



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Representative Genevieve Mina

Member, House Health and Social Services Committee

Member, House Transportation Committee

Serving House District 19: Airport Heights, Mountain View, & Russian Jack

HB 127 Sponsor Statement

“An act relating to home and community-based services under the medical assistance program; and providing for an effective date.”

Family caregivers provide physical labor to loved ones while bearing higher rates of emotional stress and financial strain due to the unpaid nature of their work. Personal care services are commonly paid through the Medicaid 1915(k) waiver, also known as the Community First Choice (CFC) program, allowing eligible recipients to receive care in their own homes and communities rather than in institutional settings such as nursing homes.

In Alaska, legally responsible individuals (e.g., spouses, parents, and adult children) are prohibited from receiving Medicaid compensation for providing personal care services. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) adopted temporary flexibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow payment for personal care services by family members. However, these flexibilities are tied to the Federal Public Health Emergency which is set to expire on May 11, 2023.

HB 127 maintains pandemic-related caregiving flexibilities in Alaska by allowing legally responsible adults to receive payment for providing personal care services to Alaskans eligible for the CFC program.

Home care workers are predicted to be the fourth-most demanded profession in Alaska, but the state faces a direct care workforce shortage, especially in rural areas where home care can be a family’s only option. Family members are often forced to make the personal sacrifice to fill the gap through unpaid caregiving, reducing their work hours or even quitting their jobs altogether – and keeping thousands of Alaskans from realizing their full economic potential. HB 127 addresses the states’ over-reliance on unpaid caregiving by increasing Alaska’s caregiving capacity, promoting economic self-sufficiency for family caregivers, and supporting the independence and dignity of aging Alaskans in their home.

Session: State Capitol Room 420 • Juneau, AK 99801-1182 • (907) 465-3424

Interim: 1500 W. Benson Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99503

Rep. Genevieve.Mina@akleg.gov