



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Alaska VA Healthcare System and Regional Office
2925 DeBarr Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99508-9998

• March 4, 2009

In Reply Refer To: 463/00

Senator Joe Paskvan
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska

Subject: Alaska e-Health Network

Dear Senator Paskvan:

I recently read with interest Senate Bill #133 that advocates creating a statewide electronic health information exchange system. The Alaska Veteran Affairs Healthcare System is a strong advocate of such a system. The VA has had an electronic medical record since the 1980's and has seen the benefits of improving quality patient care and safety, reducing healthcare costs, coordinating care and improving emergency services. Increasing the ability to exchange information with private sector providers would further enhance these benefits for Alaska veterans.

The Alaska VA Healthcare System has a strong relationship with providers throughout Alaska. Last year the Alaska VA purchased approximately \$40m of healthcare services from hospitals, clinics and doctor's offices throughout the state. Allowing instantaneous exchange of vital information can do nothing but improve the quality of care for Alaskans. Reducing duplication of tests, x-rays, medications and procedures would surely drive down costs for everyone. We are excited about the possibilities of a statewide network. As such, I am a member of the Board of the Alaska e-Health Network to assure federal providers are included as a stakeholder in any system developed in our state.

The Alaska VA Healthcare System seeks the same solutions as you do. We would be glad to work with all parties to assure such a system is comprehensive in its scope.

Good Luck in your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Spector".

Alex Spector
Director
Alaska VA Healthcare System

Alaska State Medical Association

4107 Laurel Street • Anchorage, Alaska 99508 • (907) 562-0304 • (907) 561-2063 (fax)

March 17, 2009

Honorable Joe Paskvan
Alaska State Senate
Capitol, Room 7
Juneau, Alaska

RE: SB 133 – Electronic Health Information Exchange System

Dear Senator Paskvan:

The Alaska State Medical Association (ASMA) represents physicians statewide and is primarily concerned with the health of all Alaskans.

We in Alaska need the ability to electronically transmit patient health information securely and flawlessly between the various facilities and health care professionals involved in the treatment process. The transfer of such information in a uniform manner is important in providing the best care for our injured or ill citizens. Additionally, this system also needs to mesh with similar systems outside of Alaska as well. This facilitates the timely and best care for patients in Alaska who reside elsewhere in the United States and Alaskan patients who require care while in another state.

ASMA has been engaged as a stake holder in this process for sometime being represented by Dr Jerome List, an ASMA past president. He currently is on the board of Alaska e-Health Network. Additionally, ASMA was one of the founders of the Alaska Electronic Health Record Alliance and is represented on its board by Dr. List and Jim Jordan, ASMA Executive Director. This entity is engaged in developing pilot programs to get electronic health records deployed in the office of solo or small number physician practices. It needs the uniform interoperability to maximize patient care through the ability to send and receive health information involving all in the care of a patient.

ASMA supports SB 133 and urges its passage.

Sincerely,



By: Thomas Vasileff, MD, President
For: The Alaska State Medical Association



Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Administration · 4000 Ambassador Drive · Anchorage, Alaska 99508 · Phone: (907) 729-1900 · Fax: (907) 729-1901 · www.anthc.org

March 10, 2009

Senator Joe Paskvan
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Endorsement of SB133: Alaska Health Information Exchange

Dear Senator Paskvan:

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) hereby expresses our support for your introduction of SB133 for consideration by the Alaska State Legislature.

For the past two years our organization has been the managing partner for the development of the Alaska e-Health Network, organized to create a health information exchange serving all residents of the State of Alaska. Like most Americans, Alaskans receive medical care services from multiple providers, and the availability of an electronic network allowing rapid transfer of medical data will significantly improve medical care wherever patients seek services. We have been encouraged that all of the major health care provider organizations in Alaska are aligned and working together in support of development of such a network.

Our organization is making a significant investment in the process of transferring all of our paper medical records to electronic medical records. When this process is complete, the Alaska e-Health Network will allow us to exchange our records with other participating health care providers both within the Alaska Tribal Health System and with other governmental and private health care providers who also see our patients.

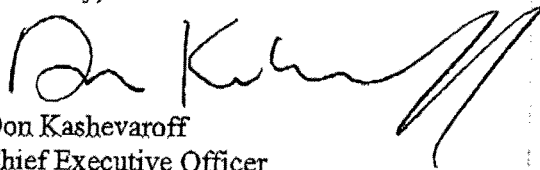
National research, and the experience of health information exchanges developed in the lower-48 states, have demonstrated that full deployment of interoperable electronic health records save the health care system nearly 5% of total annual costs, improve patient safety through reduction of medical errors, and improve the coordination of patient care.

The Alaska e-Health Network will ensure that patient privacy is protected and enhanced through the availability of a secure, encrypted network that is HIPAA compliant.

ANTHC urges the State of Alaska to take a leadership role in deploying health information exchange for Alaskans through passage of SB133 as enabling legislation, through a capital contribution to the development of the Network, and through a proportionate contribution for the long-term operations of the Network. The State will realize savings as a health care provider, as an employer, and as a major payor for health care services for Alaskans.

Please let me know how ANTHC can assist further in supporting your initiative.

Sincerely,



Don Kashevaroff
Chief Executive Officer
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

cc: Governor Sarah Palin
Commissioner William Hogan, DHSS
Paul Sherry, Alaska e-Health Network



AARP Alaska
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March 6, 2009

The Honorable Joe Paskvan
Member of the Senate
Alaska State Capitol, Room 7
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB 133 (Paskvan)—Support

Dear Senator Paskvan:

On behalf of the 97,000 members of AARP in Alaska, we are pleased to support SB 133, authored by you and co-sponsored by Senator Davis.

AARP has been collaborating with a group of organizations and medical leaders for several years to determine how Alaska can develop electronic medical record systems in medical offices and an electronic health record exchange network to connect clinics, hospitals, labs, pharmacies, insurers, the State of Alaska and other related health and medical providers that need to have quick access to accurate records.

SB 133 will establish an electronic health information exchange system.

AARP strongly supports this effort.

We believe electronic medical records will save overall costs as well as significantly reduce medical errors. In addition, electronic medical records will also lead to the more effective use of personal health records to increase consumers' engagement in their health care. Electronic records can take advantage of technology to facilitate patient education and self-management, permit secure messaging reminders, allow patients to maintain diaries, eg., of pain, symptoms and side effects, and to obtain prescription refills, schedule medical appointments online, and track medical test results. Ideally these personal health records will be connected to the electronic medical record system.

Even if all an electronic health information exchange accomplished was a reduction in medical errors, that goal alone is worth pursuing in Alaska.

Some proponents of setting up such an exchange system believe such a network could be the biggest advance in medicine since the discovery of penicillin. A network like this in Alaska has the potential to save hundreds, if not thousands, of lives and save millions of

dollars by eliminating duplicate tests, shortening hospital stays, improving care for chronically ill patients, and guaranteeing accurate prescribing.

The collaboration on this issue that we have already witnessed in Alaska gives us confidence that the system will work and work well. Some of our "best and brightest" are committed to accomplishing this for Alaska citizens and health consumers.

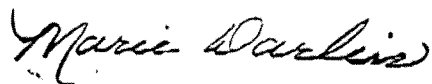
AARP members, more than any other age group, are consumers of health care. We believe SB 133 is in the best interests of our members as well as their families.

AARP is pleased to lend our strong support to SB 133.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Senator Bettye Davis
Patrick Luby

3/9/09



Senator Joe Paskvan
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Fax: (907) 465-4714

Re: SB 133

Dear Senator Paskvan:

Premera Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alaska is pleased to offer this letter of support for Senate Bill No. 133. Benefits to Alaskans will be significant. Health information exchange networks have been successful in improving patient care and safety, reducing healthcare costs and enhancing emergency response to public health emergencies.

A non-profit organization which is independent, widely representative of the major stakeholders, and operates transparently is crucial to the success of this effort. We feel this is necessary to win and maintain the trust of Alaskans. Your bill truly meets these important criteria.

Premera feels a deep commitment to improving the health and welfare of the citizens of Alaska while creating efficiencies in the health care system. This organization is willing to work with other stakeholders to seek out best practices and solutions for a statewide healthcare network infrastructure enabling the secure exchange of health care data.

Premera supports this plan. Healthcare organizations in Alaska have a track record of working together with other health care leaders in Alaska to improve health services for our patients. We see this as a next logical step toward improving health care delivery and outcomes throughout Alaska.

Thank you, Senator Paskvan, for supporting this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara B. Russell".

Barbara B. Russell, CLU
Vice President, Alaska Sales
Premera Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alaska



CAROLYN Y. HEYMAN-LAYNE
(907) 257-7870
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heyman.carolyn@dorsey.com

March 9, 2009

VIA FACSIMILE

Senator Joe Paskvan
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Fax: (907) 465-4714

Re: SB 133

Dear Senator Paskvan:

As a mother and a health care lawyer, I am writing in support of Senate Bill No. 133. Health information exchange networks can be a great tool to improve healthcare and increase the efficiency and safety of health care services. In addition, they can assist in reducing healthcare costs and eliminating redundant services. As a mother, I want to make sure my daughter can receive the best health care with the least amount of pain or discomfort. As a health lawyer, I want to make sure clients can provide services quickly and in compliance with all laws and regulations. An independent non-profit organization representing the major stakeholders would help to facilitate these goals and is an important step towards a complete health care system. Senate Bill No. 133 is a major part of this goal.

Everyday, I encourage clients to adopt electronic health records and help them figure out the privacy and security of those records. Most clients are ready and willing to support health information exchange, if they know there will be support available and the infrastructure to make their efforts worthwhile. They also want to know that there are local laws that address and encourage the exchange of health information, so they can show patients that these efforts are backed by more than just a computer company selling a program, or a healthcare organization pushing its own agenda. This bill would be one step in the building blocks that form a health information exchange network.

Even with my daily interaction with health care providers, I did not realize how difficult coordination of records would be without an electronic health record and health information network until I had a baby. My daughter was born over a year ago, was happy and healthy, and yet we are still working out the bills and services provided during her birth. I can only imagine the difficulty that we would have had if she were not healthy and happy. By coordinating records and services electronically, and by helping families avoid redundant tests and paperwork, a health information exchange network can make it easier for parents to cope with a loved one's illness.

I strongly support this plan. Healthcare organizations in Alaska have a track record of working together with other health care leaders in Alaska to improve health services for patients – I see this happening everyday. This bill is the next logical step toward improving health care delivery and outcomes throughout Alaska.



Senator Joe Paskvan
March 9, 2009
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Thank you, Senator Paskvan, for supporting this important legislation.

Sincerely,

DORSEY & WHITNEY LLP

Carolyn Y. Heyman-Layne

cc: R. Madison (via email)

ALASKA PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION, INC.

"... Uncompromising in the pursuit of access to primary care for all Alaskans."



March 6, 2009

Senator Joe Paskvan
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Fax: (907) 465-4714

Re: Alaska e-Health Network Appropriation Request

Dear Senator Paskvan:

The Alaska Primary Care Association (APCA) is pleased to offer this letter of support for Senate Bill No.133. Irrefutable research shows that health information exchange (HIE) networks are successful in improving patient care and safety, reducing healthcare costs and enhancing emergency response to public health emergencies. Thus, there is no question that benefits to Alaskans as a result of this bill will be significant.

APCA holds a deep commitment to improving the health and welfare of the citizens of Alaska while creating efficiencies in the health care system. APCA's mission, purpose and programs revolve around increasing access to primary care for all Alaskans. APCA is committed to working with other stakeholders to seek out best practices and solutions for a statewide healthcare network infrastructure enabling the secure exchange of health care data, as it will help our constituents (Alaska's community health centers and other safety net providers) in providing quality health care more effectively.

Healthcare organizations in Alaska have a track record of working together with other leaders and stakeholders here to improve health services for our patients. APCA sees this plan for the continued development of an HIE as a next logical step toward improving health care delivery and outcomes throughout Alaska.

Thank you, Senator Paskvan, for supporting this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marilyn Walsh Kasmir".

Marilyn Walsh Kasmir, RNC, MBA
Executive Director.



Alaska Ear Nose & Throat, Inc.
Jerome List, DDS, MD

3841 Piper Street
Suite T4-348
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Tel: (907) 261-3096
Fax: (907) 261-3094

March 3, 2009

Senator Joe Paskvan
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Fax: (907) 465-4714

Re: Alaska e-Health Network appropriation request

Dear Senator Paskvan:

Alaska Ear Nose & Throat, Inc. is pleased to offer this letter of support for Senate Bill No. 133. Benefits to Alaskans will be significant. Health information exchange networks have been successful in improving patient care and safety, reducing healthcare costs and enhancing emergency response to public health emergencies.

A non-profit organization which is independent, widely representative of the major stakeholders, and operates transparently is crucial to the success of this effort. We feel this is necessary to win and maintain the trust of Alaskans. Your bill truly meets these important criteria.

Alaska Ear Nose & Throat, Inc. feels a deep commitment to improving the health and welfare of the citizens of Alaska while creating efficiencies in the health care system. This organization is willing to work with other stakeholders to seek out best practices and solutions for a statewide healthcare network infrastructure enabling the secure exchange of health care data.

With the geography in Alaska, exchange of medical information is critical. Telemedicine has been a huge cost savings to the Native Health System not to mention numerous other benefits. We need to expand our interconnectivity to allow exchange of medical data among all Health Care Providers for all patients when appropriate & needed.

Alaska Ear Nose & Throat, Inc. supports this plan. Healthcare organizations in Alaska have a track record of working together with other health care leaders in Alaska to improve health services for our patients. We see this as a next logical step toward improving health care delivery and outcomes throughout Alaska.

Thank you, Senator Paskvan, for supporting this important legislation.

Sincerely,


Jerome List, DDS, MD



Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association

426 Main Street
Juneau, AK 99801
907-586-1790

March 4, 2009

The Honorable Joe Paskvan
Alaska State Senator
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: SB 133 and the Alaska e-Health Network (AeHN) Budget Request

Dear Senator Paskvan:

The Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association (ASHNHA) is pleased to offer this letter of support for Senate Bill No.133. ASHNHA has been – and is – a long standing and strong supporter of the efforts of the AeHN. Indeed, I have seat on the newly formed board of directors for the AeHN, in part as a reflection of the Association's keen interest in this important project, but primarily because ASHNHA's members believe that the benefits to Alaskans from the outcome of the AeHN initiative will be significant. Health information exchange (HIE) networks in other parts of the country have been successful in improving not only the quality of patient care but patient safety, as well. As a result, HIE's contribute to reducing healthcare costs while enhancing emergency response to public health emergencies.

The AeHN is an independent, non-profit organization with representative of the major stakeholders within Alaska concerned for the development and provider and patient utilization of important health information technologies (HIT). In this day of heightened concern for the speed at which digital information is spinning out across the Internet, the purposeful and transparent actions and activities of the AeHN are viewed by ASHNHA as crucial to the success of this statewide effort to bring unity of purpose to this important cost-effective, public safety program. The AeHN Board of Directors feels strongly that it must conduct its business in the full view of the public in order to win and maintain the trust of Alaskans. Your bill truly ensures these important criteria.

ASHNHA and its individual members feel a deep and demonstrative commitment to improving the health and welfare of the citizens of Alaska, while also recognizing citizen call for the creation of more efficiencies within the health care system.

Page Two – The Honorable Senator Joe Paskvan – March 4, 2009

Our organization is most willing to work with other healthcare related stakeholders to seek out best practices and solutions as we move forward together to create a statewide healthcare network infrastructure enabling the secure exchange of personal health care data.

ASHNHA whole heartedly supports the approach outlined in SB 133. Healthcare organizations in Alaska have a track record of working together with other health care leaders in Alaska to improve health services for our patients. We see this legislation, its goals and intents, as the next logical step toward improving health care delivery and outcomes throughout Alaska.

Thank you, Senator Paskvan, for sponsoring this important legislation.

Respectfully,



Rod Betit
President and Chief Executive Officer
Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association

cc: Rebecca Madison



Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation
6000 Kakanak Road
P.O. Box 130
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800-478-5201
FAX (907) 842-9354

Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation is a tribal organization representing 34 villages in Southwest Alaska:

- Aleknagik
- Chignik Bay
- Chignik Lagoon
- Chignik Lake
- Clark's Point
- Dillingham
- Egegik
- Ekuk
- Ekwook
- Goodnews Bay
- Iglugig
- Iliamna
- Ivanof Bay
- Kanatak
- King Salmon
- Krugank
- Kukhanek
- Koliganek
- Levolock
- Manokotak
- Naknek
- New Stuyahok
- Newhalen
- Nondalton
- Pedro Bay
- Perryville
- Pilot Point
- Platinum
- Port Heiden
- Portage Creek
- South Naknek
- Togiak
- Twin Hills
- Ugashik

March 16, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (BBAHC) has begun implementation of a Electronic Health Records EHR system at our Kakanak Hospital and hopes to secure additional funding to do so with our 28 village clinics.

It is our hope that we can electronically communicate our EHR's and receives EHR's from all patients using our system and other health facilities throughout the state and elsewhere.

With our different system's we need a way to all talk to each other. We are excited about the possibility of SB No. 133 "An Act creating a statewide electronic health information exchange systems; and providing for an effective date. By senators PASKVAN, Davis introduced on 3.2.09.

We are members of several statewide groups who are supportive of an HIE as proposed, as we have seen how well it works in the lower 48.

This should be a high priority of the state and is an area that President Obama's stimulus package supports.

Thank you for you support.

Robert J. Clark
President/CEO

To promote health with competence, a caring attitude &