

Introduced: 3/5/73
Referred: Finance

BY THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 IN THE HOUSE

2 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 68

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 Relating to a study of mental health
6 delivery systems in Alaska.

7 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

8 WHEREAS the delivery of mental health services in the State of Alaska
9 is presently inadequate; and

10 WHEREAS the division of mental health, Department of Health and Social
11 Services has been without a full-time director for 13 1/2 years out of the
12 16 years since the inception of the program; and

13 WHEREAS recruitment and retention of needed mental health professionals,
14 especially psychiatrists, has been extraordinarily difficult, resulting in
15 the discontinuity of program and services; and

16 WHEREAS the responsibility for the delivery of mental health services
17 is divided among many federal, state and local agencies making coordination
18 of those services difficult, if not impossible; and

19 WHEREAS the fragmentation of these various services are largely in
20 response to the federal government's fragmentation into categorical grant-
21 in-aid programs; and

22 WHEREAS effective planning should be led by program decisions and not
23 by fiscal considerations as is the present case, especially in the area of
24 alcohol and drug abuse; and

25 WHEREAS it now appears that the direction of the federal government is
26 attempting to reduce the confusion by returning control over expenditures to
27 the local level through revenue sharing; and

28 WHEREAS we are now at a time in the development of our mental health
29 service delivery system that unified action and joint planning would greatly

1 benefit the State of Alaska in improved services to a potentially rapidly
2 expanding population in response to the development of our natural resources;
3 and

4 WHEREAS mental health services currently have a low priority in the
5 hierarchy of human services precisely because the consumer of mental health
6 services, because of his mental illness, is not prone to seek after those
7 services in a political arena; and

8 WHEREAS alcoholism, drug abuse, divorce, suicide, mental illness, crime,
9 etc., continue to remain at an increasingly unacceptable level; and

10 WHEREAS the State of Alaska has no mental health facilities to
11 accommodate the mentally disordered offender which the courts of Alaska
12 increasingly demand;

13 BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature that the Legislative Council is
14 directed to undertake a comprehensive study of the mental health delivery
15 system including major attention to delivery systems related to the abuse of
16 alcohol and drugs in Alaska with the objective of preparing legislative pro-
17 posals that might resolve the inadequacies of the present system; and be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Council hold public hearings on
19 the mental health delivery system proposals before its proposals are
20 finalized; and be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED that the council submit its legislative proposals to
22 the Eighth Legislature - Second Session.
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