

March 4, 2015

Representative Paul Seaton
Chair, House Finance Committee, HSS Subcommittee

Dear Representative Seaton,

I have been fortunate to live with health insurance my entire life. My father's company had a medical plan, and jobs in the public and private sector have also offered generous health insurance plans during my 26 years of adult employment.

I know the Alaska legislature is working hard to make thoughtful cuts to our state budget. I strongly support Medicaid expansion in Alaska. I don't believe healthcare should be a privilege only afforded to those who can pay for it or be lucky enough to work for an employer who offers it. In a state where citizens pay almost nothing to live in comparison to most of the US, I'd be willing to pay state income tax in order to ensure that qualified Alaskans have access to whatever services that Medicaid provides.

Alaskans will pay in some way if we don't expand Medicaid coverage. The 41,000 low-income families that are already living on the edge will not seek the kind of medical treatment that can get them on their feet more quickly and back to work. Workers of extremely ill family members will be able to stay employed rather than quit work to take care of their ailing loved one. Preventative care, like vaccinations and cancer screenings, and early diagnosis of treatable diseases and conditions will decrease the amount of acute and costly care for which low-income people are often seen.

And for people who want to start new businesses, have just retired from military service, need to cut back their work hours to attend classes, and need to go to school full-time to better themselves, knowing that their health care is coverage is a non-issue is a HUGE relief. By 2017, we have time to decide how to cover the 10% cost that the federal government will no longer cover. There are many hard-working Alaskans who do not have access to health care through no fault of their own and I am willing to help them get the care that they need after 2017.

Representative Seaton, I would appreciate your reconsideration of Medicaid expansion as you negotiate the state's budget.

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of all Alaskans,



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