



May 10, 2021

The Honorable Tiffany Zulkosky
Alaska State House
State Capitol, Room 416
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Via email: rep.tiffany.zulkosky@akleg.gov

Re: Support for House Bill 198 — Community Health Aide Appreciation Day

Dear Representative Zulkosky,

I am pleased to offer support for House Bill 198 which will designate Sept. 10 of every year as Community Health Aide Appreciation Day. This designation honors community health aide practitioners (CHAP) who perform vital services for the health and well-being of Alaskans across the state, especially in rural areas.

Southcentral Foundation is the Alaska Native Tribal health organization designated by Cook Inlet Region, Inc. and 11 federally recognized Tribes – the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Igiugig, Iliamna, Kokhanok, McGrath, Newhalen, Nikolai, Nondalton, Pedro Bay, Telida, and Takotna – to provide health care services to beneficiaries of the Indian Health Service.

Southcentral Foundation provides services to more than 65,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people living in the Municipality of Anchorage, Matanuska- Susitna Borough, and 55 rural Alaskan villages. Services provided by Southcentral Foundation include outpatient medical care, home health care, dentistry, optometry, psychiatry, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, residential treatment facilities for adolescents and for women, suicide prevention and domestic violence prevention.

Southcentral Foundation employs CHAPs throughout the areas it serves. CHAPs care about the communities they serve, living and working in villages. They are often the first responders to those in crisis and may be the only health care provider in some of the smallest villages in the state. CHAPs are frontline providers who link residents with other health care professionals in hub communities and larger cities. They do everything from assessing heart attacks to setting broken bones.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, health aides performed heroically time and time again. They have assisted with COVID-19 testing and played a key role in vaccination campaigns in their villages and regions. Rural Alaska would not have had such a successful vaccine roll-out without the support and assistance of CHAPs.

Thank you for introducing this legislation to recognize the service of CHAPs. If Southcentral Foundation can be of further assistance in advocating for HB 198, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at akyle@southcentralfoundation.com.

Sincerely,

SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION

April Kyle, MBA

Interim President/CEO