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February 27, 2024

The Honorable Senator Jesse Bjorkman  
Chair, Senate Labor & Commerce Committee  
State Capitol, Room 9  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Electronic Letter

RE: Providence Alaska Supports Senate Bill 219 PRIOR AUTH EXEMPT FOR HEALTH PROVIDERS

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

Providence Alaska has set the standard for modern health care in Alaska for more than 100 years. Today we remain the state's largest health care provider and the largest private employer, with nearly 5,000 caregivers across Alaska. As the chief executive for Providence Alaska, I write in support for SB 219 and reducing the administrative burden on hospitals and providers.

The prior authorization process requires providers to seek approval from health plans before moving forward with treatment, procedures, or medication. Unfortunately, it can negatively impact patient experience without evidence that it positively impacts the delivery of health care. SB 219 works to streamline process by exempting providers with a proven track record of approved authorization requests.

Providence has teams of caregivers whose focus is to help the hospital and our patients navigate the complicated web of health care administration. Our caregivers and provider partners are the backbone of the patient experience, and they often spend considerable time waiting for approvals for a single patient. Caregivers and patients are burned out. Hospitals and health systems cannot continue to afford unnecessary administrative burdens and regulatory overload.

Just a couple of years ago, the State of Alaska had a golden ticket pilot program that followed a similar process outlined in this legislation, allowing providers with a proven track record to avoid time consuming and often unnecessary prior authorizations in the Medicaid program. As debate continues on SB 219, we request that consideration is made to applying the streamlined process to Medicaid.

Thank you to Sen. Wilson for his leadership in introducing this legislation. Regulatory burdens do not positively impact the delivery of the health care and we support SB 219.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Goss".

Ella Goss, MSN, RN  
Chief Executive  
Providence Alaska