



Alaska Psychological Association

Advancing psychology as a science, a profession, and a means of promoting health and welfare

March 6, 2016

Representative Liz Vazquez
Alaska House of Representatives
Alaska State Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801-1120

RE: HB 234 – "Insurance Coverage for Telemedicine"

Dear Representative Vazquez:

The Alaska Psychological Association (AK-PA) was formed in 1963 as a member-based entity to advance psychology as science, profession and as a means for promoting human welfare in Alaska. We have been actively involved in the healthcare reform efforts that are currently underway in Alaska, and are especially encouraged by the introduction of HB 234.

The delivery of healthcare services through properly regulated technology such as telemedicine is critical for a state such as ours to provide access to needed services. This has certainly been true in psychology and more generally in behavioral health. Requiring healthcare insurers to reimburse for medically necessary telemedicine services that are already covered in existing benefits addresses an obstacle to service provision for many Alaskans and takes us another step forward in healthcare reform that will achieve the goals of quality, comprehensive services that are cost-effective.

Thank you for your dedication to developing the highest quality of healthcare for Alaskans. We applaud your efforts and look forward to working with you moving forward. Please consider us a resource.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael Sobocinski", is written over a horizontal line.

Michael Sobocinski, PhD
President, Alaska Psychological Association

cc: Members of House Health & Social Services Committee
Valerie Davidson, Commissioner, DHSS
Randall Burns, Division of Behavior Health, DHSS
Tom Chard, Alaska Behavioral Health Association
Jeff Jessee, Mental Health Trust