

**HJR**

**10**

Session:  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
(907) 465-4457 Office  
(907) 465-3519 Fax  
(800) 928-4457 Toll Free

Alaska House of Representatives  
David Guttenberg



District 8

Interim:  
1292 Sadler Way  
Suite 304  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-3171  
(907) 456-8172  
(907) 456-2490 Fax

MEMO

To: *Jonda*  
Senator Linda Menard, Chairman  
State Affairs Committee

From: *David*  
Representative David Guttenberg

Date: March 31, 2009

Re: HJR 10 Veterans' Health Care

SHORT TITLE: "Veterans' Health Care"  
Support Soldiers'  
Burial Designations"

Pending the referral from Senate Health & Social Service on April 10, 2009, I respectfully request HJR 10 to be scheduled in State Affairs Committee at your earliest convenience.

Included you will find:

- The current version of HJR 10
- Sponsor statement
- Fiscal note
- Letters of support

I look forward to discussing the merits of this resolution in the House of Representatives. My staff, Chris Reid, is assigned to this legislation if there are any questions, 465-4475. Any additional materials we wish to place before the committee will be submitted no later than 24 hours prior to the scheduled hearing.

4457

Anderson • Cantwell • Chena • Denali Park • Ester • Geist • Goldstream • Healy • Pike  
University Campus • University Hills • University West  
Representative\_David\_Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SESSION:  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 418  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-4457 Office  
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## Representative David Guttenberg

### CSHJR 10 (MVA)

#### Sponsor Statement

CSHJR 10 (MVA) urges the United States Congress to provide the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with the funding and resources necessary to enable the Veterans Health Administration to provide sufficient, timely and predictable health care for all veterans.

The Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform, an association of national veterans groups, has found that the current funding mechanism for veterans' health care is "unreliable" and subject to "great political wrangling." Without a streamlined, comprehensive and accessible health care system, many veterans are denied the health care they are entitled to.

As the number of veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq suffering from traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress syndrome and other combat-related injuries is increasing, the need for access to quality health care, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, is increasing as well. Veterans returning from these wars are entitled to five years of health care from the VA without charge, regardless of the priority group to which they are assigned. However, they are only reimbursed for the cost of traveling to access that care if they meet certain eligibility criteria.

Many Alaskan veterans have access to outpatient care at a variety of urban facilities – including the Veterans Affairs Healthcare System facility in Anchorage, the Veterans Affairs Community-based Outpatient Clinics at Fort Wainwright and in Kenai, and the soon-to-open facilities in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Juneau, and Homer. There is also a system in place that allows Alaskan veterans living in outlying areas to access quality health care at local community health centers. However, there are still many veterans living in rural areas that are unable to access health care in their communities, resulting in costly travel to central locations to receive that care.

CSHJR 10 (MVA) supports efforts to ensure that veterans across Alaska have access to quality health care in the outlying areas where the VA does not have clinics, including at Community Health Centers, community mental health centers, substance abuse treatment centers, tribal health organizations, and other appropriate local providers. It also supports increased funding for research into traumatic brain injuries and encourages the Veterans Health Administration to improve its electronic claims process and ability to use information contained in military records in order to provide a more efficient health care delivery system.

Representative.David.Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us  
<http://guttenberg.akdemocrats.org>



March 12, 2009

The Honorable Representative David Guttenberg  
State Capital  
Juneau, Alaska

Support for CSHJR 10 Improve Health Care for Veterans

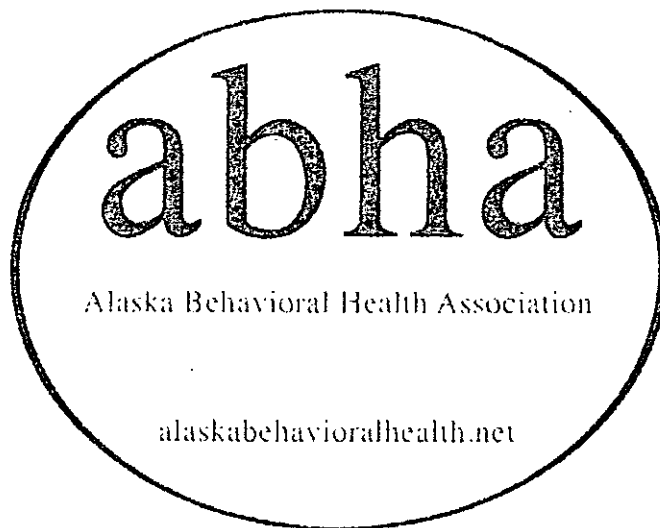
Dear Representative Guttenberg;

On behalf of the members of the Alaska Behavioral Health Association, I am writing to pledge our support for CSHJR 10. The members of this association provide mental health and substance abuse treatment and services across this state. We support federal and state funding and other efforts to ensure that veterans across the state have access to quality health care. We would also ask for an increase in funding and emphasis on suicide prevention. This is health crisis of epidemic proportions and a bright spotlight needs to be shone upon this issue to bring attention to a problem that we could solve.

Thank you for bringing this issue to the attention of the legislature and I trust we will see something good come from this effort.

In Health,

Steve Horn  
Executive Director



**abha**  
**2009**

The Alaska Behavioral Health Association (abha) is a statewide trade association whose members are the primary providers of behavioral health services in Alaska. The mission of abha is to enhance behavioral health and quality of life for all Alaskans by providing leadership which insures high quality, affordable behavioral health services.

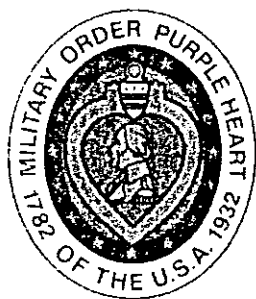
## Members of abha support the following principles:

- Ensure that beneficiaries of services have access to a community-based continuum of care that provides individualized comprehensive treatment.
- Promote community-based behavioral health services as the most appropriate, clinically effective, and cost sensitive method for providing care to individuals in need.
- Advocate for appropriate public policy and adequate funding for each service by working with the administration and legislature at both the state and national levels.
- Serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among providers and their constituents.
- Work to ensure our members are positioned as mainstream healthcare providers in any state or national healthcare system reforms.
- Support education, research and evaluation, technical assistance, professionalism, family/consumer involvement, and outcome-oriented services.

## 2009 abha Membership

Organization	Community
Akeela	Anchorage
Alaska Children's Services	Anchorage
Alaska Family Services	Palmer
Alaska Island Community Services	Wrangell
Alaska Youth & Family Network	Anchorage
Anchorage Community Mental Health Services (Southcentral Counseling)	Anchorage
Arc of Anchorage	Anchorage
Assets, Inc.	Anchorage
Mat-Su Health Services	Wasilla
Bristol Bay Counseling Center (BBAHC)	Dillingham
Boys and Girls Home of Alaska	Fairbanks
Catholic Community Service	Juneau
The Center	Homer
Community Connectors, Inc.	Ketchikan
Donell Family Services	Anchorage
Edgar Nollner Health Center	Galena
Fairbanks Community Behavioral Health Center, Inc.	Fairbanks
Fairbanks Native Association	Fairbanks
Family Centered Services of Alaska	Fairbanks

Organization	Community
Frontier Community Services	Soldotna
Gateway Center for Human Services	Ketchikan
Impact Counseling	Haines
Juneau Alliance for Mental Health, Inc.	Juneau
Juneau Youth Services	Juneau
Kenai Peninsula Care Center	Kenai
Lynn Canal Counseling	Haines
Maniilaq Association	Kotzebue
North Star Behavioral Health System	Anchorage
Peninsula Community Health Services	Soldotna
Petersburg Mental Health Services, Inc.	Petersburg
Railbelt MH and Addictions	Nenana
SEARHC - Behavioral Health Service Division	Sitka
SeaView Community Services	Seward
Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services	Sitka
Southcentral Foundation Behavioral Health Services	Anchorage
Volunteers of America of AK	Anchorage
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation	Bethel



Military Order of the  
*Purple Heart*  
Department of Alaska



**Date: March 6, 2009**

**The Honorable David Guttenberg  
House Military and Veterans Affairs  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 418  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182**

**Subject: Support for HRJ 10.**

**Dear Representative Guttenberg, and other sponsors/supporters of HJR 10.**

**The MOPH, Department of Alaska, is in full support of HJR 10 and its intent to provide the best health care available to our veterans. Those who answered the call to defend our country have fully earned the right to have the country be there for them in their time of need.**

**As the current military conflict continues there will be an ongoing need to care for those who will stand among others who served previously. It is only fair for our nation to provide the care and assistance that our veterans have rightfully earned. Reasonable access to that health care is equally important, especially to those who suffer the most and often need special assistance just to get to the location providing that health care. While many veterans are fortunate to be able to drive to and walk to the point of health care assistance, it is important to not forget about those who need wheel chairs or other special assistance. The need to reach out to provide adequate care can be stated like this "LET NO VETERAN BE LEFT BEHIND" and that responsibility falls on the system charged with providing the health care that has already been paid for by our nations veterans.**

**HRJ 10 is a commendable approach in proving that Alaska truly cares about its veteran population. As such HRJ 10 has the support of the MOPH, Department of Alaska.**

*Ron Siebels*

**Ron Siebels  
MOPH, Department Commander, Alaska**

**Chris Reid**

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**From:** k8819tejk@netscape.net  
**Sent:** Friday, February 13, 2009 5:53 AM  
**To:** Chris Reid  
**Subject:** Leeter of Agreement

Thomas E. Kopaceski

February 13, 2009 P. O. Box 871115 Wasilla, Ak.

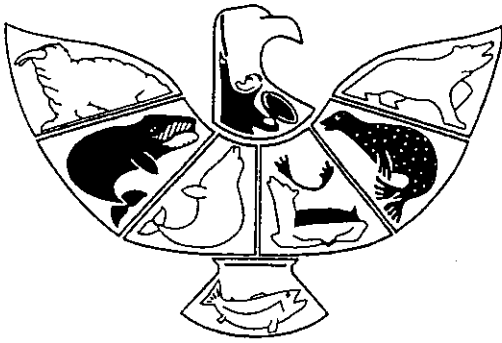
99687-1116

Dear Representative David Guttenberg,

Since I am a Viet Nam veteran, I have reviewed HJR10 Resolution. I am in total support of HJR10.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Kopaceski



# Alaska Native Health Board

1840 Bragaw Street, Suite 220  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Phone: (907) 562-6006  
Fax: (907) 563-2001

March 24, 2009

Representative David Guttenberg  
State Capital Building, Room 418  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Guttenberg,

***We write to express our strong support for the Health & Social Services Committee Substitute for HJR 10, urging Congress to improve health care for veterans.***

The Alaska Native Health Board appreciates and values the service of Alaska's veterans, including our Alaska Native Veterans, many of whom live in remote areas of the State and consequently have great difficulty accessing their hard-earned Veterans Administration health benefits.

This limited or non-existent access of many of our veterans to their hard-earned Veterans Administration health benefits is shameful.

For decades, Alaska Tribal Health System providers filled this gap created by the Veterans Administration by providing high-quality services to veterans (including many non-Native veterans) throughout Alaska. Despite little to no Veterans Administration support, we continue to provide these services to veterans to this day because it's the right thing to do, despite the costs.

Representative Guttenberg, we thank you for efforts on behalf of Alaska's veterans, including our Alaska Native veterans, and we look forward to working with you in a cooperative manner on this and other healthcare issues before the Alaska Legislature.

Respectfully,

Evangelyn Dotomain  
President/CEO



Jill Hodges  
Alaska Brain Injury Network  
3745 Community Park Loop #140  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
March 6, 2009

Representative David Guttenberg  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Building  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Guttenberg:

Thank you for your continued concern for returning service members in Alaska, as well as traumatic brain injury research. The Alaska Brain Injury Network supports HJR 10 – Veterans Health Care.

The Alaska Brain Injury Network is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 whose mission is to educate, plan, coordinate, and advocate for a comprehensive service delivery system for survivors of traumatic brain injury and their families.

ABIN supports the need for traumatic brain injury research; yet also requests the committees take into consideration equal access to rehabilitation and ongoing support programs for all Alaskans with cognitive disabilities.

Recent studies show at least 20% of service members will return from war with a traumatic brain injury. Additionally, there are 800 Alaskans each year hospitalized for more than 24 hours with a moderate to severe traumatic brain injury (Alaska Trauma Registry). There is an estimated 3000 Alaskans that visit the Emergency Department each year (CDC). Falls, motor vehicle crashes, assault, ATV/Snowmachine and bicycle crashes are the leading causes of traumatic brain injury in Alaska. The Alaska Brain Injury Network, "10 Year Plan for TBI in Alaska" highlights the many recommendations needed to provide information and referral, case management, acute and post-acute rehabilitation, educational supports, vocational supports, and long-term care to all Alaskans with brain injuries. ([http://www.alakabraininjury.org/documents\\_akbrain/10%20Year%20TBI%20Plan.pdf](http://www.alakabraininjury.org/documents_akbrain/10%20Year%20TBI%20Plan.pdf))

It is important to understand brain injury affects Civilians and Military Members alike. The health care issue is a matter of access, as well as availability of services locally and payment for those serves. Currently the Alaska VA Health Systems and the Department of Defense, 3rd Medical Unit are developing TBI clinics, polytrauma clinics and brain injury rehabilitation and ongoing support services which will benefit both active duty and veterans; however these programs are being built with little coordination among the state and community providers. At the same time Alaska community providers are planning the development of brain injury residential programs because currently there are civilians who are not receiving the care they need to recover and/or

best learn to live with their cognitive disability. Alaska does not have the workforce to operate three separate brain injury service delivery systems (including the Tribal system).

### **ABIN Activities Promoting Coordination among Military, State, Tribal, and Community**

ABIN has been meeting with military partners since October 2007 for the purposes of determining the impact of returning service members with brain injuries and the impact it will have on state and community providers and resources. Participants have included 3rd medical unit, Elmendorf, TBI Clinic; Alaska VA Health Systems Polytrauma and Neuropsychology program; National Guard; Service and Family Assistance Center-Warrior Transition Battalion; Marines; Vet Center representatives; and Alaska Federal Health Care Partnership. We have learned that we can share outreach and awareness resources, but with program planning and implementation there has been little collaboration.

### **Potential Challenges**

It is important to recognize how service members with brain injury may have challenges without the proper services and supports and are at risk for additional brain injuries. Highest rates of brain injury in civilians are among rural Alaskans and Alaska Natives. Many national guardsmen/women live in rural Alaska. A risk factor for a brain injury is history of brain injury; i.e. A national guardsperson is in an IED blast in Afghanistan. He/she returns to Alaska and may have challenges with balance, memory, attention, etc. He is riding his snowmachine and crashes, no helmet or maybe even with a helmet, he sustains an additional brain injury. There is potential for an influx of brain injuries in the next 5-20 years; a coordinated TBI prevention program and service delivery system would benefit all Alaskans.

### **Recommendations**

The leadership and collaboration among State Government, Tribal Systems, Military and Veterans, and Community Providers is key to developing appropriate, timely, and coordinated brain injury services in Alaska.

If we do not have the essential brain injury awareness and treatment in Alaska

- Alaskans are at risk for bankruptcy, homelessness, divorce, or institutional care.
- This impacts State and local behavioral health, corrections, and educational systems greatly.

The Alaska Brain Injury Network encourages coordination in planning and implementation of brain injury programs in-state, as well as a state funding source to support the payment of brain injury rehabilitation and long-term care for both military and civilians.

The Alaska Brain Injury Network supports HJR 10-Veterans Health Care. We also support collaboration efforts in the planning and implementation of the services that are needed in both rural and urban Alaska to support veterans and civilians.

Sincerely,

Jill Hodges

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1  
 Bill Version: CSHJR 10(MLV)  
 (H) Publish Date: 2/25/2009

Identifier (file name): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title: CSHJR 10 VETERANS' HEALTH CARE RDU: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sponsor: Representative David Guttenberg Component: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Requester: Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Component Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

	Appropriation Required	Information					
		FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>							
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>0.0</b>

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

1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF							
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
<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>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: \_\_\_\_\_

**POSITIONS**

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

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

Prepared by: House Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approved by: Represtativ Carl Gatto Date: 2/24/2009

# SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 4/11/09

FURTHER: Rules

DATE TURNED IN TO OFFICE: 4/14/09

State Affairs Committee considered CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10(HSS)

## HJR 10 VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

Urging the United States Congress to improve health care for veterans.

and recommends:

- be replaced with  SCS or  CS \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)
- adopt previous  SCS or  CS \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of Intent
- further referral to \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

<b>SENATE BILL:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title
<hr/>	
<b>HOUSE BILL:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Title Change
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title w/ SCR # _____

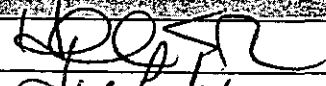
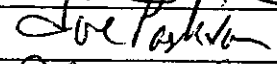
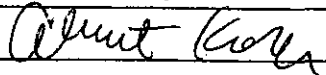
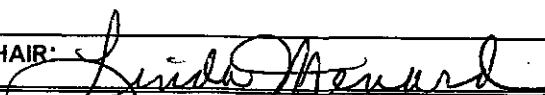
**NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):**

**PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):**

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet	Zero	FN#

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet	Zero	FN#
H. MVA	4/24			✓	1

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PRINTED LAST NAME	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
	French	X			
	Paskvan	X			
	Kookesh			X	
CHAIR: 	Menard	X			