



Alaska State Legislature

Senator Matt Claman

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Senate Bill 91

Sponsor Statement – Version A

“An Act relating to telehealth; relating to multidisciplinary care teams; and relating to the practice of medicine.”

Senate Bill 91 expands telehealth providers and services available to Alaskans.

Last year, the legislature passed House Bill 265, which created a framework in statute for telehealth and ensured Alaskans’ access to critical health care.

In the summer of 2022, Senator Claman was contacted by a constituent who was recently diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Upon receiving her diagnosis, Sheila Swanson flew to Seattle to receive specialty treatment. Sheila was told that she could continue to receive care from the physician via telehealth, but would need to fly to Seattle to receive in-person care from other seven members of her multidisciplinary ALS care team, including a respiratory therapist, speech language pathologist, and physical therapist.

Senate Bill 91 would allow out-of-state multidisciplinary care team members to provide telehealth services. The bill applies to two different situations, the first situation being on-going treatment or follow-up care from an out-of-state physician or member of their disciplinary care team related to health care services previously provided by the physician to the patient. Senate Bill 91 requires that the physician and patient have an established physician-patient relationship and the physician has had a previous in-person visit with the patient.

The second situation outlined in the bill is when a patient receives care for a suspected or diagnosed life-threatening condition. To receive treatment from a non-physician member of the multidisciplinary care team, Senate Bill 91 requires a documented referral to the member of the multidisciplinary care team by either a physician licensed in Alaska or through a physician licensed out-of-state with whom the patient has a previously-established relationship.

Senate Bill 91 amends the statute passed by House Bill 265 by adding “multidisciplinary care teams” as an option for telehealth. Alaskans deserve to receive the appropriate care in their local support network when possible, and Senate Bill 91 will expand these options.