

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATOR HOLLIS FRENCH

April 1, 2011

Senator Bert Stedman
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 516
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Stedman,

Thank you for hearing SB 87 on March 28, 2011 in the Senate Finance committee. We appreciate the detailed review by members of the committee.

During the discussion, Senator Olson asked whether access to dental care and prescription drug coverage would be improved under the legislation. The short answer is 'no.'

Under the bill a health care provider, on page 2 lines 27-29, is defined as including a physician, osteopath, physician assistant, nurse, physical therapist, occupational therapist, or chiropractor licensed in the state and qualified to provide primary care services. At this time, due to the nature of that definition, individuals who are licensed to provide dental care in Alaska aren't eligible to receive grants under the legislation.

On page 2 lines 5-6, the legislation requires a grant application to provide 'adequate proof that a grant is necessary to enable the applicant to provide increased primary care services to seniors.' Given the reference to services at the end of this section, supplementing payment for prescription drugs wouldn't be permissible under the current language.

If you or members of the committee have any questions on these points, please let my office know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hollis French", written over a horizontal line.

Senator Hollis French