

Juneau Youth Services, Inc.

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March 7, 2011

Senator Bettye Davis, Chair
Health and Social Services Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Support for SB 5

Dear Senator Davis,

I am writing on behalf of both Juneau Youth Services and the Alaska Association of Homes for Children. Thank you for once again introducing legislation (SB 5) to raise the eligibility threshold for Denali KidCare from 175% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

As you know, Alaska is one of the strictest states in the country when it comes to eligibility for Children's Medicaid (Denali KidCare). The estimate last year was that raising the eligibility criteria to 200% of the FPL would result in an additional 1,200 children and 200 pregnant women being covered under Denali KidCare. With a high rate of federal matching funds, this increase could take place with a minimal increment in state operating funds.

It is important to recognize that Denali KidCare is a major funding source for children's behavioral health and residential services in Alaska. Approximately 75% of the children and youth served by Juneau Youth Services access these services through Medicaid/Denali KidCare. Denali KidCare is also a major factor in ensuring that Alaska's children and youth receive services as close to their home communities as possible.

Raising the threshold for Denali KidCare is a wise investment in the health and wellbeing of Alaska's children. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Walter Majoros
Executive Director