

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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North to the Future

## Senator Cathy Giessel Senate District N

### Senate Bill 72 - CARE Act - Sponsor Statement

SB 72 seeks to improve post-discharge health outcomes by improving coordination with designated caregivers, providing training to them on discharge tasks, reducing preventable and costly hospital readmissions and enabling older Alaskans to stay in their own homes longer.

At any given time, around 88,000 Alaskans are providing some type of caregiving services and supports to a loved one, friend or neighbor. Caregivers are increasingly being asked to perform complex nursing and medical tasks - such as dispensing numerous medications, administering injections and providing wound care - often with inadequate skill training.

Caregivers are a critical link in the transitional care for frail adults and those with disabilities; with few exceptions, caregivers are responsible for providing and coordinating much of the care received at home following discharge.

Untrained and unsupported caregiving jeopardizes the patient's recovery, as well as often puts the caregiver at risk for their own injury and burnout, frequent symptoms of those caring for others.

SB 72 contains three important provisions:

- The name of a caregiver is recorded when a loved one is admitted into a hospital facility, if the patient so desires to name a caregiver.
- The designated caregiver is notified of the patient's discharge home or transfer to another facility as soon as practicable
- The hospital must attempt to consult with the designated caregiver about the discharge plan describing the patient's aftercare needs and offer training to the caregiver for aftercare tasks.

The value of family caregiving in Alaska is valued at over a billion dollars a year...money that would otherwise likely have to come from the state coffers for paid caregiving in the home or in a facility.

Unsupported caregivers are more likely to experience burnout, develop their own health problems, or see their loved one moved into a facility for more expensive care. Most of all, SB 72 will help people continue to live independently at home, and will support the family caregivers who make this possible.

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