

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

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## **Sponsor Statement HB 215 ver D 30<sup>th</sup> Legislature**

This bill would amend AS 44.29.022(a) to grant the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services the authority to collect fees to support the administration of public health programs. The bill would also add public health fees to the list of designated general fund program receipts in AS 37.05.146(c), making clear that the fees collected would be used to support public health operations.

Currently, the division is not able to charge fees for all the potential public health services it could because the list of “public health related duties” for which fees are allowed is limited to maternal and child health, preventive medical services, public health nursing, nutrition, health education, and laboratories.

This bill will give the Division of Public Health the opportunity to collect reasonable fees to support essential public health services consistent with its duties and authority under state law; services that protect Alaskans from preventable illness, injury and death. Examples of public health services and functions provided by the Department that currently lack fee authority include data extraction and analysis, training, expert consultation, inspections and certifications, enforcement activities, administrative functions, and professional services.

HB 215 is necessary to allow the Department of Health and Social Services’ Division of Public Health to increase and diversify revenue opportunities, ensuring the means to support public health operations and thereby reducing reliance on general funds. The Division of Public Health budget includes nearly \$7 million in revenue from fees, primarily for clinical laboratory and public health nursing services and certified copies of vital records. The widening gap between public health costs and state general funds jeopardizes our ability to protect and promote the health of Alaskans. It is necessary in public health that those who can pay, should contribute to support these essential services.