

HB

219

Alaska State Legislature House of Representatives

Committees

Rules Committee, Chair
Legislative Council
International Trade & Tourism
Military & Veterans Affairs
World Trade & State/Federal Relations



Interim:
10928 Eagle River Rd. Suite 141
Eagle River, AK 99577

Session:
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Sponsor Statement HB 219

HB 219 will allow Alaskans to choose chiropractic services notwithstanding the positions of their health maintenance organizations or gatekeepers. This bill will give Alaskans the right to choose their own initial treatment for their health services.

Managed Care Plans are one of the many solutions that have been suggested to control ever-rising health care costs. There are several types of entities under the umbrella of managed care, one of which is called a Health Maintenance Organization or HMO. Within the last 6 months, several articles in national magazines have been written documenting the abuses within HMOs. Examples of these abuses include dismissing mothers and new-borns too soon and gag clauses in the contract between the HMO and a participating doctor that limit what information the doctor can tell the patient about treatment options.

HMOs attempt to control the cost of health care by requiring all participants to initially go through a gatekeeper. A gatekeeper is usually a Medical Doctor or Registered Nurse who listens to the health complaint and refers the enrollee to the appropriate health care provider. There has been a long-standing animosity between traditional Western medicine and the chiropractic profession. This has improved in recent years but the prejudice still exists. Many times a gatekeeper will not refer a patient to a chiropractor even if the HMO plan covers chiropractic services and even if such a referral would be the most effective means of solving the health complaint.

The issue this bill addresses is one of fairness. It would require that Health Maintenance Organizations allow their clients to self-refer to a chiropractor, thus guaranteeing a patient's right to these types of services. It also contains language stipulating that an HMO cannot limit a health care provider from disclosure of information to a patient regarding their condition or treatment options. At this time, there are no HMO's operating in Alaska but this bill is being introduced in order to assure fairness and access in the future.



Representative Pete Kott

Juneau Office (907) 465-3777 Toll Free 1-800-861-KOTT(5688) Fax (907) 465-2819
Eagle River Office (907) 694-8944 Fax (907) 694-8945 E-Mail: representative_pete_kott@legis.state.ak.us

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Alaska State Legislature House of Representatives

Committees

Rules Committee, Chair
Legislative Council
International Trade & Tourism
Military & Veterans Affairs
World Trade & State/Federal Relations



Interim:
10928 Eagle River Rd. Suite 141
Eagle River, AK 99577

Session:
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Sectional Analysis HB 219

Section 1. This section is entirely new.

(a) Subsection (a) allows an enrollee to use the services of any licensed chiropractor, not specifically the services of a chiropractor chosen by a health maintenance organization (HMO). This subsection states the time frame within which the chiropractor and the enrollee have to diagnose the enrollee and report back to the HMO for follow-up treatment.

(b) This subsection requires the enrollee's chiropractor to complete a second examination if the chiropractor determines the enrollee requires treatment beyond thirty days. The chiropractor must transmit the findings to the HMO.

(c) This subsection allows the HMO, after receiving a thirty-day treatment report, to request a review by an alternate chiropractor. The reviewing chiropractor must disclose findings to the enrollee and the enrollee's chiropractor. Any additional charges for prescribed treatment made by the alternate chiropractor will be paid by the HMO.

(d) This section limits preventative treatment by the enrollee's chiropractor to two visits per month once the enrollee's treating chiropractor and reviewing chiropractor have agreed that the enrollee's condition has stabilized. If the enrollee's chiropractors disagree on the enrollee's treatment then the HMO and the enrollee will jointly select a third chiropractor within sixty days of the initial appointment with the treating chiropractor. The enrollee is allowed to continue receiving treatment by the treating chiropractor until the third chiropractor's opinion is received in writing. The third chiropractor's opinion on the enrollee is binding on both the enrollee and the HMO. This subsection does not apply if a new documented injury or a substantial exacerbation of the enrollee's previous primary complaint occurs.

Representative Pete Kott

Juneau Office (907) 465-3777 Toll Free 1-800-861-KOTT(5688) Fax (907) 465-2819
Eagle River Office (907) 694-8944 Fax (907) 694-8945 E-Mail: representative_pete_kott@legis.state.ak.us

