



April 21, 2025

Representative Alyse Galvin
State Capitol Room 502
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: ANTHC Support of House Bill 151

Representative Galvin,

On behalf of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), I write in support of House Bill (HB) 151.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) is a statewide Tribal health organization serving all 229 tribes and all Alaska Native and American Indian (AN/AI) people in Alaska. ANTHC provides a wide range of statewide public health, community health, environmental health, and other programs and services for Alaska Native people and their communities. ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation operate programs at the Alaska Native Medical Center, the statewide tertiary care hospital for all AN/AI people in Alaska, under the terms of Public Law 105-83.

Multi-year continuous Medicaid eligibility promotes improved health outcomes and higher educational success for children and increased economic stability for families. It also makes state systems more efficient and cost-effective, ultimately saving public resources. Medicaid reimburses the State at 100-percent federal matching dollars for eligible AN/AI people served by Tribal health programs—or through a care coordination agreement with non-Tribal providers. This provides critical access to care for youth who live in all regions of the state. A loss of Medicaid coverage for even a short amount of time can result in missed developmental screenings or access to preventative care that is further exacerbated if the child lives in a remote and roadless part of the state.

Alaska Native and American Indian children experience disproportionately high rates of chronic health conditions and face persistent barriers to care rooted in geographic distance, economic hardship, and intergenerational systemic inequities. Compounding these challenges, Alaska Native and American Indian children are more likely than other American children to be uninsured. This gap in coverage undermines early childhood health and development and contributes to worsening disparities over time.

The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Investigation of the State of Alaska's Behavioral Health System for Children, found the State "... *fail(ed) to provide services to children with behavioral health disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.*" Further, the investigation states, "*Many of these children are eligible and appropriate for community-based*

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

4000 Ambassador Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508

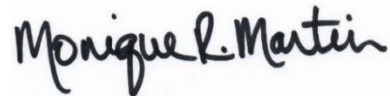
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services and supports that Alaska offers through its Medicaid program.” With Alaska Native youth overly represented in Alaska’s child welfare system and also identified as disproportionately unable to access community-based services in the DOJ Investigation, continuous eligibility for youth under the age of 6 could be a critical tool for accessing services that promote resiliency and ameliorate the negative impacts of that disproportionate representation.

House Bill 151 provides a solution to children moving on and off Medicaid during these critical early years of development. Allowing children to remain eligible reduces unnecessary administrative work and expense for the state and improves outcomes for our youngest Alaskans.

We appreciate you bringing this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monique R. Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monique R. Martin, Vice President
Intergovernmental Affairs



Alaska Native Health Board

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YUKON-KUSKOKWIM
HEALTH CORPORATION

VALDEZ NATIVE TRIBE

April 21, 2025

Transmitted via email: Representative.Alyse.Galvin@akleg.gov

The Honorable Alyse Galvin
Representative, District 14
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol, Rm 502
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for House Bill 151 – Medical Assistance: Children Under Age 6

Dear Representative Galvin,

On behalf of the Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB)¹, I write to offer our support for House (HB) Bill 151, which creates a pathway for multi-year, continuous Medicaid coverage for children under six years of age.

HB 151 is an important step in ensuring Alaska's children, particularly Alaska Native children, receive consistent and uninterrupted access to health care throughout this critical development period. Continuous coverage supports improved health outcomes by ensuring children can access preventative care, developmental screenings, immunizations, and treatment for emerging health issues without interruption. It also makes the state system more efficient and cost-effective, saving public resources. Medicaid is a foundational resource for Alaska's children and families, but administrative barriers during the redetermination process often result in eligible children losing access to this support for months at a time. Even a short-term loss of coverage during early childhood can result in missed developmental screenings or access to other preventative care.

Alaska Native and American Indian children experience disproportionately high rates of chronic health conditions and face persistent barriers to care rooted in geographic distance, economic hardship, and intergenerational systemic inequities. Compounding these challenges, Alaska Native and American Indian children are more likely than other American children to be uninsured. This coverage gap undermines early childhood health and development and contributes to worsening disparities over time.

¹ ANHB was established in 1968 to promote the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and cultural well-being and pride of Alaska Native people. ANHB is the statewide voice on Alaska Native health issues and is the advocacy organization for the Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS), which is comprised of Tribal health programs that serve all 229 Tribes and over 234,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people throughout the state. As the statewide Tribal health advocacy organization, ANHB supports Alaska's Tribes and Tribal programs to achieve effective consultation and communication with state and federal agencies on matters of concern.

While the Indian Health Service (IHS) represents a key component of the federal trust responsibility to provide health care for Alaska Native and American Indian people, it has been chronically underfunded for decades. IHS budget shortfalls have forced Tribal Health Organizations to braid resources from IHS, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to provide comprehensive care. This funding structure is both complex and fragile, making consistent access to Medicaid essential. HB 151 would provide more stable coverage by guaranteeing continuous eligibility for children under six, protecting Alaska Native and American Indian children from avoidable lapses in coverage, and helping ensure they receive consistent, preventative care necessary for healthy development.

Finally, while HB 151 focuses on children under six, the principle of continuous eligibility holds promise for other vulnerable populations as well, particularly Alaska Native elders. Like young children, elders often face significant barriers to maintaining consistent coverage due to mobility issues, limited access to administrative support, and the complex nature of eligibility requirements. Expanding continuous eligibility policies in the future could help ensure our elders—who rely heavily on regular medical care and prescription medications—receive the uninterrupted coverage they need to age with dignity and security. HB 151 is a meaningful step toward a more stable and equitable healthcare system for all generations. We also support continuous eligibility for other populations to reduce the administrative burden on the Department of Health, Medicaid beneficiaries, and their families.

Thank you for sponsoring this legislation to support uninterrupted health care coverage for young Alaskans. If you have any questions, please contact anhb@anhb.org or 907-729-7510.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W F Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chief William F. Smith, Chairman
Alaska Native Health Board

From: [Connie Markis](#)
To: [House Health and Social Services](#)
Subject: In Favor of HB 151 - Medical Assistance for Children Under the Age of 6
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 9:27:07 AM

The purpose of HB 151 is to provide continuous eligibility and stability for medical assistance for children under 6 years of age. This is a common sense bill to improve outcomes of children affected by this bill, which gives potential savings to the state because of the better outcomes and it gives comfort and reassurance to the families receiving the benefit. Please support HB 151. Thank you!

Kind regards,
Constance (Connie) Markis
Anchorage, Alaska