

**HB**

**82**



# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: 1  
 Bill Version: HB 82  
 ( H ) Publish Date: 2/9/05  
 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):

Title: EXTENDING THE TERMINATION DATE OF THE STATEWIDE SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL  
 RDU: Boards and Commissions  
 Component: Suicide Prevention Council

Sponsor: DAHLSTROM  
 Requester: HOUSE (HES) Component No. 2651

**Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)**

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)**

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost:

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The Suicide Prevention Council (SPC) is due to sunset on June 30, 2005. The SPC is the state planning and coordinating agency for issue surrounding suicide and suicide prevention. The powers, duties and responsibilities of the Council are to act in the advisory capacity to the Governor and legislature with respect to what actions can and should be taken to:

Continued on Page 2

Prepared by: Janet Clarke, Assistant Commissioner Phone 465-1630  
 Division: Finance and Management Services Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner Date 02/01/2005  
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

FISCAL NOTE  
FN # 1

STATE OF ALASKA  
2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 82

**ANALYSIS CONTINUATION**

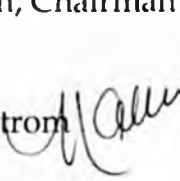
- Improve health and wellness throughout the state by reducing suicide and its effect on individuals, families, and communities;
- Broaden the public's awareness of suicide and the risk factor related to suicide;
- Enhance suicide prevention services and programs throughout the state;
- Develop healthy communities through comprehensive, collaborative, community-based approaches;
- Develop and implement a statewide suicide prevention plan; and
- Strengthen existing and build new partnerships between public and private entities that will advance suicide prevention efforts in the state.

Extension of the Council does not have any fiscal impact since the funding is budgeted in the Governor's budget.

*Representative Nancy Dahlstrom  
Alaska State Legislature*

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Representative Peggy Wilson, Chairman  
House HESS Committee

FROM: Representative Nancy Dahlstrom 

DATE: February 2, 2005

SUBJECT: Hearing Request for House Bill 82

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I respectfully request House Bill 82, extending the termination date of the Suicide Prevention Council, be scheduled for a hearing at the earliest possible date.

Attached please find the sponsor statement, a copy of the legislation, the recently issued legislative audit summary and a supportive newspaper article.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at extension 3783.

Thank you.

*Representative Nancy Dahlstrom  
Alaska State Legislature*

## **SPONSOR STATEMENT**

House Bill 82

Extending the Termination Date of the  
Suicide Prevention Council

Based on the recommendations of the legislative audit conducted in November of last year, House Bill 82 was introduced to extend the Suicide Prevention Council until 2009.

The LBA audit was very complimentary of the work performed to date by the Council and stated "the Council serves a public need and is operating in the public's interest." With Alaska's suicide rate ranking 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation, its mission is as critical today as it was when the Council was created in 2001. The Council is made up of 15 members representing rural and urban Alaska, along with two members from the House and Senate.

The extension allows the Council to continue its work focusing on:

- finding ways to reduce suicide rates
- broadening public awareness of suicide warning signs; and
- enhancing suicide prevention services throughout the state.

The committee's favorable consideration is greatly appreciated.

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

### Division of Legislative Audit



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**SUMMARY OF: A Sunset Review of the Department of Health and Social Services  
Statewide Suicide Prevention Council, November 15, 2004.**

### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

In accordance with Title 24 and Title 44 of the Alaska Statutes (sunset legislation), we have reviewed the activities of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (SSPC). The purpose of this audit was to determine if there is a demonstrated public need for the continued existence of the council.

Legislative intent requires consideration of this report during the legislative oversight hearings to determine whether the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council should be extended. The law currently specifies the council will terminate on June 30, 2005.

### REPORT CONCLUSIONS

Our primary conclusion is the termination date of the council should be extended. We recommend that the legislature extend the termination date for the council to June 30, 2009. We also have concluded that the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) hindered the efforts of the council by providing inadequate financial information to the council and by diverting almost 20 percent of the council's FY 04 funding for non-related expenditures.

### FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) Community-based Suicide Prevention Program coordinator should ensure prevention programs conform to the Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan.

Now that SSPC has a statewide suicide prevention plan in place, we believe the various community-based suicide prevention plans, at a minimum, should be consistent with the statewide plan. Developing procedures that require grant applicants to certify and explain how their grant activities and community plans are consistent with the state plan will provide more assurance that this particular state funding is being implemented in a manner consistent with the centrally-developed state plan.

Accordingly, we recommend DBH modify the grant application process as necessary, requiring communities to read the statewide prevention plan and certify their local plan is consistent with the state plan. Further, we recommend that DBH report to SSPC regarding these grant applications and talk about how the various community-based efforts are consistent with the council's plan.

2. The Administrative Manager for DHSS Boards and Commissions and staff to the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council should develop a more formalized, informative system of reporting financial information to the council.

Eighty percent of the FY 04 operating budget for the council was either lapsed or spent for items that were not directly related to suicide prevention activities. While it is unclear whether DHSS management actively prohibited the council from spending much of their funding, it is clear SSPC did not receive consistent and informative financial reports from the department.

Accordingly, we recommend the administrative manager develop a comprehensive, informative format for tracking and reporting expenditure activity for SSPC and develop understandable, reliable reports on a consistent basis to assist the council in the use of its appropriated funding.

3. The council should ensure it provides public notice of all council meetings.

Since its inception in 2001, the council did not give adequate public notice of two of its 12 meetings. No public notice was provided on either the State of Alaska's online public notice system or through publication in widely-circulated state newspapers. Additionally, the agendas for three of the council meetings did not provide periods for public comment.

We recommend the council ensure that all meetings are publicly noticed, ensure that the method of notice is consistent and provide opportunity for public comment. We also recommend the council consider posting its meeting schedule on SSPC website.

4. The Office of the Governor should make appointments to the council in a timely manner.

SSPC activities were also hampered by delays in appointments made to the council. We recommend the Office of the Governor makes appointments to the council in a timely manner.



Today is January 20. The legislative session ends on January 27.

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## Audit recommends suicide prevention council be allowed to continue

The Associated Press  
(Published: January 13, 2005)

FAIRBANKS - A legislative audit recommends that a council created to address Alaska's high suicide rate should continue its work through 2009.

The 15-member Statewide Suicide Prevention Council started in 2001 and is scheduled to end its work at the end of June. The Division of Legislative Audit has been evaluating the council at the request of the Legislature.

The Legislative Budget and Audit Committee voted to publicly release some conclusions Sunday, including that the council has "reasonably addressed" its duties outlined in state law.

The audit says that despite some roadblocks and operating inefficiencies, the council has taken up important efforts such as drafting a statewide suicide prevention plan and providing advice and assistance on suicide prevention.

The audit concluded that the council should continue until 2009. But the audit also noted that steps should be taken to correct problems that have hampered the council's work since its creation.

For example, the audit says that in the 2004 budget year only about 20 percent of the \$200,000 allocated to the council went to suicide prevention efforts. One of the reasons was that the Department of Health and Social Services spent about \$32,000 of the money on furniture for an unrelated program.

Alaska's suicide rate consistently ranks as one of the highest in the nation. In 2004, there were more than 150 documented suicides in the state, the highest ever.

In 2000, the state had the highest rate in the nation - 21.1 suicides per 100,000 people - nearly twice the U.S. rate of 10.7, according to the council's 2003 report.

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**Bill track**  
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[www.alzaska.org](http://www.alzaska.org)

February 4, 2005

To the Health, Education and Social Services Committee:

The Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska (ADRAA) supports Governor Murkowski's proposed HB105 and HB106.

ADRAA supports HB 105 which would provide Medicaid benefits for adult dental services. The need for adult dental services in Alaska's elderly population is great. ADRAA distributes a limited number of mini-grants each year to clients. Dental work is the most often requested mini-grant by our clients. While we can help, our help is limited to a small yearly grant program. Dental services, both preventative and restorative, are a primary concern for the elderly.

ADRAA supports HB 106 which would offer a Senior Care cash and prescription drug benefits program. The program would help Alaska's elderly, who see prescription drug costs increase while their income remains fixed. In some cases, low-income seniors find themselves choosing between buying food or their basic prescription medications. Our Alaskan seniors deserve the respect of not being put in this predicament.

The Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska is the largest agency in Alaska devoted to providing information and support to Alaskans affected by Alzheimer's disease. The agency serves approximately 5,000 people annually. During this legislative session, we urge you to consider the growing needs of Alaska's elderly population by supporting House bills 105 and 106. On behalf of our Board of Directors and our constituents statewide, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dulce Nobre".

Dulce Nobre  
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Frank H. Murkowski, Governor



February 7, 2005

The Honorable Peggy Wilson, Chair  
House Health, Education and Social Services Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 108  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 82 (Dahlstrom)--Support

Dear Chair Wilson:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we encourage you and your colleagues on the House Health, Education and Social Services Committee to support HB 82, authored by Representative Nancy Dahlstrom and co-sponsored by Representatives Gara and you.

Unfortunately, Alaska has a high rate of suicide. Many of these suicides include mid-life and older Alaskans. The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council needs to continue its work and address this issue for our citizens. The Council still has much to do and, in our opinion, should be allowed to continue for another four years.

We urge an "AYE" vote on HB 82.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie Darlin".

Marie Darlin, Coordinator  
AARP Capital City Task Force  
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506  
Juneau, AK 99801  
586-3637 (voice)  
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Vice-Chair Paul Seaton  
Representative Vic Kohring  
Representative Tom Anderson  
Representative Lesil McGuire  
Representative Berta Gardner  
Representative Sharon Cissna  
Representative Nancy Dahlstrom



February 7, 2005

The Honorable Peggy Wilson, Chair  
House Health, Education and Social Services Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 108  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 105 (Governor Murkowski)--Support

Dear Chair Wilson:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we encourage you and your colleagues on the House Health, Education and Social Services Committee to support HB 105, introduced by the House Rules Committee at the request of Governor Murkowski.

Under Alaska's current Medicaid program, the only dental coverage offered adult beneficiaries is for emergency care. HB 105 would offer funding, albeit annually capped at \$1,150, which would begin to address preventive and restorative care. Currently, for example, an older Alaskan on Medicaid who resides in a long term care facility and needed dentures would not be able to secure them under the program. Older persons who have dental problems, missing teeth, or are in need of dentures often have accompanying nutrition problems. These nutrition problems can exacerbate other health issues and create an overall deterioration in health status. We believe dental care is essential to quality health care. Funding for dental care should be considered sensible prevention with the long term possibility of saving Medicaid funds that would not be need to be spent on more serious health care problems resulting from poor oral health status.

We urge an "AYE" vote on HB 105.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Marie Darlin*

Marie Darlin, Coordinator  
AARP Capital City Task Force  
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506  
Juneau, AK 99801  
586-3637 (voice)  
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Vice-Chair Paul Seaton  
Representative Vic Kohring  
Representative Tom Anderson  
Representative Lesil McGuire  
Representative Berta Gardner  
Representative Sharon Cissna  
Governor Frank Murkowski  
Commissioner Joel Gilbertson

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

### *Alaska Commission on Aging*

**FRANK H. MURKOWSKI**  
**GOVERNOR**

P.O. BOX 110693

JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0693

PHONE: (907) 465-3250

FAX: (907) 465-1398

February 7, 2005

The Honorable Peggy Wilson, Chair  
House H.E.S.S. Committee  
State Capitol Room 108  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: HB 82, Extension of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council

Dear Representative Wilson:

The members of the Alaska Commission on Aging would like to voice their support for passage of HB 82, Extension of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council. As one of the boards which operate under the statutes of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Commission believes it is vitally important to the work of serving all Trust beneficiaries, that we support the continuation of the Suicide Prevention Council.

Alaska currently has the second highest suicide rate in the United States, second only to Nevada. Extending the Suicide Prevention Council would give the council members the opportunity to continue to develop and implement programs which will address this serious mental health problem in Alaska.

The members of the Alaska Commission on Aging respectfully ask your consideration and support for passage of HB 82, and sufficient funding to ensure the Council may fulfill its statutory responsibilities.

Sincerely,



Linda Gohl, Executive Director  
Alaska Commission on Aging