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of **ALASKA**
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Department of Health

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March 9, 2023

The Honorable Donny Olson
Senate Finance Committee Co-chair
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Rm 508
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Olson,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide supplementation information on Alaska Department of Health's SB 58: Postpartum Medicaid bill presentation to the Senate Finance Committee on March 7, 2023. Please find the requests and corresponding responses below.

Q1: Yukon-Kuskokwim put in a pre-maternal home for surrounding communities. Is there any indication that there is associated reduced maternal mortality?

The Department is not aware of any evaluation completed on prematernal homes and reducing maternal mortality in this specific region. The overall goal of delivering in a hub community and not the village remains to decrease maternal and infant mortality.

Q2: Why is the United States' maternal death rate so much higher than the other developed countries provided on the slides?

There are several factors which contribute to the United States' higher maternal death rate including:

- Inadequate or missed prenatal care
- Higher rates of not having a prenatal care provider
- Higher rates of women who cite cost as a barrier and are more likely to skip appointments
- Higher rates of chronic conditions like diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure
- Higher rates of mental health conditions

Q3: Is a woman who comes into an urban hub to give birth has a death or complication – is she counted as urban or rural?

The region used is based on region of residence of the mother, not the location of her death. We determine this residence from the mother's residence noted on the infant birth certificate. If no birth certificate is linked, we use residence from the death certificate.

Q4: Will there be any additional requirements to access the Medicaid dollars associated with SB 58's fiscal notes beyond the normal process currently outlined?

There will be no additional requirements for facilities or individuals associated with postpartum Medicaid extension. The same requirements remain in place as under the existing postpartum Medicaid.

I hope you find this information to be useful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Heidi Hedberg
Commissioner-designee

Cc:
Laura Stidolph, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor
Emily Ricci, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Health
Anne Zink, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health

