

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 2/21/07

Referred: Health, Education and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to public health and a health compact.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 **WHEREAS** this state continues to lead the nation in negative health indicators,
4 including tobacco use and alcohol abuse; and

5 **WHEREAS** state residents continue to rank poorly in rates of obesity and lack of
6 physical activity compared to other states, and these negative indicators can lead to long-term
7 illnesses, such as heart disease, diabetes, and other diseases that require costly and ongoing
8 health care; and

9 **WHEREAS** the state ranks second in the nation in per capita public health costs;
10 every layer of government in the state spent over \$1,000,000,000 on health-related costs in
11 2005, and, despite these substantial expenditures on health care, the state still has a low
12 ranking in the overall health of its population; and

13 **WHEREAS**, under the current system, the state's health care costs continue to rise,
14 often resulting in lower expenditures for standard preventative health measures; and

15 **WHEREAS** the state must develop a health care strategy that provides opportunities
16 to advance the quality and accessibility of health care so that the overall health of state

1 residents will be improved; and

2 **WHEREAS** the state has a high rate of uninsured residents who often cannot afford
3 preventative health care programs or medical assistance when sick, and these behavioral
4 patterns can result in a higher incidence of long-term illness that often leads to catastrophic
5 levels of debt; and

6 **WHEREAS** the high number of uninsured residents in the state translates into poor
7 physical and financial health; and

8 **WHEREAS** medical training in the state for health care providers is not sufficiently
9 funded to produce qualified health care workers to occupy the many unfilled health care
10 professional positions statewide; as a result, medical practitioners and health care workers are
11 recruited from outside of the state to fill these positions, thus depriving the state's present and
12 future health care workers of good careers and well-paying jobs; and

13 **WHEREAS** there is an increasing need for translators who can communicate with
14 patients for whom English is a second language, and the lack of qualified translators creates
15 barriers to receiving adequate medical treatment;

16 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature invites state departments, all
17 local governments, private and nonprofit businesses, and individuals to join in forming the
18 Alaska 2008 Health Compact; and be it

19 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that each compact member may voluntarily craft and
20 promote the member's own health preventative or curative initiative in the arena of the
21 member's unique experience or interest, that the compact member's plans and efforts will be
22 reported as voluntary presentations by private and public media and Internet websites, and
23 that the method and content of the initiatives, as well as the method of promotion, will be at
24 the discretion of each individual member.

25 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Sarah Palin, Governor of
26 Alaska; the Honorable Emil Notti, Commissioner, Department of Commerce, Community,
27 and Economic Development; the Honorable Joe Schmidt, Commissioner, Department of
28 Corrections; the Honorable Roger Sampson, Commissioner, Department of Education and
29 Early Development; the Honorable Karleen Jackson, Commissioner, Department of Health
30 and Social Services; the Honorable Walt Monegan, Commissioner, Department of Public
31 Safety; the Honorable Mark R. Hamilton, President, University of Alaska; Richard I. Mauer,

- 1 Chair, State Board of Education and Early Development; and all members of the Twenty-
- 2 Fifth Alaska State Legislature.