



YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION

"Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health"

April 10, 2013

Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-chair
Representative Alan Austerman, Co-Chair
House Finance Committee, State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for SB 88 – Alaska Native Medical Center Housing
Dear Representatives Stoltze and Austerman:

The Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) strongly supports passage of SB 88, which will bring construction of a 170 bed residential housing facility on the campus of the Alaska Native Medical Center.

As part of the Alaska Tribal Health System network, YKHC sends patients whose medical needs are beyond our capacity into Anchorage for specialty clinic appointments and hospitalization. Coordination of patient appointments includes planning for travel and housing. With limited capacity at the current Quiana House and the challenge of placing people who travel into local hotels, dependent on taxi services, our region strongly supports construction of the on-campus facility.

Campus housing for the tribal health system will ease the anxiety of elders who must travel into a large strange city, especially those for whom English is a second language. With kitchen facilities, extended family will be able to visit and share traditional foods.


For the high risk prenatal mother who can spend several weeks waiting to delivery her baby, campus housing will provide a closer community feel than a hotel, and they will have the added bonus of being close to the hospital when they deliver, supplemental prenatal education and supports.

Patients who can be discharged from the hospital but need follow-up care before returning to their home village will benefit from being on campus, close to the services they need. Our trauma patients receive outstanding care at ANMC, but trauma patients often need post-hospitalization rehabilitative services. Patient recovery times are faster when the patient receives the prescribed follow-up on the prescribed schedule.

The Senate passed SB88 by a vote of 20 yeas & 0 nays. Senator Pete Kelly, co-chair of Finance did a fine job explaining the bill to members of the Senate. He said in his years of experience we often hear the phrase "we need to spend money to save money." In this case, he believes it is true. The 170 room housing project would be financed with a \$35 million state revenue bond. Once completed, housing on the ANMC campus will allow for expanded services for Medicaid eligible patients. Each time that happens at ANMC instead of a non-tribal facility, the state saves 50% of the Medicaid general fund. Each year approximately \$2.8 million of those savings (estimated at more than \$8 million) will be used to pay the debt service on the bond. When the bond is paid in full, 15 years from now, the property will be transferred to ANTHC.

If you have questions concerning YK's position in support of this bill, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Gene Peltola
President & CEO