



March 30, 2023

Senator Cathy Giessel  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, AK. 99801  
Sent via email.

Dear Senator Giessel,

The Mat-Su Health Foundation (MSHF) shares ownership in Mat-Su Regional Medical Center and invests its share of the hospital's profits back into the community through grants, scholarships and systems change work to improve the health and wellness of Mat-Su residents. I am writing today to voice strong support for SJR 10 Medicare Reimbursement Rates.

Alaska and Mat-Su have fast growing senior populations. The state's senior population grew from 54,900 in 2010 to 105,600 in 2022. Here in Mat-Su our senior population has more than doubled since 2010 and the average annualized growth rate for Mat-Su seniors is 8.3%, the highest growth in the state. Over the next ten years it will continue to accelerate as baby boomers reach their golden years.

As all of us age, our need for medical care is likely to increase and the ideal way to receive that care is with a primary care provider. That can be challenging for all residents in a state that has the fewest number of primary care providers per capita than any other state. It is even harder for our senior population. Medicare reimbursement rates are so low that the payments don't even cover the cost of providing the care. This leads many physicians to either not accept Medicare patients at all or to limit the number they accept. What this means to our senior population is that they often put off routine care because they do not have a primary care provider, or they visit hospital emergency departments with ailments that do not require that level of care. This leads to higher costs and does not help our elders maintain optimal health.

The Mat-Su Health Foundation is working in partnership with senior services and medical providers to build capacity and address service needs, but we can't do it alone. That is why we join you in encouraging Alaska's Congressional delegation and the federal government to raise Medicare reimbursement rates to cover the actual cost of care for Alaska's seniors.

Thank you for sponsoring this important resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Ripley".

President and CEO