



Representative Mia Costello Alaska State Legislature

Sponsor Statement House Bill 134

"An Act requiring Medicaid payment for scheduled unit dose prescription drug packaging and dispensing services for specified recipients."

A number of individuals in Alaska have medical needs so complex they are required to take a dozen or more medications daily. These persons are often frail, elderly, and experiencing a wide range of mental intellectual and developmental disabilities. For these most vulnerable persons, medication management services offer a way to simplify difficult dosing regimens.

HB 134 establishes within statute a medication management service that has already proven successful in keeping those individuals faced with the most difficult dosing regimens compliant with their doctor ordered prescriptions.

In 1997 Alaska became an institution free state with the closure of Harborview Medical Center. Since then Alaska has moved to more fiscally responsible "home based" healthcare for its indigent population. Medication management is an integral part to this home based care system. It improves patient adherence to prescriptions and allows persons to remain in their home communities rather than move to much more costly institutions or nursing homes.

The state of Alaska has a mandate to pay for the care of Medicaid patients, including indigent and disabled persons. Many studies have shown that medication management programs such as medication management keep patients compliant to their medication resulting in fewer visits to the hospital and emergency room. The result is a higher quality of care at a lower cost.

At a time of tight state budgets, it is important to recognize and preserve programs that generate long term cost savings for the State of Alaska.

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