

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

March 21, 2011

1:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bettye Davis, Chair
Senator Dennis Egan
Senator Johnny Ellis
Senator Kevin Meyer

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Fred Dyson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees

Russell Webb - Juneau

Mike Barton - Juneau

CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

State Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board

Valerie Phelps - Anchorage

CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

Board of Nursing

Julie Gillette - Wasilla

Erin Pringle - Anchorage

CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

Board of Dental Examiners

Dr. Paul Silveira -Valdez

CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

Board of Pharmacy

Dirk White - Sitka

CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

Board of Marital and Family Therapy

Joann Young - Anchorage

CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

Commissioner, Department of Health and Social Services
William J. Streur - Anchorage

CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

RUSSELL WEBB

Governor's Nominee

Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Governor's nominee to the Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees.

MIKE BARTON

Governor's Nominee

Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Governor's Nominee to the Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees.

VALERIE PHELPS

Governor's Nominee

Anchorage, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Governor's Nominee to the State Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board.

JULIE GILLETTE

Governor's Nominee

Wasilla, AK

POSITION STATEMENT Governor's Nominee to the Board of Nursing

DR. PAUL SILVEIRA

Governor's Nominee

Valdez, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Governor's Nominee to the Board of Dental Examiners.

DIRK WHITE

Governor's Nominee

Sitka, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Governor's Nominee to the Board of Pharmacy.

JOANN YOUNG

Governor's Nominee
Anchorage, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Governor's Nominee to the Board of Marital and Family Therapy.

ERIN PRINGLE

Governor's Nominee
Anchorage, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Governor's Nominee to the Board of Nursing.

WILLIAM J. STREUR

Commissioner Designee
Department of Health and Social Services
Anchorage, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Governor's Nominee as Commissioner of Health and Social Services.

ACTION NARRATIVE

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CHAIR BETTYE DAVIS called the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Ellis, Egan, Meyer, and Chair Davis.

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS FOR GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENTS

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CHAIR DAVIS announced the first order of business would be confirmation hearings for the governor's appointments to various boards.

CHAIR DAVIS said the committee would first hear from nominees present in the audience.

RUSSELL WEBB, governor's nominee to the Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees, said he has spent 30 years working for the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) in Juneau, in positions ranging from social worker to child protective services provider and probation officer, up to serving as Director of the Division of Family and Youth Services, Deputy Commissioner of Health and Social Services, and 2.5 years as a program officer for the Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees.

He said he is also a family member of mental health trust recipients, and he has the time and energy to give, and a commitment to helping mental health trust beneficiaries.

CHAIR DAVIS said it is always good to see the faces of people who want to fill these positions.

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SENATOR ELLIS said we are lucky to have him.

MIKE BARTON, governor's nominee to the Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees, said he had served as commissioner of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF) and was the top official for the Forest Service in Alaska for ten years. He said his interest in the board stemmed from personal involvement with beneficiaries, and he looked forward to serving on the board.

CHAIR DAVIS thanked Mr. Barton.

VALERIE PHELPS, governor's nominee to the State Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board, said she has been a physical therapist for 30 years.

CHAIR DAVIS thanked her and asked if she was available for questions.

MS. PHELPS said yes, and it is an honor to contribute.

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JULIE GILLETTE, governor's nominee to the Board of Nursing, said she was in the Air Force for 20 years. She has a general knowledge of medical administration, and saw the opportunity to serve the state.

CHAIR DAVIS thanked Ms. Gillette.

[1:43:08 PM](#)

DR. PAUL SILVEIRA, governor's nominee to the Board of Dental Examiners, said he has been a practicing dentist in Alaska since 1992, and he is honored to be considered for the board.

DIRK WHITE, governor's nominee to the Board of Pharmacy, said he has been a resident of Alaska for 35 years and has been on the Board of Pharmacy for four years and is up for renewal for another four year term.

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CHAIR DAVIS thanked them both for their willingness to serve.

JOANN YOUNG, governor's nominee to the Board of Marital and Family Therapy, said she is a practicing registered nurse (RN) and is currently working as an RN case manager. She said it is a great honor to be considered for the board.

BETH FRANSTROM, governor's nominee to the Board of Nursing, said she is asking to be reappointed to the board for another four year term.

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ERIN PRINGLE, governor's nominee to the Board of Nursing, said she was available for questions.

SENATOR ELLIS asked what the current big issues are before the Board of Nursing.

MS. PRINGLE said the scope of practice for nurses is one big issue, in terms of what procedures are appropriate to be done by RNs, CNAs, and nurse assistants.

SENATOR ELLIS asked if the prime consideration is professional standards, consumer protection, or patient protection.

MS. PRINGLE said they have to consider all of those things. The primary concern is the protection of the public. They must consider the safety of patients, and look at standards of care; they look at national organizations to see the established standards of practice.

SENATOR ELLIS said thank you for your service.

[1:49:16 PM](#)

WILLIAM J. STREUR, Commissioner Designee, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), said he has spent 35 years in the health care system, and has been a deputy commissioner since 2007. He became Acting Commissioner in December of 2010 and Commissioner Designee in January of 2011. He stated he brings a breadth of knowledge to the state as far as private sector knowledge, having worked with four states, primarily with Medicaid issues.

When he was appointed Acting Commissioner he went around the state and talked to various medical associations and community groups. After speaking with all of them, he believes there is a

chance to do some good things in a very difficult and turbulent time in health care. He said he stands ready to face the challenge.

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SENATOR MEYER asked what the number one health issue is in Alaska today.

COMMISSIONER STREUER said the biggest concern is access to the right service at the right time and right place for the right people. There is a Medicare crisis in the state of Alaska; Medicare recipients have called him saying they can't find service. Their doctor has retired, they are very sick, and they don't know who to see. Alaska has spent \$70 million on Medicaid transportation.

Alaska's medical information technology is outdated; it pays claims but state agencies don't know what they are paying for, because there is no documentation. Electronic health records are extremely important for the state. It is impossible to focus on any one thing. Domestic violence and sexual assault also need to be addressed.

SENATOR ELLIS thanked Commissioner Streuer for being respectful of the committee's role in the process, and asked if he would speak about the need for a psychiatric residency program. Money for this is proposed in the budget.

COMMISSIONER STREUER said the state has a significant psychiatric shortage, and issues at Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) and within the court system all point to a significant shortage of psychiatric professionals. A psychiatric residency program is one way to address this. He tends to support it; however, the problem is that the crisis is now, and a psychiatric residency program takes four years to complete. It is a significant investment but there would also be a significant future benefit for the state.

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CHAIR DAVIS thanked Commissioner Streuer for taking the time to come. She said all of us will do what we can to help you make this a better state for health care. She noted the confirmation list would be signed by committee members and given to the [Senate Secretary's] Office.

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There being no further business to come before the committee,
Chair Davis adjourned the meeting at 1:58 p.m.