

ALASKA LEGISLATURE SPECIAL COMMITTEE / SUBJECT FILE 8672
1713 SCOMM 68: HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE, 1989-1991

SECTION I

CREATION OF THE

HEALTH COST CARE CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE

Several events occurred at the beginning of the Sixteenth Alaska State Legislature that drew attention to the escalating costs of health insurance for State employees, retirees, and their dependents. The first was the announcement of a substantial mid-year premium increase in order to cover the increased costs and utilization of State health care plans. The supplemental appropriation bill introduced to pay the additional premium costs for the fiscal year (FY 89) budget alone was \$21,800,000.

Particularly alarming was the aspect that the additional premium needed followed large premium increases in the preceding two years with essentially no changes to the health plans. In effect, the cost of State employee health benefit coverage has increased 54% over the last three years. Legislative finance committees had earlier expressed their concern by requesting the Division of Retirement and Benefits to make recommendations that the Legislature could take to limit costs. The initial reaction of many finance committee members to the new funding request was negative or confrontational.

State employee union representatives had also expressed concern. Several of the bargaining units were in negotiations with the State over wages and benefits, wherein, the health care cost increases presented a complicating factor. From their perspective, rising health care costs was a continuing problem throughout the nation that has been confronted successfully in the private and other public sectors with appropriate cost management of health plans. Furthermore, they expressed a willingness to assist the Administration and the Legislature in determining cost containment provisions that could readily and effectively apply to the State's health care situation.

With consenting agreement between the Governor and the House and Senate leadership, Senate Concurrent Resolution 23 was introduced on February 23, 1989 to create a task force made up of legislators, public employee representatives, and representatives of the Administration. Their task was to review all aspects of health care cost containment and make recommendations that would reduce the supplemental funding request.

Secondly, the task force was to determine actions that would contend with health cost inflation in the long term. Testimony before the Senate Finance Committee on February 24, 1989 asserted that there was in fact means to help reduce the costs of the State health care plan. Possible areas of savings that were outlined included: cost containment provisions could be incorporated into the plan without changing existing benefits, review of the plan's financial status, alternate funding of the plan, and provider payment schedules. Several items could be implemented to impact the FY 89 budget, with the remainder to reduce health care costs in FY 90 and beyond.

On March 10, 1989, SCR 23 had passed both houses of the Legislature and became Legislative Resolve 8. Appointments to the Task Force were quickly made and the Task Force began work on March 22, 1989. The Task Force retained A.J. Gallagher & Co. to provide health care consulting and actuarial services.

The following is a report of the work and activities of the Health Care Cost Containment Task Force. This report describes the findings, results, and recommendations designed to achieve a more cost efficient State of Alaska Health Care Benefit System for employees, retirees and their dependents.

SECTION II

HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

SHORT RANGE

The Task Force was charged with the responsibility of identifying ways to reduce the FY 89 health care cost supplemental funding request. The Task Force looked at ways to immediately reduce the cost to the State and, in return, reduce the supplemental funding request to cover premium increases. The short range review focused on three specific areas:

- Funding of the plan.
- Plan Design.
- Procedural or legislative changes that would reduce costs.

MID-RANGE

The Task Force was charged with determining appropriate cost containment measures that could be implemented, without interfering with collective bargaining prerogatives, to reduce health care cost to the State for FY 90 and beyond. The mid-range review focused on several areas:

- Cost containment measures that would monitor and assure that the most cost beneficial health care delivered to participants.

- Methods to revise the health plan designs to keep it in line with general trends and changes in the health care delivery systems.
- Educational and wellness programs to effect long-term health improvement strategies and identify long range cost containment goals.

LONG RANGE

The Task Force sought to identify ways to control or curb rising health care provider charges, assure quality of care, and restrict actions that shift additional costs to the State plan. The Task Force has identified means to reduce or slow medical inflation of State health plans over the long term. The areas that have been determined to require further study are:

- Alternate financing of the plan (partially self-funded, etc.).
- Purchasing groups (i.e., Preferred Provider Organization-P.P.O.-or buying coalitions) to coordinate the health care purchasing power of the State in order to assure appropriate costs and proper benefit delivery to participants.
- Provider payment schedules in lieu of the current, usual, customary and reasonable schedules (UCR).
- Pooling or trusting of health care benefit plans.
- Impact of state or federal legislation that dictates cost shifting from other programs to State plans.

SECTION III

OVERVIEW OF STATE HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS

(ACTIVES AND RETIREES)

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OVERVIEW OF STATE HEALTH BENEFITS PLANS

(ACTIVEES AND RETIREES)

The base medical plan covers approximately 13,000 active employees, and an estimated 17,500 dependents for medical, dental, vision and audio coverage. Prior to December 1, 1989, there were nine plan designs for each of the separate bargaining units all covered under one master contract with the Aetna Insurance Company.

Effective December 1, 1989, all of the plans have come under one common plan design, including non-bargained and union employees. Cost containment measures were implemented on December 1, 1989. This was accomplished utilizing Task Force recommendations, collective bargaining negotiations between the State and the Alaska State Employees' Association (ASEA), along with the "me too" clause in other labor contracts. A summary of the new plan is presented in Exhibit A. It should be noted that the new plan is still subject to a ratification vote of ASEA employees.

Under a separate plan design, approximately 10,500 retirees and an estimated 9,800 dependents are covered for medical only. Retirees can be former members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), the Teacher's Retirement System (TRS), the Judicial Retirement System (JRS), or the Elected Public Officer's Retirement System (EPORS).

Retirees have the option of having dental, vision and audio coverage with the premium being deducted from their retirement checks, if they elect to do so following 60 days of their retirement. A description of coverages provided to retirees is outlined in Exhibit B.

The Supplemental Benefits System (SBS) is available to all eligible active employees of the State of Alaska, where the employee can choose additional

coverage and pay premiums out of the Alaska Social Security Fund. SBS covers the deductible and the wellness or prevention care programs. Open enrollment occurs in October for the plan year effective the following February. There are two SBS coverage options (Exhibit C). Currently, 8,900 employees are enrolled in Option I and slightly over 400 enrolled in Option II.

DESCRIPTION OF AETNA SERVICES

Aetna Insurance Company provides a fully insured plan for both the active and the retiree plans. Although, the two plans are governed under separate contract, there appeared to be a financial link between the two plans upon termination of the Aetna contracts. The link was a provision that allowed the cross application of deficits or surpluses between the two plans. Upon recommendation of the Task Force, the State and Aetna agreed to keep the two plans completely separate.

Aetna Insurance Company services the State's plan from Seattle, Washington, where the claim processors, cost containment and service of the plan are handled on a day-to-day basis. There are currently 46 Seattle-based Aetna employees dedicated exclusively to the State of Alaska plan. They include: claim processors, nurses, cost containment specialists, customer service representatives, clerical, supervisors, and account executives.

Financial and accounting services for the State of Alaska plan are handled out of the Aetna western home office, located in Walnut Creek, California. The Walnut Creek office provides for renewals, financial projections and costing of revisions as necessary for the plan.

The home office of the Aetna Insurance Company (based in Hartford, Connecticut) receives the eligibility and premium payments. Aetna then allocates the funds to the appropriate accounts and verifies coverage for the eligible individuals.

Under the fully insured plans, the State pays a fixed premium to Aetna, where Aetna assumes the risk and settles claims for the participants. The plan is fully experience-rated, whereby future rates are based on claims paid under the State's plan. It should be noted that the financial accounting for the plan is run on a fiscal year basis coinciding with the State's fiscal year; however, the rates change on February 1st of each year. Originally, the rate change and the financial accounting coincided; however, due to prolonged and

proposed plan changes over the past several years, the actual rate change has been shifted to February 1st of each year. Aetna is required to produce rate changes and financial accounting to the State during the month of October, preceding the proposed renewal date in February. This leads to some confusion as the claims and accounting data are on a slightly different basis than when the premium is collected. In years when there is no premium increase, it has less of an effect than in years when there is a substantial increase projected. The increases lag the claims data by seven months.

Aetna has been under contract with the State of Alaska since 1981. The contract was rebid in 1987 for a three year duration with the possibility of two one-year extensions. In 1987, the rebid attracted only one respondent, Aetna.

COST EXPERIENCE

Tables I and II display the monthly premium cost over the years for each entity covered under the medical plans. Please note that the financial accounting period and the fiscal year of the State do not coincide; therefore, the discrepancy for two rates in a single year. The aggregate of claims experience is presented in Table III.

INPATIENT AND OUTPATIENT BENEFITS

Total inpatient and outpatient benefits payable increased 12.95 percent from policy year 1987 to 1988. The detailed breakdown of these increases is presented in Exhibit D.

Inpatient benefits payable (regular benefits payable by the plan, after deductibles and coinsurances) increased 11.12 percent from 1987 to 1988 of which hospital room and board increased 14.57 percent. Mental and nervous benefits payable increased 27.34 percent during this period, which represents 10.6 percent and 12.14 percent of inpatient benefits payable in 1987 and 1988, respectively.

Outpatient benefits payable increased 14.57 percent from 1987 to 1988. Benefits payable for outpatient facilities increased 72.22 percent during the same period, while ancillary increased 22.97 percent. (See Percent Changes in Benefits Payable). Mental and nervous/substance abuse increased 8.69 percent.

TABLE I

**MONTHLY HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS
BY COVERED ENTITY
(ACTIVE EMPLOYEE PLAN)**

	FY84	FY85	FY86	FY87	FY88	FY89	2/89 a	12/89 b	2/90 c
General Gov't Unit	\$217.65	\$217.65	\$224.20	\$242.15	\$307.53	\$411.16	\$431.72	\$384.59	\$384.59
Non-Covered Employees	217.65	217.65	224.20	242.15	307.53	411.16	431.72		
Local 71	186.51	230.84	237.75	256.80	326.14	421.75	442.84		
IBU (begin 11/83)	184.57	184.57	224.20	242.15	307.53	411.16	431.72		
MMP (begin 7/85)	N/A	N/A	237.75	256.80	326.14	427.41	448.78		
MEBA	234.84	234.84	250.45	270.50	343.54	461.88	484.97		
CCSEA	217.65	217.65	224.20	242.15	307.53	411.16	431.72		
Supervisory	230.84	230.84	237.75	256.80	326.14	427.41	448.78		
Confidential	230.84	230.84	237.75	256.80	326.14	427.41	448.78		
PSEA	216.12	216.12	222.60	240.90	305.94	411.16	431.72		

(a) Renewal

(b) Cost Containment Implementation

(c) Renewal with Cost Containment

TABLE II

MONTHLY HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS
RETIREES

FY84	FY85	FY86	FY87 7/86-10/87	FY88 11/87-6/88	FY89 7/88-1/89	FY90 2/89-1/90	FY90/91 2/90-1/91
\$156.07	\$191.85	\$175.00	\$165.00	\$140.25	\$211.22	\$252.83	\$243.98

TABLE III

STATE OF ALASKA
ACTIVE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

<u>Policy Year</u>	<u>Paid Premium</u>	<u>Incurred Claims</u>	<u>Retention</u>	<u>Policy Year Surplus (Deficit)</u>	<u>Cumulative Balance</u>
7/82 - 7/83	\$27,729,375	\$25,312,455	\$1,586,818	\$ 830,102	\$ 830,102
7/83 - 7/84	27,857,503	23,619,520	684,501	3,553,482	4,383,584
7/84 - 7/85	34,763,000	32,223,711	770,849	1,768,440	6,152,024
7/85 - 7/86	36,756,000	38,378,681	871,457	(2,494,138)	3,657,886
7/86 - 7/87	39,484,110	44,113,812	1,526,215	(6,155,917)	(2,498,031)
7/87 - 7/88	47,004,042	48,171,397	2,210,804	(3,378,159)	(5,876,190)
7/88 - 7/89	67,580,599	49,502,164	2,185,030	17,603,865*	4,279,836

RETIRED EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

<u>Policy Year</u>	<u>Paid Premium</u>	<u>Incurred Claims</u>	<u>Retention</u>	<u>Policy Year Surplus (Deficit)</u>	<u>Cumulative Balance</u>
7/82 - 7/83	\$ 6,440,213	\$ 8,146,246	\$ 377,676	\$(2,083,709)	\$(2,083,709)
7/83 - 7/84	10,274,521	7,275,641	258,989	2,739,891	656,182
7/84 - 7/85	13,848,779	9,456,773	254,484	4,137,522	4,793,704
7/85 - 7/86	14,011,340	11,092,724	353,460	2,565,156	7,358,860
7/86 - 7/87	15,500,815	12,621,468	568,806	2,310,541	9,669,401
7/87 - 7/88	17,296,636	19,881,727	869,340	(3,454,431)	5,558,415
7/88 - 7/89	27,078,313	21,257,624	1,042,751	5,656,150	11,214,565

*Includes refund of \$3,698,336.

Hospital ancillary (which includes mental and substance abuse disorders) continues to represent the largest percentage of inpatient and total benefits payable for plan years 1987 and 1988, at 42.56 percent and 43.19 percent, respectively.

On an outpatient basis, ancillary benefits represent 18.99 percent and 10.06 percent of outpatient and total benefits payable, respectively.

Medical benefits is the most significant outpatient service at 20.28 percent of outpatient and 10.74 percent of total benefits payable, respectively.

RANGE OF EXPENSE REPORT

Generally, the occurrence of claimants within the various cost ranges are relatively consistent from one year to the next.

During the calendar years 1987, 1988 and 1989, the majority of claims (between 66.65 percent and 69.94 percent) fall within the \$10,000 to \$20,000 range.

In calendar years 1987 and 1988, the number in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range increased almost 65 percent from 42 to 69. Based on annualized data for calendar year 1989, this range appears to normalize back to approximately the 1987 level.

INPATIENT CONFINEMENTS IN EXCESS OF \$50,000

Benefits payable for inpatient confinements in excess of \$50,000 as a total inpatient benefits payable increased slightly from plan year 1987 to plan year 1988 (11.15 percent to 12.14 percent), while the actual dollar increased over 20 percent. The most significant increase was in the Son of Participant category, where 11 participants (10 more than the 1987 plan year) had a medical condition that generated over \$50,000 in benefits payable, ranging from \$51,767 (extreme immaturity) to \$145,740 (pre-term infant), and amounting to almost \$850,000. During plan year 1987, there was one claim that amounted to just over \$62,000.

SECTION IV

FINDINGS, RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OF THE

HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE

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SHORT RANGE -- MARCH 1989 TO MAY 1989

- A. **Financial Reviews of Plans.** Premium Taxes --Aetna would charge the State's plan for premium taxes and credit the plan experience once a refund was received from the Department of Revenue. This procedure would not normally effect the State's rates, however, (plan expenses) were overstated by \$1.8 million (\$1,147,379 for activees and \$667,978 for retirees) due to a delay in crediting the refund.

The Task Force requested the Department of Administration to procure a refund from Aetna for this amount. This refund was applied to reduce the supplemental funding request. The active plan received a refund of \$1,147,374 and the retiree plan received a \$667,978 refund.

- B. **Legislation.** The Task Force recommended that the Legislature revise AS 39.30 to exempt the payment of premium taxes on the State's health plan and eliminate the possibility of a future expense charge to the plan expenses.

HB 264 am was enacted on May 8, 1989 effecting this change.

- C. **Extended Liability Reserve.** As a part of Aetna's standard operating procedure, a separate reserve is established for "extended liability." The purpose of the extended liability reserve is for claims incurred by an individual on disability at the time of a prospective contract termination (Aetna's). Plans can eliminate the extended liability reserve. If they change from one carrier to another, the new carrier could accept the liability.

Aetna was holding \$3,697,724 as of June, 1988 for this liability and agreed to release 80% of the monies to the State, if the State accepted the liability.

The Task Force recommended that the Department of Administration assume the liability and recover \$2.4 million to help reduce the supplemental funding request.

- D. **Financial Experience.** The State's financial experience was reviewed to determine if the reserves, expenses (retention) and deficit/surplus were in accordance with the contract.

The Task Force found that the reserves were set within actuarially accepted levels.

Plan expenses were running less than 7.0% (before interest offsets). It was, however, found that previous years when the plan was in a surplus position, the rates could have been reduced or a refund could have been generated to the State, as opposed to being held by Aetna.

In 1989, the active employees' plan had a surplus of \$4,279,836 (see Table III). The implementation of cost containment provisions and good experience, enabled the State to negotiate the current rate of \$384.59 to be guaranteed for an additional 12 months.

The retiree plan has a current surplus of \$11,241,565 less the claim fluctuation margin of \$1,464,374 for a net balance of \$9,750,191. The net balance could be used to reduce premium rates.

- E. **Drafts Versus Checks.** Alaska State Law (AS 21.89.03) requires that an insurance company use a negotiable bank check to settle a claim or pay a judgment. This means that Aetna issues checks on a funded account. Usually, minimum premium or self-funded plans issue drafts that are funded upon presentation. This change from checks to drafts would result in an additional ten day float on the money, resulting in a net interest credit to the State. There are some administrative and banking arrangements that need to be established to take advantage of this.

The Task Force recommended revision of AS 21.89.03. SB 257 and HB 265 were introduced for the State to take advantage of this interest credit.

- F. **Supplemental Benefits System (Plans I & II).** Prior to fiscal year 1989, the Supplemental Benefits System experience or (cost) was not maintained separate from general health plan experience. Therefore, it had not been possible to ascertain the actual and appropriate premium rates.

The Task Force recommended separate experience results with the financial accounting period ending June 30, 1989. The plan experience has been separated and the SBS option has been rated much closer to what the actual cost is.

A second concern of the Task Force was that the Supplemental Benefits System raises the level of benefits to the participants and, therefore, may increase utilization. This possibility heightened the importance to separate the experience and limit the shifting of costs to the base plan. Separation of

experience would provide for the SBS and the base medical plan to be responsible for their appropriate share of costs. Effective February 1, 1990, the SBS plan will have a 53% increase, while there was no increase necessary for the regular medical plan.

- G. **Audit.** In the nine years that the State plan has been covered by Aetna, there has never been an audit of the carrier's performance. To evaluate the performance and quality assurance factors that are contractually agreed to. The Task Force had recommended that the Division of Retirement & Benefits should institute a complete audit of Aetna's procedures and claims operations. The Division of Retirement & Benefits contracted with Deloitte & Touche to audit Aetna's claims operation. The audit report was delivered in December, 1989.

CONCLUSION

The initial supplemental request for FY 89 (\$21,800,000) was subsequently reduced to \$12,300,000 through finance committee budget work. The \$7,200,000 general fund portion of this latter figure was offset by \$3,500,000 through Task Force identified refunds. In effect, the FY 89 general fund requirement for the health care cost increase was reduced to \$3,700,000.

An additional \$700,000 of refunds was returned to retiree pension funds.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MID-RANGE -- MAY 1989 THROUGH DECEMBER 1989

The Task Force identified over 20 items that would help reduce health care cost in fiscal year 1990 and beyond.

The most significant areas of potential savings were cost containment provisions in the operation of the health care plan and negotiated fee arrangements with health care providers. The Task Force identified the following cost containment provisions that could be implemented by agreement between labor and management without effecting negotiated benefits.

***Utilization Review** - Provides ongoing review for reasonableness of treatment and costs;

***Pre-admission Certification** - Requires pre-certification for all hospital admissions, reduces inpatient hospital stays, and provides alternate treatment sites where more cost effective;

***Outpatient Pre-certification** - Requires pre-certification for all outpatient surgeries or procedures over a pre-determined level, reduces unnecessary procedures or limits expensive procedures;

***Managed Mental Health/E.A.P.** - Helps guide participant to appropriate treatment and intervention/prevention by using an employee assistance program as a referral to treatment;

***Expanded Large Case Management** - By knowing about a claim early on (via pre-certification), the Health Care Coordinator can review the claim for possibly more efficient care setting at a lower cost to the plan.

***Consumer Advisory Service** - Provides a health resource to all participants regarding claims, procedures or questions giving the participants an ally in the "system".

***High Risk Pregnancy Management** - This program is designed to lower the incidence of low birth weight (LBW) infants born to female employees and dependents. Can reduce or eliminate high cost of premature deliveries;

***Managed Second Surgical Opinion** - Operates similarly to the pre-certification factor system, whereby listed surgical procedures requires a second opinion to find out whether the surgery is necessary or an alternative method could be used at a lower cost;

***On-Site Concurrent Review** - The On-Site Concurrent Review Program is designed to assure that medically necessary care is provided in an efficient manner. A registered nurse visits hospitalized patients daily and reviews the patient's hospital charts. Provides sentinel effect on hospitals lowering overall inpatient costs;

***Vision Plan P.P.O.** - Provides plan members with the option of receiving care from a preferred provider. The participant receives improved benefits while the plan is billed at a discount for services;

***R & C Profile** - Reasonable and Customary (R & C) profiles represent the prevailing charge made by health care providers of similar expertise for a similar procedure in a particular geographic area. These are currently set every six months for the State. Aetna states they are paying 90% of R & C. The profiles could be revised every 12, 18 or 24 months to slow medical inflation within the plan;

***Wellness Programs** - Wellness Programs are comprised of topics designed to promote safety and good health among employees, including physical fitness programs. A long range approach to controlling medical costs through prevention;

***Mail Order Drug Program** - The Mail Order Drug Program offers a cost saving, convenience service for obtaining prescription drugs through the mail. Drugs are dispensed up to a ninety day supply instead of a thirty day supply. This program is ideal for patients receiving maintenance treatment, which account for up to 70% of all prescription drug costs. Additional savings would be realized by substituting generic drugs for brand names drugs.

***Eligibility/Enrollment Verification** - It was recommended that all participants re-enroll in the plan to ensure that the eligibility of employees, retirees and their dependents and other insurance plan information was current. The last complete enrollment was in 1983.

***Management Reports/Participant Demographics** - Management reports provide the necessary information for the effective management of the health care program. Effective reports help to identify trends and patterns in charges and utilization; pinpoint specific sources of experience; design plan changes and monitor the results of plan changes. Current reports need revisions to accurately track plan experience on a timely basis.

As of December 1, 1989 all recommendations were implemented with the exception of managed mental health, R & C profiles and wellness programs. The total savings generated by these cost containment provisions in conjunction with negotiated benefit changes is approximately \$7,000,000 for calendar year 1990 (for active employees). These measures also helped provide the State with a favorable renewal from Aetna, whereby the revised premium rate of \$384.59 will be guaranteed until February 1, 1991.

A similar but limited effect could be achieved for the retiree's plan. The limit is the State constitutional treatment of an employee's retirement benefits as a contractual right (from the first day of employment). The State cannot act to reduce or impair that right. It is the impairment question that needs legal

definition. Accordingly, the Task Force has requested an Attorney General's opinion on which cost containment provisions may be implemented and withstand challenge. It is expected that provisions such as utilization review and periodic re-enrollments are acceptable, whereas pre-certification and second surgical opinions require close legal scrutiny.

The Task Force anticipates affecting in the near future some cost containment provisions for the retiree's plan which will reduce the health care cost obligations of the pension funds.

LONG RANGE CONSIDERATION OF THE HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE

While the Task Force has achieved particular success in reducing the supplemental funding request and reducing the FY 90 cost of the State's health plan, the inflationary trends of medical costs in Alaska portend future increases for the State. Indeed, the State will be paying in excess of \$300 million in FY 90 for health care payments of all types. This is an increase from \$75 million in 1980, a 300 percent increase over the past 10 years. Aetna's calculation of cost trend factors for the last three years has ranged from 14 percent to 23 percent.

It is with this view and concern that the Task Force identified several considerations to affect long-term strategies of minimizing medical inflation. These strategies are for the most part directed at the health provider industry itself. They utilize the State's size in both numbers and funding to health care providers to restrain or control medical inflation. These considerations also attempt to reduce direct cost shifting to the State from mandated benefit changes and federal program changes.

The following areas have been determined by the Task Force as needing further study and consideration in developing recommendations to the State.

1. Self-Insured Plan Options

Currently, the State purchases its State health care on a fully insured basis. The Task Force is presently investigating the funding alternatives, whereby the State could employ a variety of financing options in order to reduce the cost of the plan and keep premium dollars in Alaska until claims are paid. Exhibit E

illustrates the self-insured options that are available to the State at this time.

By utilizing alternate funding methods, the State could increase the flexibility by which it funds and pays benefits to participants. However, it must be noted that there would be some administrative expenses incurred as some of the record-keeping for the accounts would have to be handled internally by the State instead of the carrier.

The Task Force expects to issue a complete report regarding the advantages, disadvantages, and associated costs, with an estimate of the savings generated by alternate funding methods.

2. Health Care Purchasing Groups

The Task Force has determined that by utilizing buying groups, the State could effect substantial savings to its health care plans.

Currently, the State of Alaska is paying full retail price for medical and dental services. Just as the State does with other goods and services purchased in quantity, the State could negotiate with providers for a discounted rate.

The State can take advantage of current negotiated discounts by utilizing the P.P.O. arrangement through Aetna. There are several ways that the State can negotiate a discount. They include: contracting with a third party organization to negotiate on the State's behalf; or have the State of Alaska negotiate its own contracts, possibly in conjunction with the P.P.O. arrangement and contracting with a third party organization. These arrangements should include all forms of health care purchasing within Alaska, not just the employee benefit plan (e.g. Medicaid and Medicare).

If the State negotiates its own contracts, this generally offers the most flexibility. The State would establish the agreement and the relationship regardless of the claims paying operations. This could also be part of the pooling authorities scope.

Estimated Savings. Generally, negotiated discounts, have generated gross savings (before expenses) of 5 percent to 20

percent, depending on the service, locality and competition in the given area. Such arrangements could generate savings on the employee benefit plan alone of 1.7 million to 7.5 million dollars per year. The Task Force believes that negotiated discounts is an important consideration for containing the cost of medical care. The Task Force will continue to review the alternatives to determine feasibility of this important buying power. Necessarily, the feasibility will depend to an important degree on unique aspects of Alaska's health provider market, wherein many communities are served by one or few providers.

The Task Force recognizes that it is imperative that quality care is delivered to the participant on a cost efficient basis through the plan with negotiated discounts.

3. Provider Payment Schedules

The Task Force has identified provider payment schedules as a proven method effective in controlling health care costs and constraining long-term medical cost inflation. This strategy has been employed by the federal government through the Diagnostic Related Group System (DRG) and the Resource Based Relative Value System (RBRVS) which will be implemented in 1992.

In a further step to control costs, a payment schedule could also be employed by the State. This would be either a modified DRG, a RBRVS or a schedule specifically tailored to the State of Alaska's health care marketplace.

Essentially, under the DRG a schedule is predetermined for each procedure based on the diagnosis of the patient. Under RBRVS schedule, type of care, necessity of care, geographic area, and training of the physician are all taken into account. A system of this nature takes considerable lead time to implement. These payment schedules can only be effective, if:

- The schedule is set on a realistic basis;
- Modifiers are used to control cost shifting; and
- If utilization review is in place;
- Quality of care is assured; and
- Cost savings objectives are met.

Unless the payment system is carefully designed, cost shifting is likely to occur which would minimize overall savings.

The Task Force continues to review and consider alternatives in the way providers are paid (other than the customary, usual and reasonable basis). The Task Force will determine the savings generated by utilizing a provider payment system, and will make specific recommendations as to the type of system most appropriate and its overall operations and implementation.

4. Pooling Concepts

The Task Force is reviewing a cost containment strategy employed by many states called pooling. The purpose of pooling is to provide comprehensive group health insurance to a larger base of enrollment so that: the risk is spread out; health coverage is provided on the most economical basis; provides the maximum opportunity for cost containment when purchasing group health insurance through favorable payment schedules of providers and vendors; entity(ies) can employ a mechanism that provides benefits or coverages that may not be available or are too costly.

Generally, legislation is required to create an entity that provides the coverages needed and oversees the operation of those coverages effectively and in a cost efficient manner. Senate Bill 254, authored by Senator Duncan, has been introduced into legislation. This bill would create the Alaska State Group Health Insurance Authority which would enable the State of Alaska to offer pooled group health coverage to eligible state, municipal and school district employees.

Some of the advantages of pooling are:

- Economy of scale. Eliminate duplicate or multiple plan costs.
- Provides for plan flexibility, plan rating and risk sharing. Each sub-group could conceivably have a slightly different plan design and could be individually rated based on their experience.

However, the risk of large claims occurring could be shared within the pool to eliminate wide swings in experience.

- Data collection - Allows a simplified system for tracking claims, abnormalities or impacts on health care expenditures, instead of obtaining information from many different sources.
- Projection of future cost and trends. The data base would be valuable in projecting future costs and trends, so that the State could be proactive rather than reactive in the management of its health plans.

Pooling enables the State to combine many advantages including self-funding, utilizing the State's purchasing power to help negotiate and control health care cost, and provide benefits on a cost efficient and manageable basis.

The Task Force is currently reviewing other states that have enacted these programs in order to determine the advantages and disadvantages and complexities involved in setting up a pool for the State. It is anticipated that the savings would be generated in several areas:

- Simplification of administration could save 1% to 3%.
- Provider Payments Schedules and P.P.O. Agreements, 5% to 20%.
- Recognize trends and adjust quickly, 5% to 7%.
- In general, economies in a scale of 1% to 3%.

The greatest savings generated would be from the State becoming a cohesive buying group for health care. By increasing the size of the group, the State is better able to negotiate with providers of the service to afford the best possible care, proper utilization, and the maximum benefit to participants without impacting the plan negatively. It would also isolate the plan from an additional cost shifting from other sources, which have become a significant

factor in medical inflation in the State of Alaska.

5. Trusts

The Task Force is also investigating the feasibility of using a trust to provide benefits to employees of the State. A trust generally collects premiums and pays health and welfare benefits to participants. It is governed by a trust document and a board of trustees, which can be a variety of representation from fully elected to an equal management and union representation.

The State could either create a trust, join an existing trust, or allow the bargaining units to utilize their own trusts. It would operate on a similar basis as an Insurance Authority (pool) would, except that they may not require enabling legislation. They would require collective bargaining agreements. Generally, a trust provides benefits to participants only up to the contribution level of employers. Typically, they use cost containment provisions and preferred provider arrangements to control costs.

6. Wellness and Employee Assistance (EAP) Programs

The Task Force is continuing investigations into the value of wellness programs. Nationally, these types of programs are gaining more recognition as a successful long-term strategy to reduce work force health costs through encouraging health promoting activities and discouraging risk taking (e.g. smoking, excess weight, etc.). Recently, the Municipality of Anchorage and one of its union groups have initiated a wellness program that combines incentives for program participation.

THE IMPACT OF COST SHIFTING TO THE STATE'S HEALTH PLAN DUE TO FEDERAL OR STATE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Consistently, over the last 10 years, federal and state law changes have shifted expenses to the various State health plans due to program cutbacks, reallocation of resources, or reducing benefits payable under certain programs. An excellent example is the federal Medicare system. Medicare currently pays 75% for physician services on the basis of "usual, customary and

reasonable" charges. The difference between the amount Medicare pays a provider for his or her services and the actual charge often times is passed on to the non-Medicare paying patients. It is in this manner that the State health plans experience a cost shift to the State's plans from the Medicare program.

In the waning hours of this last session of Congress, substantial changes to the Medicaid/Medicare system were incorporated in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA 89). It is difficult to report with certainty all the ramifications. However, there are several features readily apparent:

- A relative value payment schedule (RBRVS) is mandated for Medicare for 1992. Studies to determine geographic area adjustment factors and volume statistics for the schedule will commence this year.
- The State is obliged to an expanded coverage of pregnant women and for children up to six years of age.
- The State is obligated for certain nursing training costs as well as making up the difference of reduced Medicaid expenditures for certain programs and services mandated in the Nursing Home Reform provisions of OBRA 87.

The initial estimates of fiscal impact to the State for the latter two are \$7,000,000 and \$1,400,000, respectively.

It is imperative that the State of Alaska monitor federal legislative and programmatic changes that would result in a shift or increase in the cost of providing benefits under the State programs. The Task Force recommends that a monitoring function be established to measure and predict the cost of such changes (particularly, the RBRVS implementation) and their effects on the State.

Conclusion

The Task Force recommends that the Legislature extend its existence to February 15, 1991. We recognize that the successes obtained in reducing State employee and retiree health care costs can only be viewed as a beginning. Much work has been done to understand the longer term implications and prospects for controlling medical cost inflation. There is much work remaining before a consensus approach can be creditably advanced. The work needs to be completed. The only questions are when and by whom. The current task force has functioned as a unique and cooperative blend of public employee, administrative and legislative interests that has had real success. Building on the existing knowledge base, much more can be achieved.

SECTION V
ATTACHMENTS

EXHIBIT A

BENEFIT SUMMARY FOR ACTIVE EMPLOYEES

(REVISED DECEMBER 1, 1989)

Variations in coverage were provided to the nine active employee groups and collective bargaining units which have been standardized as of December 1, 1989. Standardization of the plan effected certain groups who had orthodontia an "incentive" dental arrangement, and other plan variations relative to the general government group. The following is a summary of the basic health plan that is provided to employees of the State:

DEDUCTIBLE

\$100/\$300 per family

MEDICAL

The plan pays 90% of the first \$3,950, then 100% of covered medical expenses.

LIFETIME MAXIMUM BENEFIT

\$250,000; \$5,000 Automatic Yearly Restoration

PREEXISTING CONDITIONS

12 month limitation of \$1,000 on medical conditions which existed prior to the effective date of coverage.

TRAVEL

The plan reimburses receipted travel/lodging/meal expenses for pre-authorized pre-operation testing when one way travel distance exceeds 100 miles. Reimbursement is available only for the days of actual testing.

ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE

The plan pays 90% of these expenses, with a limitation of \$7,000 on outpatient services over a two year period.

MENTAL/NERVOUS DISORDERS

The plan pays 90% of inpatient expenses, 50% of counseling services up to \$2,500 annually.

EXHIBIT A

(continued)

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

If a participating pharmacy is utilized, there is a \$5 copay per brand name prescription, and no copay for generic prescriptions; if a non-participating pharmacy is used the plan pays 100% after the applicable brand name copay.

MAIL ORDER DRUGS

\$2 copay for each brand name prescription, no copay for generic prescriptions. The plan deductible and coinsurance requirements are waived. Copay amounts do not apply either toward the calendar year deductible or the out-of-pocket limit.

DENTAL

\$25 annual deductible per covered individual, with a maximum of 3 deductibles per year which is applied to maintenance, and structural services. The plan pays 100% of preventative services (mouth X-rays once per year), 85% of maintenance services, 50% of structural services up to an annual maximum of \$1,500. Preauthorization required for dental procedures or treatment in excess of \$500.

VISION

\$5 copay per examination, \$10 copay for materials (lenses, frames). The plan covers one examination and one set of lenses every 12 months, one set of qualified frames every other year. Charges for non-covered items in excess of the maximum allowable limit are paid by the employee.

AUDIO

The plan pays 80% of an annual exam, 80% for hearing aids and services, \$800 limit over a three year period, no annual deductible.

EXHIBIT A

(continued)

CONVALESCENT FACILITY

The plan pays 100%, up to the semi-private room limit after the deductible is satisfied. Precertification is required, no prior hospital confinement is required. The convalescent facility confinement must be certified as being in lieu of acute care hospitalization. No maximum length/days of coverage applies.

HOME HEALTH CARE

After the deductible is satisfied, the plan pays 90% for up to 120 visits per year. Precertification is required, no prior hospital confinement required.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

After the deductible is satisfied, the plan pays a maximum of \$750 per year per person.

COORDINATION OF BENEFITS

An accumulated calendar-year-to-date Maintenance of Benefits coordination applies to both the standard "external" Coordination of Benefits situation, where primary coverage is available through another employer's plan, as well as to duplicate coverage for working couples under the State of Alaska Plan. Children will be enrolled only under one parent's plan according to the birthday rule. Spouses will enroll separately, effective January 1, 1990.

PATIENT AUDITOR PROGRAM

A program that encourages patient participation in identifying services for which the patient did not receive treatment. The erroneous charges identified on a single bill or admission total a minimum of \$100. If an overcharge is verified, and any overpayment made to the provider are recovered, the patient will be rewarded half of the overcharge, up to \$400 per year. Any payments to participants under this program are considered as taxable income.

EXHIBIT A

(continued)

HEALTHLINE

Healthline is a program comprised of precertification requirements under the following situations: a hospital or skilled nursing facility stay; certain elective surgeries (which may also require a second opinion); certain outpatient procedures and treatments; and arranging for home health care or private duty nursing. The penalties for failure to certify medically necessary treatment are as follows: failure to precertify a hospital stay, \$400; failure to precertify required inpatient/outpatient surgery or treatment, or to obtain a second surgical opinion when requested, \$200; failure to precertify private duty nursing, home health care, or a long stay in a skilled nursing facility, \$400. The precertification penalty is not a covered expense under SBS.

EXHIBIT B

BENEFIT SUMMARY FOR RETIREES (CURRENT PLAN DESIGN)

DEDUCTIBLE

\$100/\$300 per family

CO-INSURANCE PLAN PAYS

Plan pays 80% of covered medical expenses.

LIFE-TIME MAXIMUM

\$1,000,000

PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

None

TRAVEL

One way transportation subject to medical necessity and pre-authorization by carrier.

ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE

Plan pays 90% of these expenses with a limit of \$7,000 outpatient services over a two year period.

MENTAL & NERVOUS DISORDERS

Plan pays \$15 per visit with certain limitations.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The plan pays 100% for generic prescriptions, 80% for brand name prescriptions.

EXHIBIT C

SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFIT SYSTEM I & II:

SBS OPTION I

Pays an additional 10% for medical expenses covered under the group plan

Pays 100% for routine physical exams, newborn care for 72 hours after birth, and immunizations

Pays rehabilitative care (100% inpatient for 60 days and 80% outpatient)

Pays 80% for convalescent care

Increases lifetime maximum of the group plan to \$1,000,000

SBS OPTION II

\$200 deductible; 20% copay, no stop loss

Covers physicians' and hospital services, prescription drugs

Does not cover dental, vision, or audio services

Substance abuse paid at 80%; maximum benefit: \$7,000 in a consecutive two year period

Mental and Nervous disorders paid at 50% after deductible; \$1,000 per year maximum

Lifetime Maximum \$250,000

Maximum of \$1,000 paid during the first 12 months for a pre-existing condition

EXHIBIT D
STATE OF ALASKA
CLAIM EXPERIENCE BY TYPE OF CARE
ACTIVE EMPLOYEE GROUP
PERCENT CHANGE IN BENEFITS PAYABLE
PLAN YEARS 1987 TO 1988

INPATIENT

Hospital Room and Board	+14.57%
Hospital Ancillary	+12.65
Surgery	+ 7.33
Assistant Surgery/Anesthesia	- 1.31
Medical	- 0.95
Total Inpatient	+11.12

	<u>Benefits Payable</u>	<u>Number of Admissions</u>	<u>Average Charge Per Admission</u>
Mental and Nervous	27.34 %	7.3 %	13.57 %
Substance Abuse	-1.31	-7.2	4.63
Total	17.61	1.8	9.52

OUTPATIENT

Facilities	72.22%
Ancillary	22.97
Surgery	11.42
Assistant Surgery/Anesthesia	7.89
X-Ray Laboratory	15.69
Pharmacy	20.84
Chiropractic	6.55
Mental & Nervous/Substance Abuse	8.69
Medical	12.76
Other Outpatient	3.17
Total Outpatient	14.57
Inpatient and Outpatient	12.95%

**STATE OF ALASKA
CLAIM EXPERIENCE BY TYPE OF CARE
AETNA PLAN - ACTIVE EMPLOYEE GROUP
INPATIENT
JULY 1987 - JUNE 1988**

	<u>Submitted Expenses</u>	<u>Percent of Inpatient Benefits Payable</u>	<u>Benefits Payable</u>	<u>Percent of Total Benefits Payable</u>
Hospital Room & Board (1)	\$ 7,150,077	34.14%	\$ 6,924,519	14.33%
Hospital Ancillary (1)	8,908,267	42.56	8,632,865	17.86
Surgery	2,545,441	12.09	2,452,408	5.07
Assistant Surgery/Anesthesia	893,074	4.25	862,986	1.79
Medical	<u>1,670,981</u>	<u>6.96</u>	<u>1,412,664</u>	<u>2.92</u>
Total Inpatient	\$21,167,750	100.00%	\$20,285,442	41.97%

**INPATIENT UTILIZATION & COSTS
MENTAL, NERVOUS & SUBSTANCE DISORDERS**

	<u>Submitted Expenses</u>	<u>Benefits Payable</u>	<u>Percent of Inpatient Benefits Payable</u>	<u>Percent of Total Benefits Payable</u>
Mental & Nervous	\$2,256,381	\$2,149,458	10.60%	4.99%
Substance Abuse	1,141,111	1,105,049	5.45	2.56
Total	\$3,397,492	\$3,254,507	16.05%	7.55%

	<u>Number of Admissions</u>	<u>Average Charge Per Admission</u>
Mental & Nervous	205	11,007
Substance Abuse	125	9,129

**STATE OF ALASKA
CLAIM EXPERIENCE BY TYPE OF CARE
AETNA PLAN - ACTIVE EMPLOYEE GROUP
OUTPATIENT
JULY 1987 - JUNE 1988**

	<u>Submitted Expenses</u>	<u>Percent of Outpatient Benefits Payable</u>	<u>Benefits Payable</u>	<u>Percent of Total Benefits Payable</u>
Facilities	\$ 138,379	0.50%	\$ 114,829	0.27%
Ancillary	4,663,209	18.99	4,336,695	10.06
Surgery	2,706,760	10.90	2,488,070	5.77
Assistant Surgery/Anesthesia	502,031	2.15	490,155	1.14
X-Ray Laboratory	4,038,233	15.33	3,500,042	8.12
Pharmacy	2,770,557	10.38	2,370,830	5.50
Chiropractic	2,562,027	9.92	2,264,807	5.25
Mental & Nervous/ Substance Abuse	1,918,380	4.62	1,054,022	2.44
Medical	6,100,745	20.28	4,631,079	10.74
Other Outpatient	<u>1,765,977</u>	<u>6.93</u>	<u>1,582,487</u>	<u>3.67</u>
Total Outpatient	\$27,166,748	100.00%	\$22,833,016	-
Total Inpatient	<u>21,167,750</u>		<u>20,285,442</u>	-
TOTAL	\$48,334,498		\$48,118,458	52.96%

**STATE OF ALASKA
RANGE OF EXPENSE REPORT
FAMILY BENEFITS PAYABLE ⁽¹⁾
IN EXCESS OF \$10,000
AETNA PLAN - ACTIVE EMPLOYEE GROUP
JANUARY 1987 TO JUNE 1989**

<u>RANGE OF EXPENSE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF FAMILIES</u>		
	<u>1/89 - 6/89 ⁽²⁾</u>	<u>1/88 - 12/88</u>	<u>1/87 - 12/87</u>
\$10,000 - \$20,000	321	727	719
\$20,000 - \$35,000	93	207	184
\$35,000 - \$50,000	32	59	59
\$50,000 - \$100,000	22	69	42
\$100,000 - \$150,000	6	23	21
\$150,000 +	2	6	3

- (1) Benefits Payable is defined as regular benefits payable by the plan after plan provisions, i.e., deductible and coinsurance, but before coordination of benefits.
- (2) First six months of experience.

STATE OF ALASKA
INPATIENT CONFINEMENTS IN EXCESS OF \$50,000
AETNA PLAN - ACTIVE EMPLOYEE GROUP
JULY 1987 TO JUNE 1988

<u>Claimant Relation</u>	<u>Claimant Age</u>	<u>Submitted Expenses</u>	<u>Benefits Payable</u>	<u>Diagnosis</u>	<u>MDC</u>
Male EE	39	\$248,194	\$241,442	Aneurysm of Carotid Artery	5
Male EE	47	122,647	113,303	Full-Thickness Skin Loss	22
Male EE	48	118,894	111,284	Intermediate Coronary Syndrome	5
Wife	51	111,447	100,775	Subarachnoid Hemorrhage	1
Male EE	45	102,405	96,918	Intercranial Hemorrhage	1
Daughter	19	101,048	83,035	Intracranial ¹ Injury	24
Daughter	0	93,963	92,748	Anomalies of Pulmonary Valve	5
Male EE	45	87,387	85,042	Unspecified Intracranial Hemorrhage	1
Wife	36	82,368	79,193	Gastric Hemorrhage	6
Daughter	19	82,221	83,047	Intracranial Injury	24
Husband	58	78,694	78,604	Respiratory Failure	4
Husband	53	76,664	80,623	Rehabilitation Procedure	23
Male EE	57	76,636	56,191	Rehabilitation Procedure	23
Male EE	35	75,326	65,796	Fracture of Rib	4
Female EE	33	74,602	75,087	Complication of Prosthetic Devise	21
Daughter	18	71,211	71,134	Neurotic Depression	19
Husband	35	70,609	61,076	Fracture of Rib	4
Daughter	0	70,192	70,044	Twin, Mate Liveborn	15
Female EE	39	66,937	60,656	Meningeal Hemorrhage	1
Female EE	54	65,120	65,833	Chronic Lymphoid Leukemia	17
Son	14	65,047	62,564	Adjustment Reaction	19
Wife	49	62,690	53,152	Atrioventricular Excitation	5
Daughter	0	60,966	61,153	Single Liveborn	15
Daughter	10	59,250	58,334	Injury to Pancreas Multiple Sites	7

Daughter	0	57,260	57,360	Pre-Term Infants	15
Wife	34	56,054	50,298	Affective Psychoses	19
Male EE	51	54,987	48,171	Chronic Ischemic Heart Disease	5
Female EE	68	52,835	47,388	Aortic Aneurysm	5
Male EE	52	52,023	49,289	Primary Cardiomyopathies	10

EE = Employee

**STATE OF ALASKA
TOP 20 INPATIENT FACILITIES
RANKED BY SUBMITTED EXPENSES
JULY 1987 - JUNE 1988**

<u>PROVIDERS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SUBMITTED EXPENSE</u>	<u>PAYABLE</u>
Providence Hospital	Anchorage	\$ 3,639,459	\$ 3,581,886
Bartlett Memorial Hospital	Juneau	1,640,884	1,163,827
Humana Hospital	Anchorage	1,443,001	1,430,857
Charter North Hospital	Anchorage	1,173,099	1,156,146
Fairbanks Memorial Hosp	Fairbanks	1,156,136	1,141,414
University Hospital	Seattle	380,689	363,694
North Star Hospital	Anchorage	379,365	377,489
Swedish Hospital Med Ctr	Seattle	360,136	357,443
Virginia Mason Hospital	Seattle	322,128	329,363
Valley Hospital Assoc	Palmer	227,113	225,947
Ketchikan General Hosp	Ketchikan	225,688	222,906
Children's Hosp & Med Ctr	Seattle	219,524	206,157
Devereaux Foundation	Philadelphia	180,063	179,886
Lakeside Recovery Ctr	Alaska	153,922	150,216
Central Peninsula Gen	Soldotna	146,520	144,816
Schick Shadil Hosp	Seattle	136,967	135,076
New England Deaconess Hosp	Boston	91,194	90,844
Sitka Community Hosp	Sitka	84,432	81,759
Camelback Hospital	Phoenix	66,312	68,239
Delpelchin Children's Ctr	Houston	65,209	64,639

**STATE OF ALASKA
TOP 20 INPATIENT FACILITIES
RANKED BY SUBMITTED EXPENSES
JULY 1988 - JUNE 1989**

<u>PROVIDERS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SUBMITTED EXPENSE</u>	<u>PAYABLE</u>
Providence Hospital	Anchorage	\$ 3,922,951	\$ 3,905,752
Humana Hospital	Anchorage	2,046,073	2,027,433
Charter North Hospital	Anchorage	1,750,962	1,738,634
Bartlett Memorial Hospital	Juneau	1,591,269	1,567,946
Fairbanks Memorial Hosp	Fairbanks	1,265,681	1,250,062
University Hospital	Seattle	490,297	488,952
Swedish Hospital Med Ctr	Seattle	403,408	402,032
North Star Hospital	Anchorage	389,835	383,121
Valley Hospital Assoc	Palmer	311,450	310,050
Virginia Mason Hospital	Seattle	284,520	281,137
Children's Hosp & Med Ctr	Seattle	274,601	274,294
Charter Medical Corp	Provo	215,590	212,576
JFK Medical Ctr	Edison	199,501	199,760
Ketchikan General Hosp	Ketchikan	192,688	189,126
Hartwyck at Oak Tree	Edison	178,336	141,470
Lakeside Recovery Ctr	Alaska	172,794	168,316
Central Peninsula General	Soldotna	164,519	162,664
University Medical Ctr	Tucson	155,431	147,581
Sitka Community Hosp	Sitka	120,347	118,060
Manor West Hosp	Los Angeles	101,387	100,386

**STATE OF ALASKA
TOP 20 OUTPATIENT FACILITIES
RANKED BY SUBMITTED EXPENSES
1987**

<u>PROVIDERS</u>	<u>PROVIDER TYPE*</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SUBMITTED EXPENSE</u>
Providence Hospital	HS	Anchorage	\$ 1,595,624
Bartlett Memorial Hospital	HS	Juneau	1,183,900
Humana Hospital	HS	Anchorage	817,321
Fairbanks Memorial Hospital	HS	Fairbanks	720,431
Sitka Community Hospital	HS	Sitka	360,314
Valley Hospital Association	HS	Palmer	273,070
Ketchikan General Hospital	HS	Ketchikan	242,990
University Hospital	HS	Seattle	195,675
Central Peninsula Hospital	HS	Soldotna	172,127
Swedish Hospital Med Ctr	HS	Seattle	137,355
Virginia Mason Hospital	HS	Seattle	125,654
Bartlett Memorial Hospital	HS	Juneau	122,282
Norton Sound Regional Hosp	HS	Nome	104,308
Kodiak Island Hospital	HS	Kodiak	93,749
Petersburg General Hospital	HS	Petersburg	83,890
South Peninsula Hospital	HS	Homer	71,797
Valdez Community Hospital	HS	Valdez	61,298
Lakeside Recovery Center	AT	Bothell	60,581
Cordova Community Hosp	HS	Cordova	59,566
Seward General Hospital	HS	Seward	57,226

* HS - Hospital

* AT - Alcoholism Treatment Facility

**STATE OF ALASKA
TOP 20 OUTPATIENT FACILITIES
RANKED BY SUBMITTED EXPENSES
1988**

<u>PROVIDERS</u>	<u>PROVIDER TYPE*</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SUBMITTED EXPENSE</u>
Providence Hospital	HS	Anchorage	\$1,657,284
Bartlett Memorial Hospital	HS	Juneau	1,450,677
Fairbanks Memorial Hospital	HS	Fairbanks	1,011,416
Humana Hospital	HS	Anchorage	966,929
Our Lady of Comp Care Ctr	CF	Anchorage	512,832
Sitka Community Hospital	HS	Sitka	435,684
Valley Hospital Association	HS	Palmer	356,429
Ketchikan General Hospital	HS	Ketchikan	253,381
University Hospital	HS	Seattle	243,503
Virginia Mason Hospital	HS	Juneau	223,973
Central Peninsula Hospital	HS	Soldotna	201,414
Norton Sound Regional Hosp	HS	Nome	186,407
Swedish Hospital Med Ctr	HS	Seattle	177,489
Petersburg General Hospital	HS	Petersburg	93,861
Alaska Treatment Ctr	OT	Anchorage	86,854
South Peninsula Hospital	HS	Homer	74,815
Valdez Community Hospital	HS	Valdez	59,352
Charter North Hosp	HS	Anchorage	56,258
Seward General Hospital	HS	Seward	53,574
Kodiak Island Hospital	HS	Kodiak	45,456

* HS - Hospital
* CF - Convalescent Facility
* OT - Other

**STATE OF ALASKA
TOP 20 OUTPATIENT FACILITIES
RANKED BY SUBMITTED EXPENSES
1989**

<u>PROVIDERS</u>	<u>PROVIDER TYPE*</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SUBMITTED EXPENSE</u>
Bartlett Memorial Hospital	HS	Juneau	\$ 1,060,108
Providence Hospital	HS	Anchorage	975,393
Fairbanks Memorial Hospital	HS	Fairbanks	585,295
Humana Hospital	HS	Anchorage	484,297
Valley Hospital Association	HS	Palmer	206,937
Sitka Community Hospital	HS	Sitka	129,984
Ketchikan General Hospital	HS	Ketchikan	115,751
Central Peninsula Hospital	HS	Soldotna	106,197
University Hospital	HS	Seattle	95,728
Norton Sound Regional Hosp	HS	Nome	91,526
Virginia Mason Hospital	HS	Seattle	74,348
Swedish Hospital Med Ctr	HS	Seattle	68,668
Kodiak Island Hospital	HS	Kodiak	51,329
Search Mt. Edgecombe Hosp	HS	Sitka	50,793
Petersburg General Hospital	HS	Petersburg	48,814
South Peninsula Hospital	HS	Homer	37,694
Seward General Hospital	HS	Seward	34,003
Our Lady of Comp Care Ctr	CF	Anchorage	31,230
Valdez Community Hospital	HS	Valdez	26,983
Deaconess Medical Ctr	HS	Spokane	26,259

* HS - Hospital

EXHIBIT E
HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

	<u>Fully Insured</u>	<u>Premium Delay</u>	<u>Retrospective Premium</u>	<u>Minimum Premium</u>	<u>Minimum Premium Reserve Less</u>	<u>Self-Funded w/Stop-Loss</u>	<u>Fully Self-Funded</u>
Claim Fluctuation Margin	Paid To Carrier	Paid To Carrier	State Retains	State Retains	State Retains	State Retains	State Retains
Incurred But Not Report Reserve	Paid To Carrier	Paid To Carrier	Paid To Carrier	Paid To Carrier	State Retains	State Retains	State Retains
Claim Liability	Carrier	Carrier	Carrier	State Up To Deposit Liability ⁽¹⁾	State Up To Deposit Liability ⁽²⁾	State ⁽³⁾	State
Expenses	Paid To Carrier	Paid To Carrier	Paid To Carrier	Paid To Carrier	Paid To Carrier	State Retains	State Retains
Who Pays Claims	Carrier	Carrier	Carrier	Carrier	Carrier	Claims Administrator	Claims Administrator
Grace Period	31 Days	90 Days	31 Days	31 Days	31 Days	N/A	N/A

(1,2) - Carrier assumes liability for benefit payments which exceeds policyholder's limit.

(3) - State assumes liability up to stop-loss (reinsurance) point.

SCOMM

68:3



STATE OF ALASKA
HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT
TASK FORCE REPORT
TO
THE SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE

RELATING TO THE ACCESS, QUALITY, DELIVERY AND
FINANCING OF
HEALTH CARE FOR ALL ALASKA RESIDENTS

WITH
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FEBRUARY 1991

**STATE OF ALASKA
HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT
TASK FORCE**

MEMBERSHIP

SENATOR JIM DUNCAN, CHAIRMAN

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE NAVARRE, VICE CHAIRMAN

SENATOR DRUE PEARCE

REPRESENTATIVE MARK BOYER

MS. MICHELLE CASTANEDO

MR. BRUCE CUMMINGS

MR. DON HITCHCOCK

MS. BARBARA HUFF

MS. KAREN PERDUE

MR. GREG O'CLARAY

MR. JEFFREY MALEK, CONSULTANT

**STATE OF ALASKA
HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE**

REPORT TO THE SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this section of this report is to give an overall perspective of the problems facing Alaska with rapidly rising health care costs and illustrate Task Force recommendations that provide solutions to assure affordable quality health care access to all Alaska residents.

OVERVIEW

Health care costs in Alaska are rising at a pace two and three times the inflation rate for all other goods and services. In 1990, total Alaska health care expenditures are estimated to be in excess of \$1.5 billion up from \$480 million in 1979. Without a plan for a long term health care delivery system, quality assurance, and financing management, total health care expenditures in Alaska will exceed \$10.0 billion by the year 2000 of which the state governments portion will be \$3.0 billion. (see exhibit one on page 10)

Health care expenditures in Alaska have been rising at a rate of over 20% each of the last five years. These trends are not unique to Alaska alone. Health care expenditures in the U.S. exceeded \$606 billion in 1989 and consumed twelve percent of our Gross National Product. Nationally, the Federal Government and virtually all other states are seeking ways to reduce these expenditures or slow the health care inflation rate to be in line with the market basket Consumer Price Index.

These rapidly rising costs further exacerbate the uninsured population in Alaska, recent estimates indicate that more than 90,000 Alaska residents are uninsured. At this rate twenty-five percent of Alaskas' population will be uninsured by the year 2000¹(see exhibit two on page 11). These increase in costs have substantially driven up health insurance premiums for all employers, making it very difficult if not impossible, to continue to provide or offer coverage.

¹ Families U.S.A. Foundation

The Health Care Cost Containment Task Force initially was charged with the task of investigating, analyzing and recommending ways to reduce or stabilize the health insurance costs for State of Alaska employees, retirees and their dependents

With these recommendations implemented, the monthly premium cost was reduced and stabilized at \$385.00 until January 31, 1992, resulting in net savings in excess of \$20 million for FY 90 & 91².

The Task Forces' charge was expanded early last session to include reviewing the delivery, quality, access and financing of health care for all Alaska residents.

The Task Force, in its expanded role, has investigated the problem of rapidly increasing health care costs in Alaska through public testimony, surveys, research (statewide and nationally) and a detailed analysis of potential solutions.

During this review the Task Force has identified not a sole culprit but numerous contributing factors that must be reviewed in an all encompassing manner to provide the best long term solutions. The contributing factors identified by the Task Force include:

- * Inefficient Medical Care Delivery Systems
- * Overbuilt Health Care Facilities
- * Cost of New Medical Technology and Facilities
- * Malpractice Insurance and Protective Measure costs
- * Limited Competition For Providers / Insurers
- * Health Care Delivery System Waste, Overhead And Administrative Costs
- * Limited Wellness Promotion And Resources
- * Large Population of Under / Uninsured Residents
- * Cost Shifting Between Health Plans and Programs
- * Life Style Diseases and Injuries
- * Mandated Benefit Coverage
- * Limited Access to Private Health Plans

² 1990 Health Care Cost Containment Task Force Report

- **No Managed Care Delivery Systems in Place**
- **Lack of End User Involvement and Education**

Although a long and far reaching list each contributing area must be comprehensively addressed to achieve the stated goal of stabilized medical costs in Alaska and basic health care access for all Alaskans'.

SPECIFIC FINDINGS

The Health Care Cost Containment Task Force has been reviewing the causes for the rapidly rising costs in the State of Alaska not only for State sponsored plans, but health care costs statewide.

1. Health care expenditures in Alaska have *increased 300% over the last 10 years, the second highest in the nation*
2. The health care expenditures portion of the *State of Alaska budget is the fastest growing component of the whole budget, 385.5 Million in FY 90, and at this pace will exceed 3.0 Billion in FY 2000 (see exhibit one on page 10).*
3. The number of *uninsured residents in Alaska* has increased at an alarming rate to an *estimated 90,000 uninsured residents, representing 16.5% of the total population in Alaska. At this rate twenty five percent of Alaskas' population will be uninsured by the year 2000 (see exhibit two on page 11).*
4. The cost of providing health coverage for *State employees and their dependents* has been reduced and *stabilized at \$385.00 (per month, per employee) for FY 90 and 91.* This compares favorably with the most recent Survey of State's health care plans that showed *only one other state (Arizona) where premiums were reduced,* and only three other State's premiums were held at the 1989 level³. It is important to note that while these were important short term measures, a long term solution to this problem must be implemented soon to avoid further large rate increases.
5. One area that has come to light, and is significant in its impact on health care expenses, is cost or liability shifting between programs. It is an item of significant impact. When a health program either reduces benefits or payments the natural reaction by health care providers is to shift those costs to other payors.

³ 1990 Martin A. Segal Company Summary of State Health Plans

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey done by the Task Force was designed to give greater insight to health insurance plans offered by Alaska employers, the costs for these plans, who is covered by health insurance, along with additional data and perspectives from health care providers.

Over 300 surveys were mailed to various groups in Alaska including, municipalities, school districts, health care providers and private sector employers.

The survey questions were tailored to gather specific information relative to each category of respondent.

Questions ranged from those eligible / ineligible for employer health plans, number of employees, plan design, employee / employer contributions, cost containment measures implemented, premium costs, ideas to help reduce ever increasing health care costs and the reasons for these increasing costs. The questionnaires sent to health care providers had additional questions to determine their specific perspective about rising health care costs and certain contributing factors *i.e.*; bad debt, malpractice insurance costs and others.

The survey results gave us information that previously was not available such as, range of employer sponsored health plan designs, eligibility, associated premium costs, cost containment strategies employed, respondents perspective, and impressions about the health care delivery system in Alaska.

In comparison to the State of Alaska active employee health plan, the survey results showed that the state no longer had either the most expensive health plan (64% of respondents plans premium or premium equivalent was in excess of the states \$385. per month) and no longer was the States plan the best in coverage (54% of respondents provide similar or better benefits).

Surprisingly 94% of the respondents do offer some form of health insurance to their full-time employees while none of the respondents provide coverage for part-time, seasonal, or occasional employees.

The majority of respondents have implemented ways to reduce their health plan costs. Seventy one percent of respondents have implemented at least two cost containment measures. Sixty percent have also made benefit changes in the last two years.

In addition respondents also are implementing alternate financing of health insurance. Thirty one percent of the respondents have self insured their plans.

The survey confirmed earlier information that the majority of health insurance in Alaska is underwritten by three carriers, Aetna, Blue Cross and Great West insurance companies.

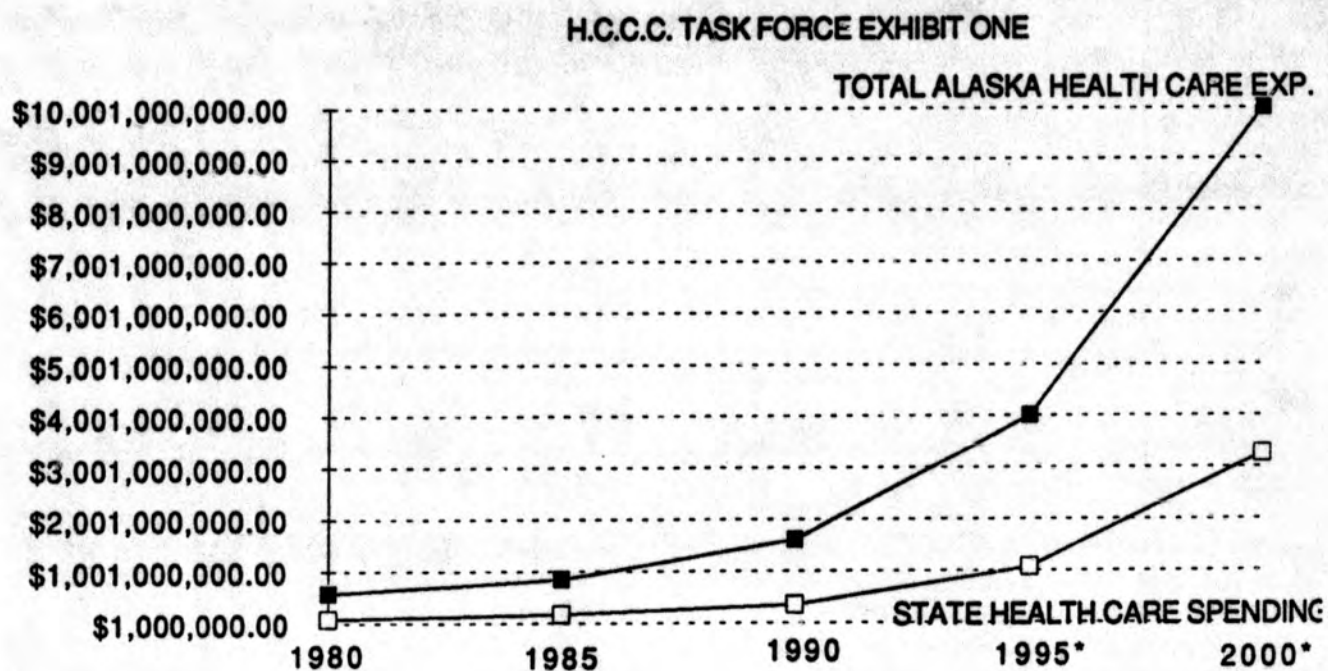
THE FUTURE

The State of Alaska Health Care Cost Containment Task Force has reviewed and recommended ways to reduce health care costs in the short term, but in order to assure quality affordable health care protection for all Alaskans a long term strategy such as the Alaska State Health Resources Authority (ASHRA) outlined in the legislative recommendations, section 8, of this report must be implemented.

In addition, because of the size and scope of the health care related problems facing the state of Alaska the Task Force recommends that a group comprised of a cross section of Alaska employers, health care providers, legislature, Executive branch, nonprofit, uninsureds and consumers continue the work of the Health Care Cost Containment Task Force to continue towards the goal of assuring quality affordable health care for all Alaskans.

EXHIBIT: ONE

Exhibit one demonstrates the rise in health care spending in Alaska from 1980 through the year 2000.



Source, Noble Lowndes

Illustrates total health care expenditures in Alaska

1980=\$576. million, 1985=\$852. million, 1990=\$1.608 billion
1995=\$4.0 billion*, 2000=\$10.0 billion*

Illustrates health care spending by the State .

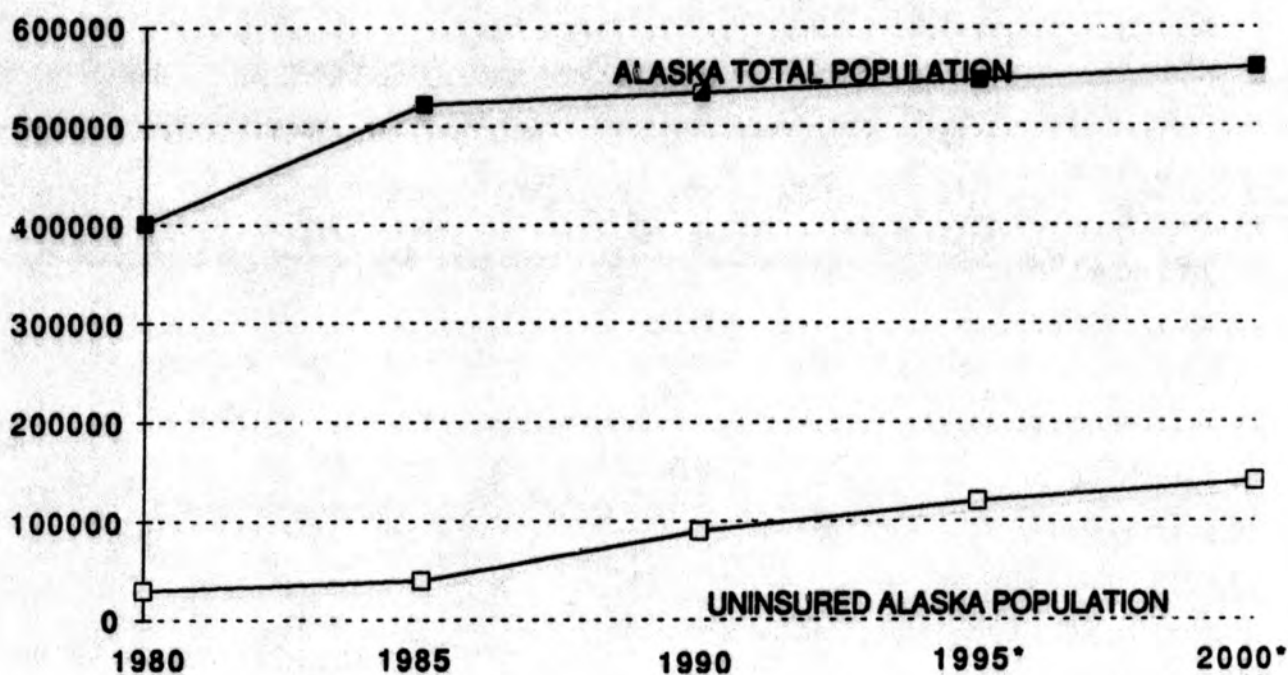
1980=\$75. million, 1985=\$175. million, 1990=\$350. million
1995=\$1.068 billion*, 2000=\$3.26 billion*

* estimate

EXHIBIT : TWO

Exhibit two illustrates Alaska's total population and the population of residents without health insurance (uninsured).

**H.C.C.C. TASK FORCE EXHIBIT TWO - COMPARISON OF ALASKA'S
UNINSURED TO TOTAL POPULATION**



Source, Noble Lowndes

Illustrates total Alaska population.

1980= 401,000, 1985= 522,000, 1990= 534,000
1995= 547,000, 2000= 560,000

Illustrates the uninsured population in Alaska.

1980= 30,000, 1985= 40,000, 1990= 90,000
1995= 120,000*, 2000= 140,000*

* estimates

**STATE OF ALASKA
HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE
REPORT**

SECTION ONE

TASK FORCE WORK PLAN AND OBJECTIVES

WORK PLAN AND OBJECTIVES

One of the major realizations of the previous year's work was that the health cost experience and expectations of any one particular group, such as state employees, cannot be viewed in isolation. Influences from the cost of service to all other health care consumers and correlated systemic factors contribute a significant portion to any one group's eventual cost, regardless of use.

Last session the work plan for the Task Force was redesigned to address unresolved health care cost issues identified in the February, 1990 report to the legislature. These issues included concerns about such long term and destabilizing effects as cost shifting, uncompensated care, and health delivery system inefficiencies. Other issues were identified that in a preliminary way held promise for some measure of control or alleviation of the health care cost spiral. In addition to this work, the Task Force would monitor closely the effects of cost containment measures established for state employee health plans and seek appropriate containment measures for retired public employees.

The main objectives of the plan were to understand, in as complete a manner possible, the financial nature of Alaskans' health care and health care delivery system. Secondly, the Task Force sought a broad spectrum of opinions about what could be done to preserve or improve access to quality affordable health care for all Alaskans in the context of financial trends and constraints.

These objectives were served by analyses of all health care funding and expenditures in the state, and informational surveys of municipalities, school districts, health care providers, and health care facilities. Information on the Alaskan perspective was additionally obtained from three public hearings and other meetings with the following groups:

- * Alaska School Board Association
- * Alaska Municipal League
- * Alaska Municipal Finance Officers' Association
- * Alaska Hospital and Nursing Home Association
- * Alaska State Medical Association
- * Alaska Chiropractic Society
- * Anchorage Medical Society
- * Alaskan private sector employer group
- * National Education Association of Alaska
- * Alaska State Employees Association
- * Public Employees Retirement System Advisory Board
- * Teachers Retirement System Advisory Board

The Task Force recognized that the health care problems it was addressing were also being discussed in other states, public forums, and by research groups throughout the nation. Indeed, the issue has attracted considerable attention in professional journals and other print media. An appreciation for the larger context of health care cost and access, viable solutions were gained through meetings and discussions with the following:

- * National Governors' Association Conference on Affordable Health Care
- * American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Washington, D.C.
- * Families USA Foundation (Senior citizen advocacy group)

- * National Leadership Commission on Health Care
- * Physicians Payment Review Commission (Congressional)
- * State of Maryland, Health Services Cost Review Commission
- * State of Washington
- * State of Hawaii
- * State of Minnesota
- * State of Wisconsin
- * State of Arizona
- * State of New Mexico
- * State of Massachusetts
- * State of Oregon
- * State of Oklahoma
- * State of Utah
- * State of Kansas
- * State of South Carolina
- * State of Louisiana
- * State of California
- * State of Colorado
- * State Alliance for Universal Health Care

The health care funding and expenditure analyses were based in part on all federal, state, and local government expenditures for different categories of health care and groups of people. State data included, in addition to employee and retiree costs, the health costs of prisoners, medicaid, Pioneer Homes, Alaska Psychiatric Institute, and rural health aides, among others. Similarly, federal data included military and military dependents' expenditures, Indian Health Service, veterans, and medicare. In all categories the number of Alaskans benefitted were determined or estimated. Alaska Department of Labor statistics were used for the private sector labor force to estimate the private sector's contribution. Two recent studies, the 1990 Health Care Cost Containment Task Force Report and the Families USA Foundation gave new estimates of the

number of Alaskans who are without health insurance or any other type of medical care. In contrast to the funding and expenditure side, revenue reports of all major health care institutions were obtained and consolidated.

Municipalities and school districts were target groups for the informational survey because they are large employee groups whose health care cost increases most directly affect state budgetary considerations. The survey sought specific information on their health plan cost increases over the last ten years, the nature of the benefit, and cost containment features employed. The survey also had questions on the effectiveness of cost containment measures and solicited opinions on what could be done to slow medical inflation.

Survey forms sent to health care facilities and health care providers were to determine the nature of their employees' health care coverage and cost experience. Additional information requested concerned the nature of their business as providers. This information included percentages of practice devoted to different categories of payors (medicare, medicaid, state employee, et. al.), the amount of uncompensated services, its increase, and the amount of fee and rate increases over the last ten years.

The expenditure and funding analyses and the survey information provided a useful foundation for meetings with the Alaskan groups listed above. They illustrated the overall nature of the issue and brought focus to the discussions. In addition to the information gained, the meetings with the second group listed above underscored the gravity with which other health care professionals, public officials, labor and management organizations view the health care cost and accessibility issue. It gave the Task Force a sense of commonality in its search for a solution.

**STATE OF ALASKA
HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE
REPORT**

SECTION TWO

STATE EMPLOYEE AND RETIREE PLAN UPDATE & RESULTS

STATE OF ALASKA EMPLOYEE AND RETIREE HEALTH PLAN UPDATE

The Health Care Cost Containment Task Force continued to review and monitor the health plans for actives and retirees during the last year.

ACTIVE EMPLOYEE HEALTH PLAN

This work resulted in the continued moratorium on premium increases for the active employees plan. This resulted in the monthly premiums being held at the \$ 385.00 level until January 31, 1992 allowing state agencies substantial relief from increasing costs associated with health insurance. This resulted in savings in excess of \$20 million for FY90, 91.

The Task Force strongly encourages the State to continue to review the possibility of self or alternate funding the plan to improve the plans financial position and overall management. In addition, the State should during the Request For Proposal process for the state plan request proposals for both an all inclusive and unbundled basis. That is, major components (cost containment, utilization review, etc.) should be bid collectively and separately to determine the most advantageous end result.

RETIREES HEALTH PLAN

The Task Force reviewed and recommended cost management techniques that could be utilized by the retirees health plan to improve the plans financial experience, without compromising the current level of benefits.

These recommended cost management techniques were ratified by the Public Employees Retirement System and the Teachers Retirement System boards and are currently being implemented. These changes will not only reduce the premium requirements but also may improve the funds future.

**STATE OF ALASKA
HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE
REPORT**

SECTION THREE

**HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES IN ALASKA
AND
THE UNITED STATES**

HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES IN THE UNITED STATES

The amount spent on health care in the United States exceeded \$606 billion in 1989, which is approximately twelve percent of our gross national product. Health care expenditures in the U.S. are increasing at the rate of approximately twenty percent per year each of the last five years

The U.S. spends \$1.152 million per minute on health care and is increasing \$230,000. per minute.

The U.S. spends 12 % of our GNP on health care more than any of our allied neighbors (Canada=7.5%, Japan=8%, Great Britain=7%). These expenditures have a substantial negative effect on our ability to remain competitive in the world market place.

Health care expenses consumed 11.6% of U.S. residents disposable income in 1989 and impacts every purchase decision made today. For example it is estimated that \$700.00 of the purchase price for each new Chrysler automobile goes to pay for employee health care, as compared to foreign models at about \$300.00. This demonstrates the additional financial burden of this sizable expense on our ability as a nation to compete in world markets for products and services.

Americans spent more for health care in 1989 than we did for food stuffs.

Of substantial additional concern is that while as a nation we spend more on health care than any other nation (12% of GNP), fewer have access to health care protection, it is estimated that 38 million U.S. residents are without health insurance.

ALASKA HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES

The amount spent on health care in Alaska exceeded \$1.5 billion in 1990 up from \$480 million in 1979. Alaska health care expenditures are increasing at the second fastest pace of the fifty states.

Alaska spends approximately \$2850.00 per minute on health care and is increasing by \$534.00 every minute. At the current rate of growth, and without health care reform, the total health care expenditures in Alaska will exceed \$10 billion by the year 2000.

Even though Alaska continues to spend more on health care there are fewer residents covered by health insurance. The Task Force estimates show that 90,000 Alaska residents are uninsured and without change 25% Alaskas' population will be uninsured by the year 2000.

With the increasing economic burden of health care expenditures, and the increasing number of residents without health care protection, Alaska is at a greater disadvantage than other states and nations to further its economy.

EXHIBITS THREE THRU SEVEN (On the following pages)

SOURCE: NOBLE LOWNDES 1991

Exhibit Three illustrates 1989 U.S. health care expenditures by source of payment, private sector employers, federal programs, state and local government programs, consumers and all others.

Exhibit Four illustrates 1989 Alaska health care expenditures by source of payment, private sector employers, federal programs, state and local government programs, consumers and all others.

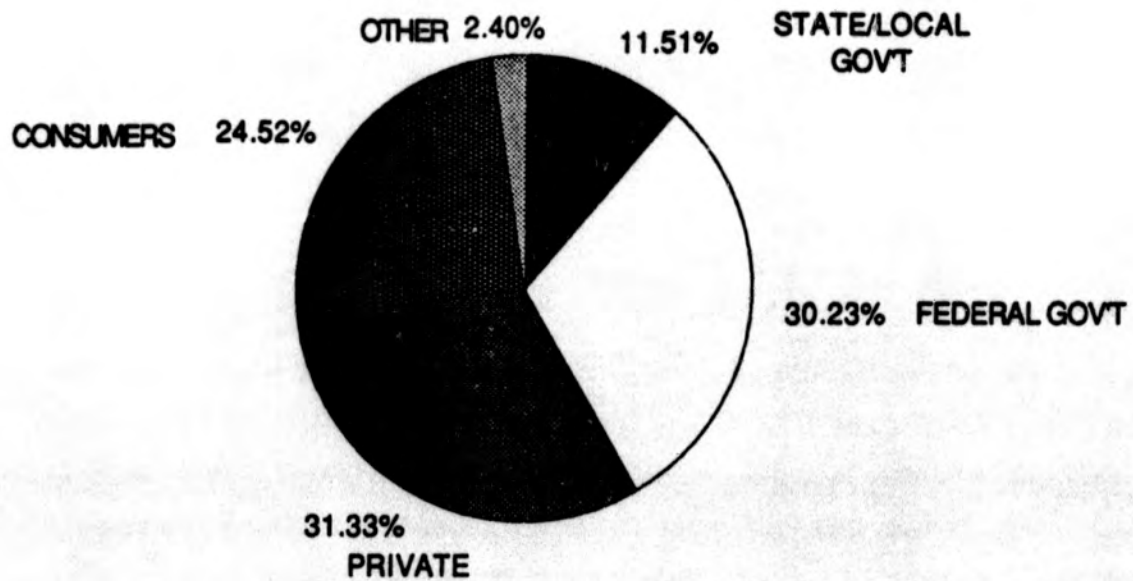
Exhibit Five illustrates Alaska health care expenditures from 1979 to 1989 and breaks down by payor (private sector, federal programs and state programs)

Exhibit Six illustrates Alaska state spending for 1989 categorized by program, medicaid, employees, retirees, municipal and political subdivisions, workers compensation, and other state funded health programs.

Exhibit Seven illustrates total Alaska health care expenditures as compared to total population to determine per capita expenses for health care.

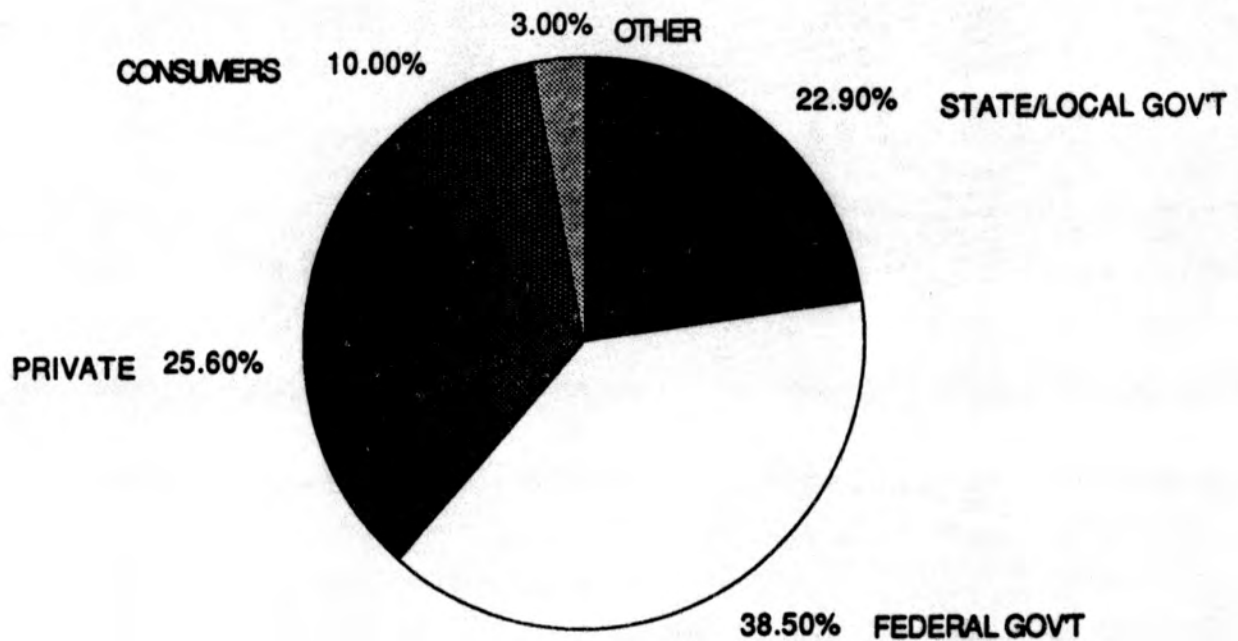
HCCC-TF EXHIBIT THREE

PERCENT OF U.S. HEALTH CARE EXP. BY SOURCE OF PAYOR



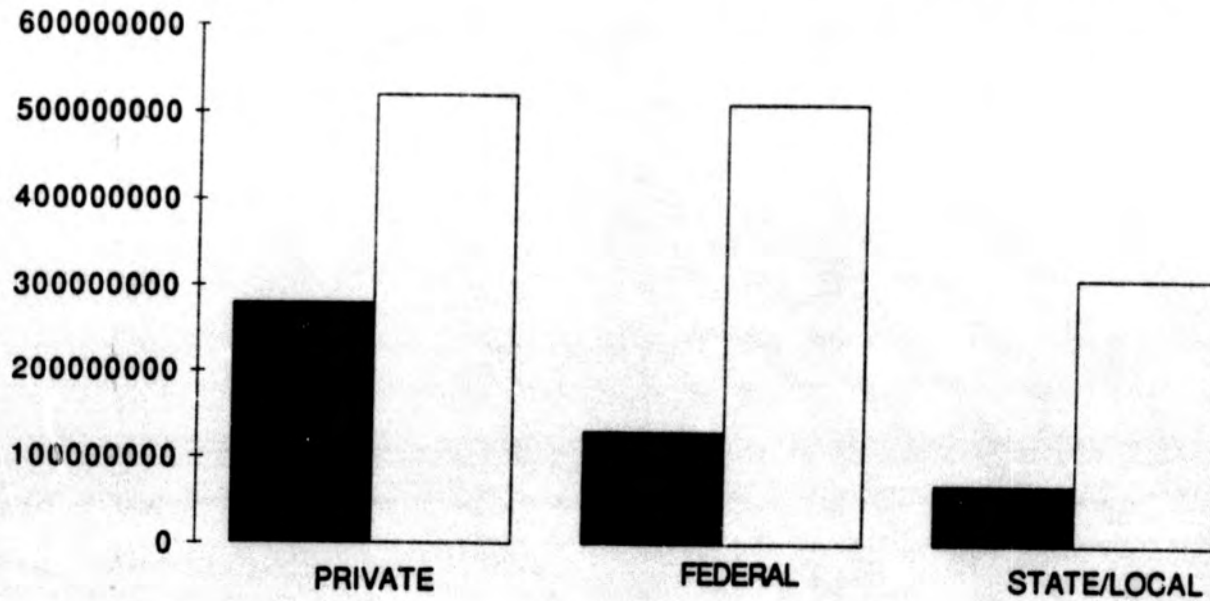
HCCC-TF EXHIBIT FOUR

PERCENT OF ALASKA HEALTH CARE EXP. BY SOURCE OF PAYOR



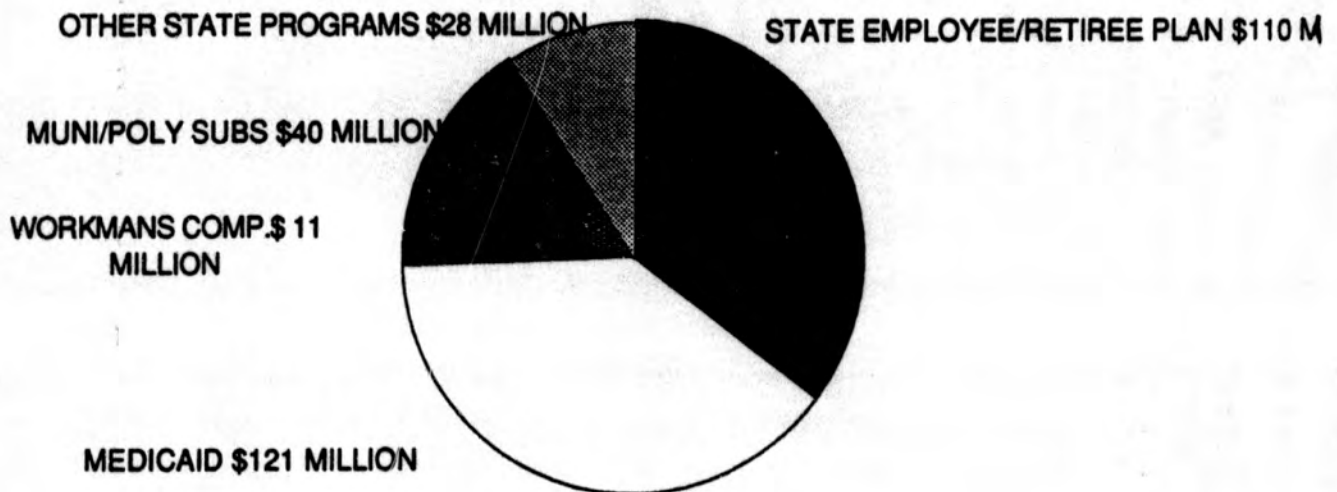
HCCC-TF EXHIBIT FIVE

STATE OF ALASKA HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES 1979 VS 1989



HCCC-TF EXHIBIT SIX

1989 STATE OF ALASKA HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES BY STATE PROGRAM



HCCC-TF EXHIBIT SEVEN

STATE OF ALASKA PER CAPITA HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS 1979-1989

	1979	1984	1989
POPULATION	401,000	522,000	534,000
HEALTH CARE EXP.	\$480. MILLION	\$710. MILLION	\$1.34 BILLION
PER CAPITA HEALTH CARE EXP.	\$1197.00	\$1360.00	\$2524.00

**STATE OF ALASKA
HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT TASK FORCE
REPORT**

SECTION FOUR

CAUSES OF RISING HEALTH CARE COSTS IN ALASKA

CAUSES OF RISING HEALTH CARE COSTS IN ALASKA

The Task Force in its expanded role, has investigated the problems and causes of rapidly rising health care expenditures in Alaska. The Task Force used public testimony, surveys, research (statewide & nationally) along with a detailed analysis of the delivery and financing of health care in Alaska in its investigation.

During this review the Task Force has identified not a sole culprit but numerous contributing factors that must be dealt with in an all encompassing manner to provide long term relief and health care expenditure management.

LIFE STYLE RELATED

Alaska residents like those in the lower 49 have seen increasing health care treatments due to life style injuries and diseases. These include alcohol and drug abuse, sports related injuries, cancer, AIDS and heart disease as the major expenditure causes in Alaska.

COST SHIFTING FROM OTHER HEALTH PROGRAMS

Alaska has to recognize the impact of cost shifting on the total cost of health care. When other programs either cut back or reimburse providers at lower levels these liabilities are directly transferred to other payors.

In addition, when programs make either enhancements or reductions in benefit levels these add additional costs or program burdens.

UNINSURED / UNDERINSURED ALASKA RESIDENTS

It is estimated that there are 90,000 Alaska residents that are without health care protection, in addition there are a substantial number that do not have adequate coverage.

These residents are prevented from regular preventative care that would eliminate more serious and costly future health care needs. Also compounding the health care cost problem is when the uninsured / underinsured residents receive treatment they cannot afford. This is recognized by the health care provider as uncompensated care, but this cost is generally spread out among the other payors.

NEED FOR PREVENTATIVE CARE, WELLNESS INCENTIVES AND HEALTH CARE EDUCATION

More and more evidence points out the significant value in promoting wellness and preventative medicine. Through health education and programs that cover and promote preventative medicine Alaskans could improve their overall health and help reduce unnecessary expenditures.

Health care education and preventative medicine programs must be designed with up to date information and continually adjusted to changing medical trends, findings and advancements. These programs must also continually educate the public and recognize changes in lifestyle, surroundings and perception of health.

One example of a health promotion, education and prevention program is the "Healthy Beginnings Program" recommended by the Health Care Cost Containment Task Force and instituted by the State for the employee health insurance plan in early 1990.

The "Healthy Beginnings Program" is a program for women and their babies starting with the first trimester, with screening for potential moderate or high risk pregnancies to determine steps necessary to eliminate or reduce the risk of a premature or unhealthy delivery.

The program centers around early intervention, education and wellness along with continued communication with the mother throughout her pregnancy.

Since the inception of the "New Beginnings Program" mothers who have participated in the program are reducing the number of low birth weight deliveries. The program has also saved the State Employee health plan millions of dollars.

Promoting health education, wellness and prevention is a cost effective way to help assure Alaska residents are receiving health care at the appropriate time and level of treatment necessary.

HIGH COST OF MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY AND WASTE

During the last five years two new facets of medical inflation have come to light. These are new technology and waste in the medical delivery system.

In recent years new technology in the form of equipment, procedures, treatments and medicines has greatly improved our ability as a nation to prolong life. While this has had a substantial effect on being able to keep people alive it has also come with substantial additional health care expenditures.

Alaska has also participated in this race for the newest and best medical technology. While we too have been able to improve the longevity of our residents the cost has been significant.

A method must be developed to assure that the technology is available to residents without duplication or undue cost to the health care delivery system. In addition we must weigh the benefits and cost of any new technology that has a substantial effect on the Alaska health care delivery system.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT MALPRACTICE INSURANCE COSTS

Malpractice insurance premiums and the associated costs continue to be a significant component of health care expenditures in Alaska. While many attempts have been made to improve and or reform the system no significant in roads have been made to reduce the overall costs.

Malpractice premiums paid to insurance companies are only one part of the equation. Of equal importance and much more difficult to measure is the practice of defensive medicine by health care providers attempting to avoid a "claim".

The problem is not only one of cost but of those providers who go without coverage or inadequate protection. It is estimated that approximately 25% of physicians and 50% of obstetric / gynecologic practitioners in Alaska are uninsured for malpractice.

The malpractice problem must be dealt with in any comprehensive strategy to manage health care expenditures in Alaska, it should be done on a systemic approach, including loss prevention, education, financing of protection and the ability to project and limit losses.

HEALTH INSURANCE CARRIERS ROLE

Health insurance carriers play an important role in the delivery and financing of health insurance in Alaska. In Alaska there are only seven insurance companies with any volume selling health insurance policies. Three nonresident companies have control of approximately 90% of the market place.

Alaska health insurance carriers have made constrictions in their underwriting standards and at the same time generally set premiums based on cost of claims plus overhead expenses & profit and instituted cost containment programs.

This limited the risk for carriers but placed additional burdens on access to health insurance adding to the population of those underinsured / uninsured.

It is recognized that writing and servicing health insurance policies in Alaska may be some what more expensive than in the other 49 states. However, Alaska is a large and growing marketplace that needs affordable health protection.

GROWTH OF NEW MANDATED COVERAGES AND HEALTH CARE SPECIALTIES

Alaska like most other states has passed a number of measures (sixteen since 1985) that mandate additional coverages for health care services in health insurance policies. This proliferation of mandated coverages adds to overall health care expenditures in Alaska.

Although many of these measures can be justified, in the future all measures that expand the mandated coverage list should be evaluated by the legislature for total long term impact on the health care delivery system in Alaska.

New health care specialties have become an important component in the Alaska health care delivery system however, the trade off is a reduction in primary care providers especially in the rural areas.

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND RETENTION

The future of the health care delivery system in Alaska revolves around the ability to train and retain quality health care professionals in Alaska. The programs in place today must be revisited and revised to keep up with the primary and emergency care needs of Alaska especially in rural Alaska.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Alaska has no central authority to provide health care planning, review of delivery, quality, access, and financing of health care protection. Alaska needs to have, in place, as the Health Care Cost Containment Task Force recommended, long term strategies to assure the medical delivery system remains accessible and affordable.