

The Honorable Andi Story
State Capitol Room 403
Juneau AK 99801

Dear Representative Story:

I have already purchased three round-trip tickets for tests and diagnosis, but follow-up visits that could be conducted online are no longer allowed. Telehealth in these types of cases involving specialists that we do not have in Juneau – and especially if none practice in the state – and physicians who have already seen the patient in person should be allowed through state law.

While flying back from Seattle after my last medical appointment, I happened to run into fellow Juneau residents at Sea-Tac. This family had flown to Seattle for ongoing specialized pediatric care, a type we would likely never see established in Juneau. I assume they would have sought medical care in Anchorage or elsewhere in the state if it was available and equal to or better than the care available in Washington. Alaska residents should not be penalized for wanting to seek the best care possible.

I would hope to receive the support of Alaskan physicians around this issue given the third item in the American Medical Association (AMA) Principles of Ethics:

A physician shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to seek changes in those requirements which are contrary to the best interests of the patient.

My best interest as a patient does not involve buying plane tickets my insurance company does not reimburse and spending an entire day in travel with a compromised immune system for a 30-minute check-up that could be conducted online.

Please let me know the status of this issue in the Legislature and any way I can help to assist with making a positive change.

Sincerely,

Leslie Daugherty

Leslie K Daugherty

Juneau AK 99801

From: Kasen [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2022 9:20 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: HB 265

Representative Merrick,

This letter is in support of HB265, but with some changes. Long story short, our son was diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder two years ago. After countless hours of reading and researching, we found the best way to treat OCD is with exposure response prevention (ERP).

After finding no one in Alaska that specializes in OCD or is trained in ERP, we started looking in Washington. We found a psychologist that fit exactly what we needed and has helped us tremendously over the last two years.

The only issue with this perfect fit, is that we must travel to Seattle to get the care we need for our son. We have flown down six times so far with more trips planned.

HB265 originally had a section where licensed health care providers from another state (including psychologists) could practice Telehealth in Alaska as long as they had a referral from an Alaska licensed provider. I think this is absolutely necessary in our case and would like this put back into the current bill.

Hopefully you understand the situation we are in and how frustrating this has been to help our eight-year-old son navigate this chronic and long-lasting disorder. Thank you for your time.

Kasen Spickler
[REDACTED]
Juneau AK 99801
[REDACTED]

From: Scott Spickler [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2022 4:47 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: HB 265

Dear Representative Merrick,

I am writing to ask for your support to make HB 265 a reality for Alaskans to get the best care and service possible for our residents. The only thing I am wanting to ask is if there is enough willpower to have it include psychologists? If so, great!

My 8 year old grandson here in Juneau suffers from OCD. His parents have flown him to Seattle many times to seek out help and they landed on a terrific psychologist that excels in dealing with OCD patients. She uses a method called ERP (Exposure and Response Prevention) which is working wonders for his condition. The reality is that it costs a ton of money and time to go to SEA for visits. This doctor is wanting to do Telehealth with my Grandson, but unless this law passes and includes psychologists, that will never be an option.

I am asking for your support to amend the bill to include Psychologists. The ironic and frustrating piece for our family is that there is no one in Alaska that is trained and specializes in this type of care that has worked wonders for them when they go to Seattle. Why would a physicians group and their lobby work to limit care for someone they can't provide in Alaska themselves? It has to be simply money and fear of competition at the expense of Alaska's kids, health, and wellness.

If you haven't seen it before, here is the link to the system that is working now for close to 30 states using Telehealth. <https://psypact.site-ym.com/page/About> This could truly be a God send for young parents dealing with their children's illnesses.

If you have any suggestions or things we can do to help make this bill a success, please let me know.

Thanks for listening.

Scott Spickler
[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK. 99801
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad