

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 48
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES ELLIS, Gruenberg, Ulmer, Koponen, B.Davis, Donley

Introduced: 2/3/92

Referred: Health, Education & Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 Relating to Medicaid options and waivers for home- and community-based services.

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

3 WHEREAS disabled children and adults who currently receive institutional care under Medicaid
4 account for costs far beyond their proportion of the Medicaid population, including over \$18,000 a
5 month for each disabled child and almost \$10,000 a month for each disabled adult; and

6 WHEREAS the average monthly cost of nursing facility care is approximately \$7,000, and the
7 age group over 75, the most frequent users of this care, has more than doubled in Alaska in the last
8 decade; and

9 WHEREAS a high percentage of these people could be adequately cared for in noninstitutional
10 home- or community-based settings, vastly improving the quality of life for themselves and their
11 families; and

12 WHEREAS home- and community-based care is not an option open to most families because
13 its lower cost is still beyond the means of the typical family and private insurance often becomes
14 exhausted or will not cover preexisting conditions; and

15 WHEREAS Medicaid in Alaska will cover institutional care but does not cover home- and
16 community-based care, even though it can cost only one-third the price of institutionalization in many
17 circumstances; and

1 **WHEREAS**, even when some types of care could be covered by Medicaid, a disabled child will
2 not be eligible for Medicaid if living outside an institution because then the whole family's income is
3 considered while only the child's income is considered if the child remains in an institution; and

4 **WHEREAS** almost every other state has used federal options or waivers to implement home-
5 and community-based care for its disabled and elderly populations; and

6 **WHEREAS** some states have also used federal options or waivers to allow consideration of only
7 the child's income when the child would qualify for institutionalization but could also be cared for at
8 home; and

9 **WHEREAS** in 1990 the legislature created Project CHOICE (Community and Home Options to
10 Institutional Care for Everyone) to explore using Medicaid waivers and options to improve long-term
11 care services in Alaska; and

12 **WHEREAS** this group, consisting of representatives of the division of medical assistance, the
13 Governor's Council on the Handicapped and Gifted, and the Older Alaskans Commission, has
14 recommended that the state apply for federal waivers and options that would allow Medicaid coverage
15 of home- and community-based care for persons eligible for institutionalization and would provide for
16 consideration of only the child's income, for purposes of Medicaid eligibility, if a child qualifies for
17 institutionalization;

18 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges the Governor to direct
19 the Department of Health and Social Services to implement the recommendations of Project CHOICE
20 in order to keep families together, improve the quality of life of disabled and elderly persons who could
21 avoid institutionalization, and decrease the growing pressure on our public resources as they are called
22 on to finance increasingly expensive institutional care.