

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 13

My name is Kevin Turkington. I am the CEO of Senior Care of Alaska Inc, serving senior Alaskans since 2002, the board president of the Older Persons Action Group since 2003 and the newly formed Alaska Chapter of the National Private Duty Association, NPDA. The Alaska Chapter of the NPDA is result of four private, competing companies working together for those we feel a strong passion to serve and protect.

I am testifying in support of SCR13. I believe it can be the vehicle that brings a better balance to our states legislation and support for our ENTIRE senior population. So much of our resources appear to be focused on our low income seniors; and I agree that these senior individuals need that support. However, about 75 percent of the senior population are not eligible for most of these services.

The most profound statement of SCR13 is on line 11 and 12, which states: "*WHEREAS the longer seniors are able to provide for themselves, the less the public payment systems supported by state and federal governments are burdened*" I believe we as a state focus more on providing for low income persons; to the tune of about \$38,500¹ per person of the total 3676² recipients in the Medicaid Waiver program alone. These costs continue to rise as we increasingly throw more money into a system that over time seems to increase and even encourages dependence on it. There are providers³ who flat out tell seniors and their families that they need to get their loved ones into a 'spend-down' situation as soon as possible so as to use their services under Medicaid.

The recent Federal Audit and Moratorium of the Medicaid program in Alaska speaks loud and clear to the problems we as a state face, including the reality that the current system seems to pay for poor management and fraud, making serving the Medicaid system very lucrative for many. Ever wonder why about 90⁴ percent of agencies serving senior and disabled Alaskans are Medicaid providers? Guaranteed income! Add to that, it appears the state is even considering rewarding these organizations with more money through a review process if they find they aren't making enough profit providing services under Medicaid⁵.

I believe that the best way to serve seniors and lower the costs of doing so is by empowering both the senior and their providers whether by a family member or a professional caregiver. I believe that this can be accomplished best by filtering all current regulations and subsequent legislation through SCR13 and the powerful statement it makes on behalf of seniors and their families. I believe it says that we as a state really do care about our seniors, *all of them*.

I think that if we stay on a path we are currently on, throwing more and more of our resources towards a system that can't be sustained, we will not meet the challenge.

However, by recognizing seniors caregiving as a profession, by supporting the private duty home care industry and the efforts of family caregivers to provide care to family, friends and neighbors, by encouraging accessible and affordable care for ALL seniors, and provide the educational support on the effects of aging and the importance and availability of senior caregivers we will meet the challenge Alaska faces with the expected 157 percent⁶ growth of our senior population over the next 20 years.

Turkington 19/2/10.

I believe most of us really do care about those we propose to serve. I know I do. It's why I started my company and it's why I actively serve in the community with several organizations.

I believe that by providing a means, both in education and support for people to do for themselves and encourage less dependence on the State of Alaska will we be able to meet the challenges ahead. Medicaid was designed to help those individuals who just plain fall through the cracks, whether by choice or by no fault of their own. But widening the cracks isn't the answer.

I ask that you recommend passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 13 and pledge to help support all of our seniors, making safe, affordable and professional care accessible, whether through family, friends or organizations. I can assure you that I will be doing so both through my company as well as through the organizations I serve with.

In service,


Kevin Turkington, CSA

3/15/10

Senior Care of Alaska Inc, Alaska Chapter NPDA, Older Persons Action Group.

Notes:

¹ AKSAS data, Report to Senate Health and Social Services Committee, November 3, 2009, pg 4.

² AKSAS data, Report to Senate Health and Social Services Committee, November 3, 2009, pg 5.

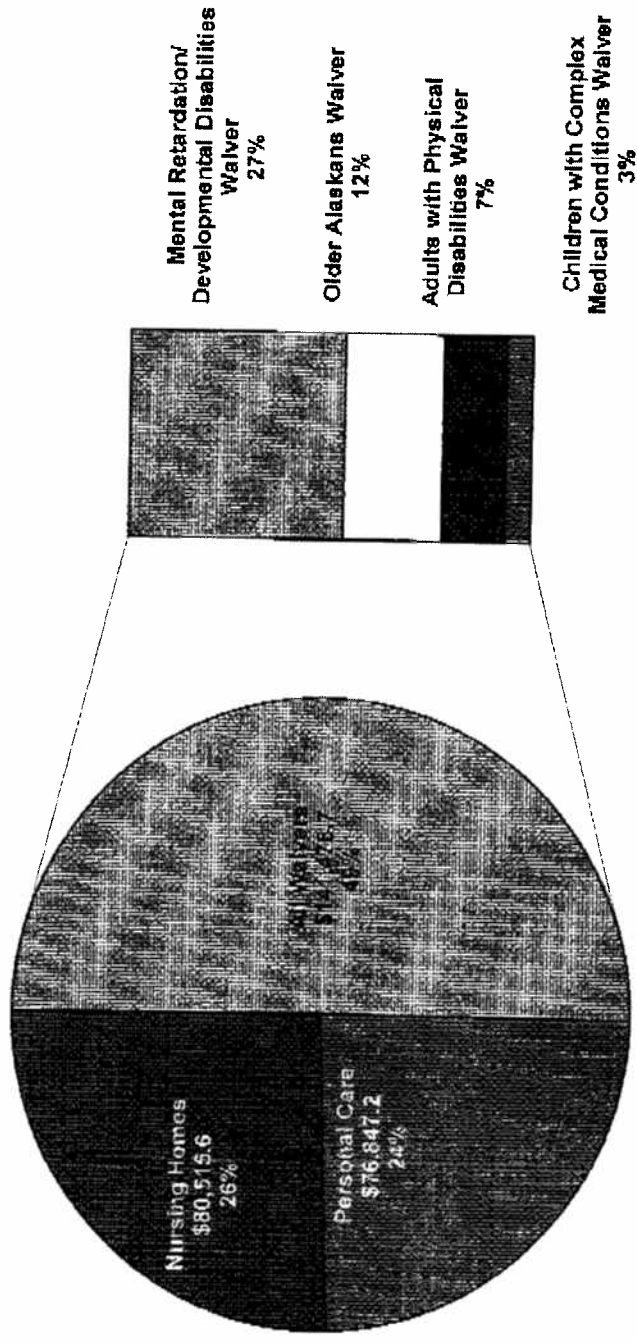
³ From competitor marketing calls made by our staff to other providers in the Anchorage area.

⁴ Based on ACS Yellow Page listing 30 companies and knowledge of which are not serving the Medicaid program.

⁵ refer to Senate Bill 32.

⁶ SCR13, line 9.

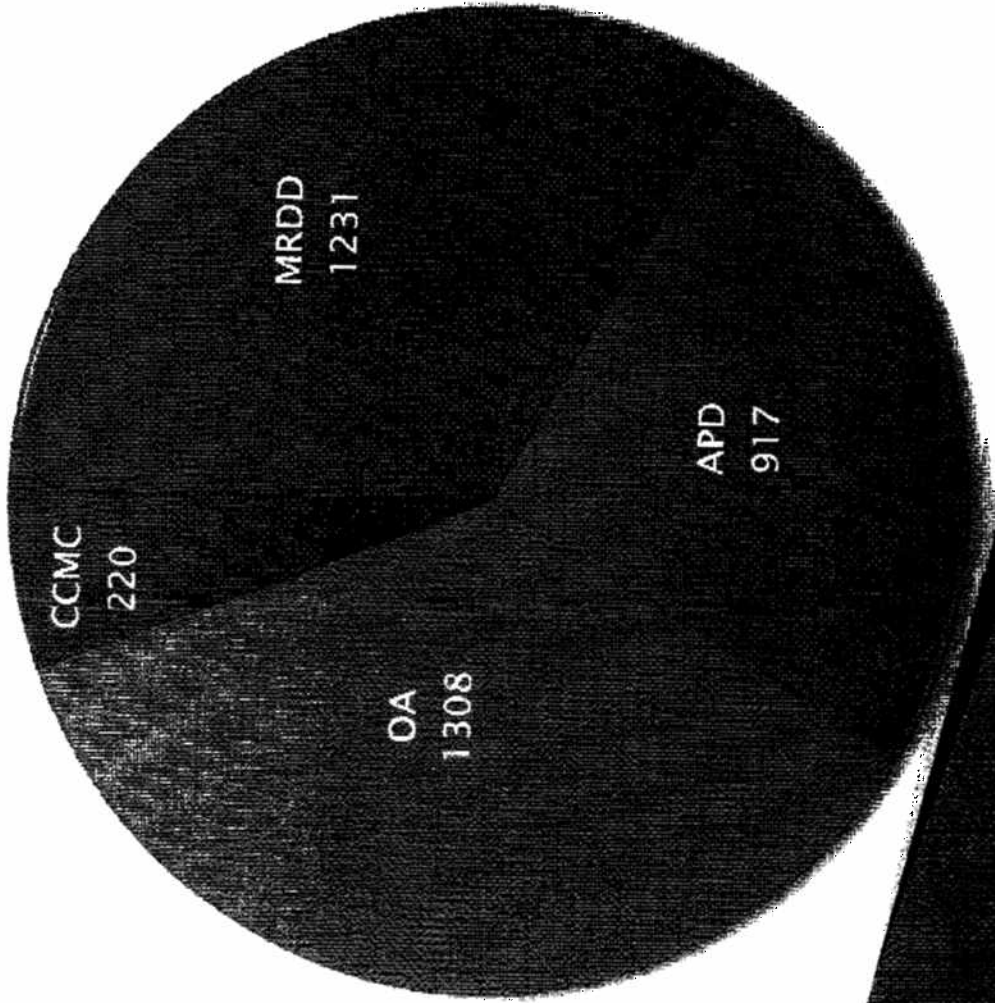
**Senior and Disabilities Medicaid Services
 FY 2009 Expenditures by Service Category
 Total Expenditure = \$298,841,000**



Source: AKSAS data.
 Excludes waiver determinations.

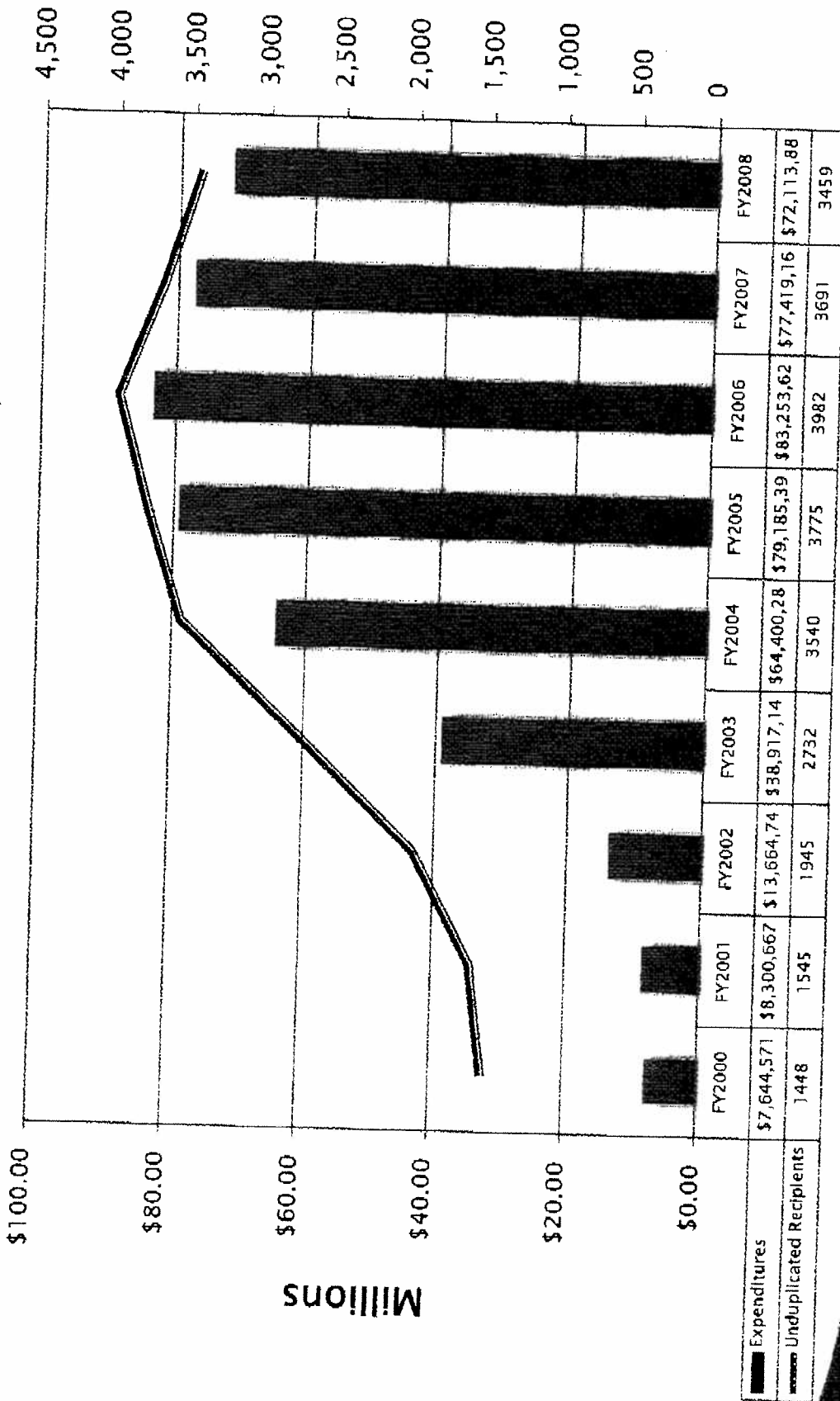
Waiver Recipients September 2009 3,676 - Unduplicated

- Mental Retardation
Developmental Disabilities
Waiver
- Adults with Physical
Disabilities
- Older Alaskans
- Children with Complex
Medical Conditions



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Personal Care Assistance Expenditures and Number of Recipients



Tombina Jan 29, 6/6.