



# Alaska Native Health Board

THE VOICE OF ALASKA TRIBAL HEALTH SINCE 1968

☎ 907.562.6006 ☎ 907.563.2001 • 4000 Ambassador Drive, Suite 101 • Anchorage, Alaska 99508 • [www.anhb.org](http://www.anhb.org)

March 28, 2019

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz  
Alaska House of Representatives  
State Capitol Room 421  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Letter of Support for House Bill 114

Dear Senator Wilson,

The Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB) is writing in support of House Bill 114 (HB 114).

ANHB was established in 1968 with the purpose of promoting the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and cultural well-being and pride of Alaska Native people. ANHB is the statewide voice on Alaska Native health issues and is the advocacy organization for the ATHS, which is comprised of tribal health programs that serve all of the 229 tribes and over 175,000 Alaska Natives and American Indians throughout the state. As the statewide tribal health advocacy organization, ANHB assists tribal partners, state and federal agencies with achieving effective communication and consultation with tribes and their tribal health programs.

ANHB has been a long-time supporter of the SHARP Programs. SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool, has been vital to Alaska's Tribes and Tribal Health Organizations who work in some of the state's most remote locations. ANHB firmly believes in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska.

HB 114 seeks to expand the successes of the SHARP Program in a budget neutral way through employer contributions under a model commonly referred to as "SHARP 3". With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP 1 and SHARP 2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like our members', who participate. SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide ANHB's members the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP by allowing the recruitment of health care professional types in very short supply in our rural communities, which are not currently allowed under SHARP 1 and 2.

ANHB sees SHARP 3 as an important extension of Alaska's workforce development programming, and we want to continue the forward momentum of this program. If you would like to have further dialogue on this issue, please contact ANHB at (907) 562-6006 or [anhb@anhb.org](mailto:anhb@anhb.org).

Sincerely,

Andrew Jimmie  
Chairman  
Alaska Native Health Board

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL  
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

ALEUTIAN PRIBILOF  
ISLANDS ASSOCIATION

ARCTIC SLOPE  
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

BRISTOL BAY AREA  
HEALTH CORPORATION

CHICKALOON VILLAGE  
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

CHUGACHMIUT

COPPER RIVER  
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

COUNCIL OF ATHABASCAN  
TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

EASTERN ALEUTIAN TRIBES

KARLUK IRA  
TRIBAL COUNCIL

KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE

KETCHIKAN  
INDIAN COMMUNITY

KODIAK AREA  
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

MANILAQ ASSOCIATION

METLAKATLA INDIAN  
COMMUNITY

MT. SANFORD  
TRIBAL CONSORTIUM

NATIVE VILLAGE  
OF EKLUTNA

NATIVE VILLAGE OF EYAK

NATIVE VILLAGE  
OF TYONEK

NINILCHIK  
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

NORTON SOUND  
HEALTH CORPORATION

SELDOVIA VILLAGE TRIBE

SOUTHCENTRAL  
FOUNDATION

SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL  
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

YAKUTAT TLINGIT TRIBE

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM  
HEALTH CORPORATION

VALDEZ NATIVE TRIBE

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you today about my experience with the SHARP Program in hopes that it will convince you to vote for SB-93.

I first came to Bethel, Alaska as a pharmacy student for one of my final clinical rotations. The first day I arrived, several pharmacists told me they were in desperate need of pharmacists. They proceeded to tell me all the benefits of working and living in Bethel, including the potential of securing a SHARP loan repayment contract.

In case you are not aware, SHARP is a support-for-service program to help offset the cost of student loans and rural living for healthcare professionals providing care to the state's residents. This program, which requires zero general funds, helps keep practitioners within the state of Alaska.

During the rest of my clinical rotation, the pharmacists continued to recruit me, using SHARP as a tool. It worked! I was back after graduation working hard and applying for the SHARP contract. That year, I was the only full-time professional to receive the 2-year SHARP-II award at my facility. And, for the next year, I watched several pharmacists (and other professionals) come and go because they weren't awarded the SHARP contract. The staffing issue made my job very difficult, and there were many times I wanted to quit, but I stayed due to my contractual obligation to SHARP. And, thankfully I "had" to stay, because a few months later I met my husband, who was a SHARP-I recipient at the time, and we are both still living and serving the people of Bethel almost 5 years after moving here! When our contracts ended, we decided not to reapply because we wanted to share the opportunities we had with other professionals looking to move to rural Alaska.

Please vote for SB-93 to give other professionals the opportunity I had to fall in love with Alaska and its people.

Thank you for your time,

Kathryn Reynolds, PharmD



## CAMAI COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

To: SHARP Advisory Council  
C/O Robert Sewell, SHARP Program Manager  
Eric Boyer Co-Chair  
Rachel Gearhart, Co-Chair

From: Peter Tallman  
Behavioral Health Director  
Camai Community Health Center  
2 School Road, PO Box 211  
Naknek, AK 99633  
Cell: (907) 469-1111

RE: Letter of Support for SHARP Funding

SHARP Advisory Council,

I am writing to offer my support for the SHARP program. I am a former SHARP recipient (Dec. 1st, 2012 to Nov. 30th, 2014). I received the SHARP loan repayment while I was a child therapist in Dillingham. At the time I was a freshly licensed social worker with a large debt hanging over my head from a top ranked-and top priced, graduate program. To me SHARP was an absolute win/win. I was able to pay down a portion of my graduate school debt while working in a community with a high cost of living and with great need. The communities I served benefited from having a well-trained, motivated and well supported clinician who felt committed to giving full effort. It felt like a fair deal to me and I hope those I served felt the same.

In my current position in another Bristol Bay community I can say that the greatest challenge for our program is the recruitment and retention of qualified and talented mental health professionals. There isn't even a close second. It is extremely difficult to recruit providers from out of state, especially if you expect them understand and connect with the unique circumstances of rural Alaska, and it seems nearly impossible to convince clinicians on the road system to venture off it for a while. As an example I have a behavioral health position that's been unfilled for two years.

I support SHARP because to me it's a fair deal for everyone. Alaska gets providers where we need them most, and providers get the practical support they need to be able to focus on their work and the reasons they entered their respective fields to begin with. SHARP is a good deal for providers and a great deal for Alaska.

Sincerely,

Peter Tallman, LCSW, CDC-I

**Mission Statement:** *Camai Community Health Center promotes and provides compassionate medical care for the health and well-being of our communities.*

**Values:** *Professionalism, honesty, respect, integrity, responsiveness, and trust.*

[www.camaichc.org](http://www.camaichc.org)

Rachael Woods  
P.O. Box 211015  
Auke Bay, AK 99821  
March 28, 2019

Dear Rachel:

I am writing to tell you of my experience as a SHARP recipient and why I think this is a valuable program. I am a recipient of the SHARP-2 grant and continue to encourage colleagues to apply for the SHARP-3 in the hopes that they will have as positive an experience as I did.

Because of the SHARP-2, I was able to pay the remainder of my student loan from graduate school. This was a tremendous benefit as it enabled me to allocate more money towards my family and relieved the stress of this financial burden I had been carrying since I graduated in May 2000. An additional benefit was the support I received from Robert Sewell who was my contact for the SHARP-2. He made himself available to me whenever I had questions and helped me to problem-solve issues with the agency where I was working.

As well as encouraging colleagues to apply for this grant I have encouraged the agency where I work to use it for recruiting clinicians. The SHARP program is a great benefit both to those who receive the grant and to those who benefit from practitioners being made available to them.

Please feel free to call me at (907) 523-6631 with any follow up questions.

Sincerely,

Rachael Woods  
Teen Health Center Clinician



March 27, 2019

SHARP Advisory Council  
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

**Subject: Letter of intent for SHARP 3**

Dear Co-Chairs:

As a recruitment and retention tool, SHARP has been vital to the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center (ANHC). Our organization firmly believes in the value of the SHARP model in enabling the provision of high-quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaskan organizations.

We see SHARP-3 as a program that will provide an important mechanism to support health workforce recruiting and retention in Alaska communities. This program would provide clear opportunities to expand loan repayment, as well as funding partnership opportunities and setting a standard program administration fee. Additionally, by expanding eligibility from their definitions in SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, SHARP-3 will allow an increase to the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

At ANHC, we have seen competition for providers continue to increase, due to retirements and growth in community demand. With this increase in challenges to recruit and retain high-quality providers, SHARP-3 provides our organization with a competitive edge. It allows nonprofits like us to have support in sharing the load when offering the important incentive of loan repayment for our providers, which is something that we would be unlikely to afford otherwise. In many cases, it is a substantial factor in obtaining service commitments that keep our highly talented providers here in the state, and we have heard that it is also a factor in recruiting new providers to Alaska.

As such, our agency is prepared to utilize SHARP-3 as soon as it is available. We do not see the 100% match requirement as a barrier, as we are committed to utilize our community partnerships to fund this match as needed.

We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska with this invaluable program.

Respectfully,

Scharla K. Baker, SHRM-CP  
Chief Human Resources Officer  
Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center



**MAT-SU HEALTH  
FOUNDATION**

950 East Bogard Road, Suite 218 • Wasilla, AK 99654  
Phone: (907) 352-2863 • Fax (907) 352-2865  
[www.matsuhealthfoundation.org](http://www.matsuhealthfoundation.org)

March 25, 2019

Senator David Wilson  
Senator John Coghill  
Senator Gary Stevens  
Senator Cathy Giessel  
Senator Tom Begich

Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, AK. 99801

Dear Senator Wilson and Members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee,

Please accept this letter of support from the Mat-Su Health Foundation for SB 93, SHARP-3 Medical Provider Incentives, Loan Repayment. Mat-Su Health Foundation (MSHF) is the official business name of Valley Hospital Association, which shares ownership in Mat-Su Regional Medical Center (MSRMC). MSHF invests its share of the profits back into the community through grants and scholarships to improve the health and wellness of Alaskans living in the Mat-Su.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is the fastest growing region in Alaska. Our current population of 104,168 people is projected to grow to 167,500 by 2045. One of our fastest-growing demographics is older Alaskans, who have a higher need for healthcare services than many other populations. Along with this growth comes the need for more health care workers. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development stated in the October 2018 issue of Alaska Economic Trends magazine that that of the 25 Alaska occupations expected to grow the most in the next 10 years, 23 are related to health and human services.

Workforce Development is a key Mat-Su Health Foundation focus area, and we are committed to filling gaps in the community's healthcare workforce through programs that include scholarships, professional development opportunities, and support of SHARP. SHARP provides incentive for clinicians to work in Alaska by offering student loan repayment for designated providers in high-need healthcare settings. As a public/ private partnership, SHARP-3 requires no monetary investment at the State level, but it does require this legislation to pass. The Mat-Su Health Foundation invested \$25,000 over the last three years to support seven new healthcare practitioners in Mat-Su: five in Behavioral Health and two in nursing. Since the inception of the SHARP program our community has benefited from 45 practitioners who may not have been here otherwise.

The Mat-Su Health Foundation fully supports SB 93 and the SHARP-3 program. We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and we respectfully ask you to move this vital piece of legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Chief Executive Officer

*"Improving the health and wellness of Alaskans living in the Mat-Su!"*

Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center  
1915 E Rezanof Dr  
Kodiak, AK 99615  
907-486-3281  
www.providence.org



March 21, 2019

SHARP Council  
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs:

Please accept this letter of intent for SHARP 3.

SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool has been vital to our organization. Our ministry firmly believes in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a require for SHARP 1.

As such, our ministry is prepared to utilize SHARP 3 as soon as it is available; finding that the 100% match requirement is not a barrier, in that we can utilize our community partnerships to fund this match how we see fit.

We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gina L. Bishop". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Dr. Gina L. Bishop, RN, PhD, CEN  
Chief Executive Officer



**ALASKA NATIVE  
TRIBAL HEALTH  
CONSORTIUM**

March 20, 2019

Senator David Wilson  
Chair, Senate HSS Standing Committee  
Alaska State Legislature

Re: Senate Bill 93

Dear Senator Wilson,

On behalf of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), I write in support of Senate Bill (SB) 93 – An Act relating to a workforce enhancement program for health care professionals employed in the state; and providing for an effective date.

ANTHC is a statewide tribal health organization that serves all 229 tribes and more than 173,000 Alaska Native and American Indian (AN/AI) individuals in Alaska. ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation co-manage the Alaska Native Medical Center, the tertiary care hospital for all AN/AIs in Alaska. ANTHC also provides a wide range of statewide public health, community health, environmental health and other programs and services for Alaska Native people and their communities.

Alaska's SHARP program provides recruitment and retention services for Alaska's health care workforce, and continues to be of great value to ANTHC. As outlined in the proposed legislation, ANTHC supports its intent to expand health professional types and sites eligible for the program.

ANTHC currently employs five health professionals that have benefited from the SHARP program and looks forward to the continued partnership this legislation would enable. Thank you for the opportunity to provide support and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or if additional information can be provided.

Sincerely,

Gerald Moses  
Vice President, Intergovernmental Affairs

Cc: Rachel Gearhart, SHARP co-chair  
Eric Boyer, SHARP co-chair

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium  
4000 Ambassador Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508  
Main: (907) 729-1900 | Fax: (907) 729-1901 | [anthc.org](http://anthc.org)





March 19, 2019

SHARP Council  
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear SHARP Co-Chairs:

The Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association (ASHNHA) is offering this letter of support for SHARP-3. As a member of the SHARP Council we have been involved with the program since its inception and believe in the value of the program to support high quality care through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska.

The SHARP program has helped Alaska's hospitals ensure an adequate supply of healthcare providers and is an important tool to help with recruitment and retention. We support the addition of a third component through SHARP-3 legislation.

SHARP-3 will support a variety of practice settings, locations (especially those not eligible as a HPSA or other federal programs for SHARP-1) and provider types. We need to use whatever tools are available to support healthcare organizations to recruit and retain employees. SHARP-3 would expand the use of federal tax exemption for education loan repayment and enhance the number and variety of financial contributors. There is a need to give local control to allow communities to designate funds to support recruitment of providers. SHARP-3 utilizes the existing SHARP infrastructure while maximizing contributions from local communities or foundations. Money could be contributed from different local sources such as a business, private foundation, trade association, government entity, foundations or employers.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a require for SHARP 1.

ASHNHA is prepared to support our members in efforts to utilize SHARP 3 as soon as it is available. We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Respectfully,

Jeannie Monk  
Senior Vice President



# Alaska Pharmacists Association

## **Board of Directors**

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President  
Juneau

*Ashley Schaber*  
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*Amy Paul*  
Anchorage

*Brennon Nelson*  
Anchorage

March 18, 2019

**SHARP Council**  
Eric Boyer and Rachel Gearhart, Co-Chairs

Dear Co-Chairs Boyer and Gearhart:

The Alaska Pharmacists Association (AKPhA) is proud to support the Alaska SHARP Program, which helps recruit and retain healthcare workers for the state by using a creative, loan repayment system.

While the opportunities in Alaska are exceptional, we do not have advanced schooling available for all fields in healthcare and we want to encourage practitioners to either return to our state or make Alaska their home once they have achieved their degrees. By helping offset the financial burden of student loans, we are able to attract practitioners to some of the remotest parts of our state and help improve patient access to needed healthcare services in the process. Over 30 pharmacists have participated in this program to date, and they join a multitude of others who have benefited from this system.

It is important to note that the SHARP I and III Programs, as outlined, do not rely on state funding and instead leverage contributions from employer sites, federal health professional shortage area dollars, and private contributions to meet its goals.

SHARP is truly a winning proposition for all—patients, practitioners and the state. We encourage the Alaska legislature to continue its support of this valuable program.

Sincerely,

Molly Gray  
Executive Director

E-mail: [akphrmcva@alaska.net](mailto:akphrmcva@alaska.net)

203 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 100 • Anchorage, Alaska 99501 • (907) 563-8880 • (907) 563-7880



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Department of  
Corrections**

HEALTH AND REHABILITATION SERVICES  
Anchorage Central Office

550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Suite 1800  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
Main: 907.269.7300  
Fax: 907.269.7310

March 18, 2019

SHARP Council  
Co-Chair Eric Boyer  
Co-Chair Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs,

I am writing this letter of support for the SHARP 3 Program. The Alaska Department of Corrections has been hit hard by the nursing and provider shortages in our communities. We have facilities across the state for which qualified health care staff are needed.

The SHARP programs thus far have been very beneficial to us as recruitment and retention tools. We have found great value in the SHARP program and SHARP 3 will provide valuable state infrastructure without additional state general funds and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

95% of people incarcerated in the Alaska Department of Corrections will return home. The care they receive while in custody increases the likelihood of successful reintegration back into our communities – and that can only be done with resources such as qualified nurses, doctors, PAs and ANPs, mental health clinicians and dentists. SHARP improves our options and increases our ability to recruit and retain quality staff.

DOC plans to continue to utilize SHARP programs and we look forward to seeing the program grow.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura M. Brooks".

Laura M. Brooks, MS, LPA  
Deputy Director  
Health & Rehabilitation Services  
Alaska Department of Corrections



Administration  
4300 Bartlett Street  
Homer, AK 99603  
907-235-0325 (f)907-235-0253

South Peninsula Hospital  
4300 Bartlett Street  
Homer, AK 99603

March 15, 2019

SHARP Council  
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs,

Please accept this letter of support for SHARP 3.

Alaska's SHARP program, as a recruitment and retention tool, has been vital to our organization. South Peninsula Hospital firmly believes in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand loan repayment and partnership funding, while establishing a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a requirement for SHARP-1.

As such, our Hospital is prepared to utilize SHARP 3 as soon as it is available; finding that the 100% match requirement is not a barrier, in that we can utilize our community partnerships to fund this match how we see fit.

We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Woodin", written over the typed name and title.

Joseph L. Woodin  
Chief Executive Officer  
South Peninsula Hospital

To Whom It May Concern,

I was born and raised in Alaska and while my education and travels took me elsewhere, I chose to return home to begin my practice. When I decided to begin work as a mental health provider I chose to come back to Alaska as a way to serve and to grow myself as a professional. I specifically chose my position, and clinic location based on SHARP program eligibility. Supporting this program does make a difference in attracting and retaining qualified providers to serve Alaska.

The SHARP program has been very beneficial to me individually, and has had a major part in the decision-making process of where I have chosen to work and what communities I have chosen to serve. I highly encourage any legislator or policy maker to consider the value that the SHARP program brings to the State of Alaska. The benefit is tangible to those who are both in service to our communities, and to those who are being served by us.

Zan Whitman, ANP

March 14, 2019

SHARP Council

Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs:

Please accept this letter of support for SHARP 3.

SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool has been vital to our ability to recruit and retain medical providers at PeaceHealth Medical Center in Ketchikan Alaska. I, personally, benefitted greatly from the SHARP program assisting me to finally complete full payment of my remaining student loans. This assistance from the state of Alaska is a key reason I have stayed in the state providing care. Since the state does not have its own medical school and has limited opportunities for advanced practice nurse training in specialties, it is critical that Alaska offers good reasons for talented, experienced providers to come to Alaska. Nearly all who consider relocation to our state must leave family, friends and many conveniences behind to consider coming to the state. The SHARP program helps make this move an easier consideration. Our hospital and clinics firmly believe in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a require for SHARP 1.

As such, our agency is prepared to utilize SHARP 3 as soon as it is available; finding that the 100% match requirement is not a barrier, in that we can utilize our community partnerships to fund this match how we see fit.

We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Respectfully,

Patricia J. Thornton, CNM, MS



P: (907) 424-8000 | F: (907) 424-8116  
P.O. Box 160 | 602 Chase Ave., Cordova, AK 99574-0160

SHARP Council  
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

3/13/19

Dear Co-Chairs:

Please accept this letter of support for SHARP 3.

SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool has been vital to our hospital. Cordova Community Medical Center firmly believes in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

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We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Respectfully,



Scot Mitchell, FACHE  
Chief Executive Officer

SM:fwj



March 13, 2019

SHARP Council  
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs:

Please accept this letter of support for SHARP 3.

SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool has been vital to our group, Providence Medical Group Alaska (PMGA). We firmly believe in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

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As such, our agency is prepared to utilize SHARP 3 as soon as it is available; finding that the 100% match requirement is not a barrier, in that we can utilize our community partnerships to fund this match how we see fit.

We are eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Yetman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Thomas J. Yetman, MD  
Chief Executive  
Providence Medical Group Alaska



# Trust

Alaska Mental Health  
Trust Authority

3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
Tel 907.269.7960  
[www.mhitrust.org](http://www.mhitrust.org)

March 12, 2019

Senator David Wilson  
State Capitol Room 115  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Wilson:

Please accept this letter of support for SHARP 3. SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool has been vital to our healthcare systems across the State of Alaska in securing licensed clinicians. The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority firmly believes in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites.

AMHTA exists specifically to improve the lives of Trust beneficiaries. Beneficiaries include Alaskan's with mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, intellectual and developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, and traumatic brain injury. In partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services, AMHTA ensures Alaska has a comprehensive and integrated system of care to provide the necessary services and supports for beneficiaries as close to home as possible.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will support healthcare providers with the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a requirement for SHARP 1. The Trust is eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Sincerely,



Michael Abbott  
Chief Executive Officer



## Alaska Primary Care ASSOCIATION

March 12, 2019

SHARP Council

Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs Boyer and Gearhart:

The Alaska Primary Care Association (APCA) supports the operations and development of Alaska's 27 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). Together with the leaders of the FQHCs in this state, we strongly support Senate Bill 93 to establish the SHARP III program.

In 2017, Alaska Community Health Centers served the primary health care needs of over 113,000 Alaskans – that's 1 in 7 of us. But, Health Center leaders constantly grapple with vacant healthcare clinician positions in their clinics. There is a statewide dearth of health professionals – especially in our hardest-to-fill rural community health positions.

The SHARP support-for-service program, including loan repayment and longevity payments, has made a tremendous positive difference in Health Centers' ability to attract and retain qualified healthcare professionals in these critical positions. Over the years Alaska's Community Health Centers have continued to benefit from the SHARP program. In 2018 alone 80 out of the 105 candidates who were awarded into the SHARP I program were practicing in Community Health Centers. SHARP has been successful in serving as the main state program to support placement of a range of providers in many hard to place organizations and communities, using the loan repayment incentive. For Alaska Community Health Centers, SHARP is an important tool for recruiting and retaining qualified and dedicated health professionals to support improved continuity, quality of care and increased Health Center sustainability.

APCA and FQHCs appreciate the SHARP Council's innovative thinking in contributing to the solutions of the healthcare workforce shortage issues in Alaska. The concept of SHARP III being privately funded (no State of Alaska funds) means that loan repayment and longevity incentives can be expanded to more practitioner types and more clinical sites across Alaska. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like FQHCs, who participate.

SHARP 3 will offer a valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a requirement for SHARP 1 as well as expand the provider types that are eligible for loan repayment. Alaska's Community Health Centers are prepared to utilize SHARP 3 as soon as it is available. We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska.

Alaska's Community Health Centers firmly believe in the value of the SHARP program to provide improved continuity of care by ensuring access to care by qualified, competent health professionals in all regions and communities of our state.

Respectfully,

Nancy Merriman  
Executive Director



March 12, 2019

SHARP Council

Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs:

Please accept this letter of support for SHARP 3.

SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool has been vital to the Alaska Dental Society. Our organization firmly believes in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a require for SHARP 1.

As such, our organization supports the utilization of SHARP 3 as soon as it is available; finding that the 100% match requirement is not a barrier, in that employers can utilize community partnerships to fund this match.

We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Respectfully,

*David Logan, DDS*

David Logan, DDS  
Executive Director, Alaska Dental Society



# central peninsula behavioral health

serenity house | diamond willow | outpatient services

245 N. Binkley Suite 202  
Soldotna, AK 99669

Phone: (907) 714-4521  
Fax: (907) 260-4063

3/11/19

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is intended as support for the Sharp-3 program. As a clinical psychologist I was able to participate in the Sharp program for loan repayment and the impact of this program was life changing. It incentivized me to stay in the non-profit sector and remain in Alaska. Since then I have supervised ten new masters' level clinicians, five chemical dependency counselors, and countless peer supports and volunteers. This effort has resulted in quality outpatient and residential care remaining available in our community. In addition to the impact professionally my personal life was changed by Sharp. Not being limited by outstanding debt increased opportunities for my family to expand and I became an adoptive parent.

As an employer, Sharp is an important tool for both recruitment and retention of quality employees. Three of our employees have been able to benefit from Sharp through the expanded description of providers. This has allowed us to provide our community with a stable addiction treatment program. Sharp incentivizes providers to remain in placements serving Medicaid/Medicare versus transition to the more lucrative private insurance markets. Recruitment into rural Alaska is a significant challenge and Sharp has helped us find interview candidates. I encourage you to expand the Sharp program to include a Sharp-3.

Sincerely,

Kristie Sellers, PhD  
Director of Behavioral Health  
Central Peninsula Hospital



## Residential Youth Care Inc.

2514 1st Ave Ketchikan, AK 99901 Phone (866)838-1861 Fax 866-848-8615 [info@rycalaska.com](mailto:info@rycalaska.com)

3/11/19

Cecilie Cody, LPC  
RYC Clinical Director

SHARP Council  
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs:

I am a mental health professional and substance abuse provider, practicing in Alaska since 2008, and a recipient of the SHARP 1 program. The SHARP program has been life changing for myself and helped my agency when we were approved to be a SHARP 1 provider. I can attest that having financial support to meet the burden of student loans is a tremendous relief for the individual and helps the agency retain mental health professionals for years.

Personally, I have recouped my student loan costs upwards of \$40,000 through the SHARP 1 program, over a four year period. With the SHARP program we have been able to recruit and retain strong therapists, one who is currently a SHARP 1 recipient and a second therapist who plans to utilize the SHARP program in the next cycle. This agency benefits from being a SHARP approved provider due to the financial awards and benefits we can offer our employees.

I do believe it is time to expand the SHARP program to more practitioners and more treatment populations. I have learned with SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a require for SHARP 1. This will only help increase the health and well being of Alaskans.

We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cecilie Cody, MAAT, LPC  
RYC Clinical Director



# Petersburg Medical Center

103 Fram Street  
PO Box 589  
Petersburg, AK 99833

Phone: 907-772-4291  
Fax: 907-772-3085

March 11, 2019

SHARP Council  
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs:

Please accept this letter of intent for SHARP 3.

SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool has been vital to Petersburg Medical Center (PMC). PMC firmly believes in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. SHARP 3 has a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a requirement for SHARP 1.

As such, our agency is prepared to utilize SHARP 3 as soon as it is available; finding that the 100% match requirement is not a barrier, in that we can utilize our community partnerships to fund this match how we see fit.

We are eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Respectfully,

Philip Hofstetter, Au.D

CEO

Petersburg Medical Center



UAA Alaska Center for  
Rural Health and Health Workforce  
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

March, 6, 2019

SHARP Council  
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs:

Please accept this letter of the Alaska Center for Rural Health & Health Workforce- Alaska's AHEC for SHARP 3.

SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool has been vital to participants of the Alaska AHEC Program. The AHEC is a statewide healthcare workforce development program dedicated to preparing Alaskans for careers in the healthcare field with a special focus on our most rural and underserved communities. The Alaska AHEC firmly believes in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a require for SHARP 1.

As the AHEC prepares Alaskans for healthcare careers with the specialized skills and experiences necessary to practice in rural and underserved communities, SHARP 3 will provide our health profession program graduates with the incentive and support to practice in these very same communities upon successful licensure. As such, the AHEC is prepared to utilize SHARP 3 as soon as it is available by encouraging our AHEC Scholars and health program graduates to apply and commit to service to our most vulnerable populations with the greatest need for access to care.

We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gloria Burnett".

Gloria Burnett, MS  
Director, Alaska Center for Rural Health & Health Workforce- Alaska's AHEC  
907-786-6705 [gburnett3@alaska.edu](mailto:gburnett3@alaska.edu)

**3211 Providence Drive, BOC3- Suite 250, Anchorage, Alaska 99508**