

SB 215 – Maintaining Federal Prescription Benefits at Pioneer Homes

Fact Sheet

PROBLEM:

- **In April 2009, Veterans in the Pioneer Homes who can no longer administer their own medications stopped receiving the free or low cost medications which they are entitled through the VA.**
- **These veterans were forced to purchase the same medications from the Pioneer Homes pharmacy.**
- **The Pioneer Homes pharmacy prepares medications in blister packs so that nurse aides can safely and accurately administer medications to patients.**
- **The VA cannot provide medications in blister packs – the preferred method of disbursing medicine at the Pioneer Homes.**
- **VA doctors cannot write prescriptions to the Pioneer Homes because the Pioneer Homes are outside the VA system.**
- **The Pioneer Homes cannot repackage VA medications because the lot number and expiration would change upon repackaging.**
- **The Pioneer Homes claimed they did not have enough qualified nursing staff to administer medicine from a bottle (using the VA packaging).**

SOLUTION:

- **Pioneer Homes involved all interested parties to determine appropriate protocol for ordering, receiving, storing, administering and disposing of medications.**
- **The Alaska VA Healthcare System and Regional Office Chief Pharmacist and Chief of Staff conducted in-service visits to the Pioneer Homes to ensure nurses are properly administering medications directly from original VA bottles.**

STATUTORY NEED:

- **SB 215 will ensure that the solution put in place by the Pioneer Homes will remain in statute.**
- **If the Pioneer Homes identify a safety precaution that prevents them from disbursing medications as they currently are, the state run Pioneer Homes would cover the costs of the medications.**
- **The Pioneer Homes does not anticipate any changes to what they are doing currently.**
- **SB 215 prevents the need to “re-create the wheel” and ensures that individuals who have earned federal prescription benefits will continue to receive their benefits, even in the face of future administrative staffing changes.**