

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 27

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 2/25/26

Referred: Health & Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Expressing commitment to the rural health transformation program and articulating**
2 **priorities for the program; acknowledging the critical health care challenges facing**
3 **rural areas of the state; urging action by the Governor and the Alaska delegation in**
4 **Congress to continue to advocate for the state's interests and advance the rural health**
5 **transformation program; and expressing legislative intent to enact comprehensive**
6 **legislation relating to the rural health transformation program and the state's medical**
7 **care and critical health care needs.**

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

9 **WHEREAS**, on December 29, 2025, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
10 Services awarded the state \$272,174,856 for the first year of the rural health transformation
11 program to support targeted, systemwide investments that improve access to health care and
12 strengthen the long-term stability of the state's health care system; and

13 **WHEREAS** Alaska received the second-highest total funding allocation and the
14 highest per capita funding of any state in the United States, reflecting the critical health care

1 needs of the state and the state's rural frontier and the dedication of those individuals who
2 advocated for those resources; and

3 **WHEREAS** the efforts of the Alaska delegation in Congress have created an
4 unprecedented opportunity to address longstanding health care disparities and build a more
5 sustainable and accessible health care system for all residents of the state, particularly those
6 individuals living in rural areas of the state and Alaska Native communities; and

7 **WHEREAS** the challenges of living in Alaska require innovative solutions specific to
8 this state that may differ significantly from approaches used in the contiguous United States;
9 and

10 **WHEREAS** the rural health transformation program provides considerable assistance
11 to the state's health care system by enabling investments in the following six critical priority
12 areas:

13 (1) healthy beginnings, including strengthening maternal and child health
14 services to reduce preventable deaths and improve birth outcomes;

15 (2) health care access, including expanding essential health services in rural,
16 remote, and frontier communities where access is currently limited or nonexistent;

17 (3) healthy communities, including promoting healthy lifestyles, preventive
18 care, and community-based wellness initiatives;

19 (4) fiscal sustainability and value-based care, including pursuing innovative
20 payment models and sustainable financing mechanisms;

21 (5) workforce strengthening, including recruiting, training, retaining, and
22 supporting skilled health care professionals across the state;

23 (6) technology and innovation, including modernizing health care
24 infrastructure, expanding telehealth capacity, and implementing innovative care delivery
25 models; and

26 **WHEREAS** federal law requires the state to enact enabling legislation by
27 December 31, 2027, to maintain access to the full \$272,174,856 allocation, and failure to meet
28 policy commitments or obligate funds appropriately may result in redistribution of the state's
29 allocation to other states beginning March 31, 2028;

30 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes that prudent
31 stewardship of those federal funds requires careful planning, stakeholder engagement, and

1 clear federal guidance; and be it

2 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature wishes to signal its strong
3 commitment to the rural health transformation program and to establish clear priorities to
4 guide program implementation; and be it

5 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature proposes to enact
6 comprehensive enabling legislation to fully authorize and implement the state's participation
7 in the rural health transformation program; and be it

8 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature articulates the following
9 legislative priorities for the rural health transformation program:

10 (1) maximum investment in health care access for all residents of the state, but
11 especially for communities that are currently most lacking adequate services;

12 (2) aggressive expansion of telehealth infrastructure, including broadband and
13 telecommunications improvements, recognizing that delivery of technology-enabled care is
14 essential for the state's geographic reality;

15 (3) substantial workforce development, including competitive retention
16 incentives, relocation assistance, housing support, professional development, and scope of
17 practice reforms, to maximize the capabilities of available health care professionals;

18 (4) maternal and child health services to address the state's unacceptably high
19 maternal and infant mortality rates;

20 (5) health care facility infrastructure improvements, including renovations,
21 equipment modernization, and technology upgrades necessary to provide quality care;

22 (6) integration and coordination between tribal health systems, the federal
23 Indian Health Service, and state health care providers to create a seamless, culturally
24 competent health care system; and

25 (7) sustainable financing models that ensure program benefits continue
26 beyond the five-year federal funding period; and be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Governor to

28 (1) work expeditiously with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
29 Services to obtain clarification on all uncertain aspects of allowable fund uses, particularly
30 regarding infrastructure investments, broadband purchases, and workforce incentive
31 structures;

1 (2) provide interim reports to the Alaska State Legislature on implementation,
2 fund distribution, and federal guidance received on the rural health transformation program;
3 and

4 (3) identify any barriers to the success of the rural health transformation
5 program that require legislative action or advocacy with federal authorities; and be it

6 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Alaska
7 delegation in Congress to

8 (1) continue advocating for the state's interests with the federal Centers for
9 Medicare and Medicaid Services;

10 (2) support maximum flexibility for the state given the state's unique
11 geographic and health care challenges; and

12 (3) defend the state's full funding allocation against any efforts to reduce or
13 redistribute those critical resources; and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes that the health
15 and well-being of all residents of the state depends on the successful implementation of the
16 rural health transformation program and that the Alaska State Legislature will work
17 cooperatively with the state and federal administrations to authorize and guide the use of
18 those transformative federal resources; and be it

19 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature affirms that improving
20 health care access in the state is a priority transcending political differences and commits to
21 working cooperatively across party lines to maximize the rural health transformation
22 program's benefit to all residents of the state; and be it

23 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature declares that this
24 resolution expresses the will of the Alaska State Legislature and provides guidance to state
25 agencies, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the public regarding
26 legislative priorities and intentions for the rural health transformation program.

27 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Mike Dunleavy, Governor
28 of Alaska; the Honorable Heidi Hedberg, Commissioner, Department of Health; Alina
29 Czekai, Director, Office of Rural Health Transformation, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
30 Services, United States Department of Health and Human Services; and the Honorable Lisa
31 Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nicholas

1 Begich, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.