

April 06, 2015

The Honorable Paul Seaton, Chair  
House Health & Social Services Committee  
House of Representatives  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Support for HB148 - Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

Dear Representative Seaton,

We, the Board of Directors at Tanana Valley Clinic, are writing in support of SB 78 and HB148, which declares a plan for Medicaid reform and expansion and is currently before the Alaska Legislature. Tanana Valley Clinic has a team of 54 physicians and mid-level providers, almost all of whom work with low-income, uninsured adult patients. In 2014, out of 118,000 clinical encounters, Tanana Valley Clinic saw 19,182 Medicaid visits, equating 16% of our total care for low-income, uninsured adults. As physicians and administrators at a community healthcare facility, we are impacted on a daily basis by the effects of healthcare costs on hard-working members of our community.

More health coverage means a healthier population, fewer life interruptions and burdens due to health crises, greater community-wide productivity at work, and less strain on our hospital and clinic budgets. With the expansion of Medicaid, our providers will be able to effectively administer care without the added consideration of a patient's economic limitations. Many exams, treatments and procedures that our physicians and mid-levels provide can leave patients with mountains of medical bills and heavy financial burdens; this can create an ethical dilemma for providers who attempt to find a balance between the necessity of treatment, and the patient's financial welfare. By providing more families with coverage through a Medicaid reform and expansion, the scope of this problem would decrease, and more of our community would receive better care without financially debilitating consequences.

A plan for Medicaid reform and expansion may also prevent families from compromising their standard of care due to financial constraints. This compromise often means the difference between making ER visits only in dire situations and scheduling preventative visits that ultimately generates healthier members of society. A plan for Medicaid reform and expansion may further elevate our community's overall health in the future and reduce the long-term cost of healthcare to the state.

With the expansion of Medicaid, not only will members of our community receive the care they need but it will help reduce uncompensated care at our community-owned hospital and our local clinic. As a leading health care provider in the state, we strongly support this plan to allow us to provide the right care, at the right time, in the right place. A plan for Medicaid reform and expansion would enable us to fulfill our mission and serve more members of our Interior community.

Sincerely,



Clay Triplehorn, DO  
Sleep Medicine  
Board President



Grayson Westfall, MD  
1<sup>st</sup> Care  
Medical Director



Corrine Leistikow, MD  
Family Practice  
Medical Director



George Rice, MD  
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Jeffrey Banks, MD  
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