

## **Senate Medicare Testimony**

Why should the legislature even care? Medicare goes bankrupt in 3 years and the state's contract with retired employees means that the state would be on the hook for what Medicare now pays. If reimbursement rates drop, the state is on the hook for the difference.

One easy action that would go a long way to ease the crisis is to delete the BLACKMAIL CLAUSE that requires medical providers who accept Medicare patients with supplemental insurance that pays the difference between Medicare and the actual billed charge from then having to accept all Medicare patients even those who can not pay. In my mind this is BLACKMAIL and a violation of my civil rights because it punishes me for the actions of another person. Why because I can not see the doctors I want to see because they will not take me as a patient since that requires them to take patients who can't pay their bills. Let the free enterprise system work. But don't deny me the right to see the doctor of my choice because somebody else can't pay their bills.

Alaska has lost its luster as an easy place to lure people to come work, live, and raise a family. We have learned that one of the biggest recruitment issues is our poor school systems. Families do not want to move here and enroll their children in sub par schools when they can live elsewhere with great schools. Right now there is a critical shortage of health care professionals and non-professional health care support staff in Alaska and vigorous recruitment has failed to attract people to jobs even with inflated financial offers because of the poor schools.

The University of Alaska has also failed to recruit and graduate the health care workers to fill the large vacancies we have right now.

So what the legislature does with schools and University has significant fallout on the medical services we provide.

The largest growth sector in Alaska is seniors - a group that has more significant medical needs. So this situation is going to get worse not better. And seniors have the highest percentage of voters of any age group.

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