

ALASKA LEGISLATURE SPECIAL COMMITTEE/SUBJECT FILE 8672
2203 SCOMM 86: HEALTH RESOURCES & ACCESS TASK FORCE, 1991-93

221

John Shaffer, consumer and AARP member, expressed concern for the high cost of health care and health insurance. He cited a 20% increase in premiums in one year. He urged the task force to make insurance affordable and available.

PETERSBURG
501

Gary Grandy, Administrator of Petersburg Hospital, voiced his concern regarding federally funded hospitals competing with private hospitals. He suggested a possible change in the present federal policies (i.e., IHS patients can only stay at a private hospital 3 days, then the patient must be moved to an IHS-funded facility in Anchorage or Sitka). He recommended a system similar to Medicaid, where private hospitals could provide services and be reimbursed by the federal government in this case, IHS. He also expressed concern over the lack of available health insurance, and suggested the task force look at a 50/50 program where half of the funding for policies for the uninsured be paid out of the permanent fund and half by the State.

KETCHIKAN
569

Erma Mead, a consumer, cited several problems including the high cost of medical care, slow reimbursement process for Medicare recipients, extensive testing spurred on by defensive medicine and the high cost of medical malpractice premiums. She suggested that one claim form be used for all medical care.

JUNEAU
I-B
588

Betty Stidolph, small business owner, spoke to both the lack of available and high cost of health insurance. She expressed her concern for the small business owner who cannot afford to offer insurance to employees. She addressed the adverse impact of losing trained employees to the State or other large organizations who are able to afford health insurance. She also shared her family's experience concerning their loss of insurance when it was discovered that her husband had a condition which made him uninsurable. She urged the task force to implement a program which would emphasize preventive services and incentives for reducing utilization.

WRANGELL
502

Laureen McGee, nurse and consumer, cited several problems with the Medicare program including no preventive services or dental care reimbursement, and the number and complexity of forms. She also shared her experience in contacting Medicare representatives (took her 3 days and the representatives were uncooperative).

SITKA
457

Dick Wilson, consumer and member of the Alliance for the Mentally Ill, urged the task force to include preventive services in the benefit plan, especially for prenatal care. He explained that some forms of mental illness are linked to iron deficiencies. He was concerned by the lack of physicians in rural communities. He further urged that early intervention programs be part of the health plan the task force recommends.

KETCHIKAN
359

Lois Gordon, member of AARP, gave a brief presentation on "Health Care America", the national health care plan AARP is proposing.

317

Karen Peterson, a seasonal worker, explained that she does not have medical insurance and has not for two years. She cannot afford the high premiums. She suggests an option to purchase insurance through the State with premiums on an income/sliding scale basis with the Permanent Fund Dividend paying for a portion.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE AT THE
MAT-SU COMMUNITY MEETING AND TELECONFERENCE
GLENNALLEN, VALDEZ AND CORDOVA
OCTOBER 13, 1992

Senator Jay Kerttula, Co-Chair
Dr. Rodman Wilson, Co-Chair

WASILLA

Marjorie Campbell, consumer and worker in the health care field, expressed her concerns regarding expensive medical equipment and the practice of defensive medicine. She feels they are large contributors to the high cost of medical care. She told of a friend's experiences and their eventual move to Canada for medical treatment. She urged support for prenatal services, and the use of the Permanent Fund Dividend in funding health insurance.

Bea Turner, a retired teacher, shared her personal dilemma concerning long-term care. Her husband has Parkinson's Disease, and is still living at home. She is his primary caregiver, but has some assistance from friends. She wishes to keep her husband at home as long as possible, but fears the day will come when she will no longer be able to care for him. The waiting list to get into the Pioneer's Home is very long, and the monthly cost of placing her husband in a nursing home is exorbitant -- \$8,000 - \$9,000 per month. She would be required to exhaust all of their savings, and give up their car, home and any other assets before her husband could receive any help from Medicaid. She urged the task force to support AARP's "Health Care America" Plan.

CORDOVA

Brian Gilbert, Administrator of the Cordova Hospital, voiced his concern about the high cost of health care and health insurance. He expressed concerns regarding federally funded hospitals (IHS) competing with private hospitals, and the concept of health care rationing.

VALDEZ

Dan Moeller, Administrator of Valdez hospital, spoke to the problems of high medical costs (citing one incident of a patient being charged \$10,000 for less than 24 hours hospital stay) and health insurance. He testified in support of universal health care.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE AT THE
DELTA JUNCTION, TOK, AND NENANA TELECONFERENCE
OCTOBER 14, 1992

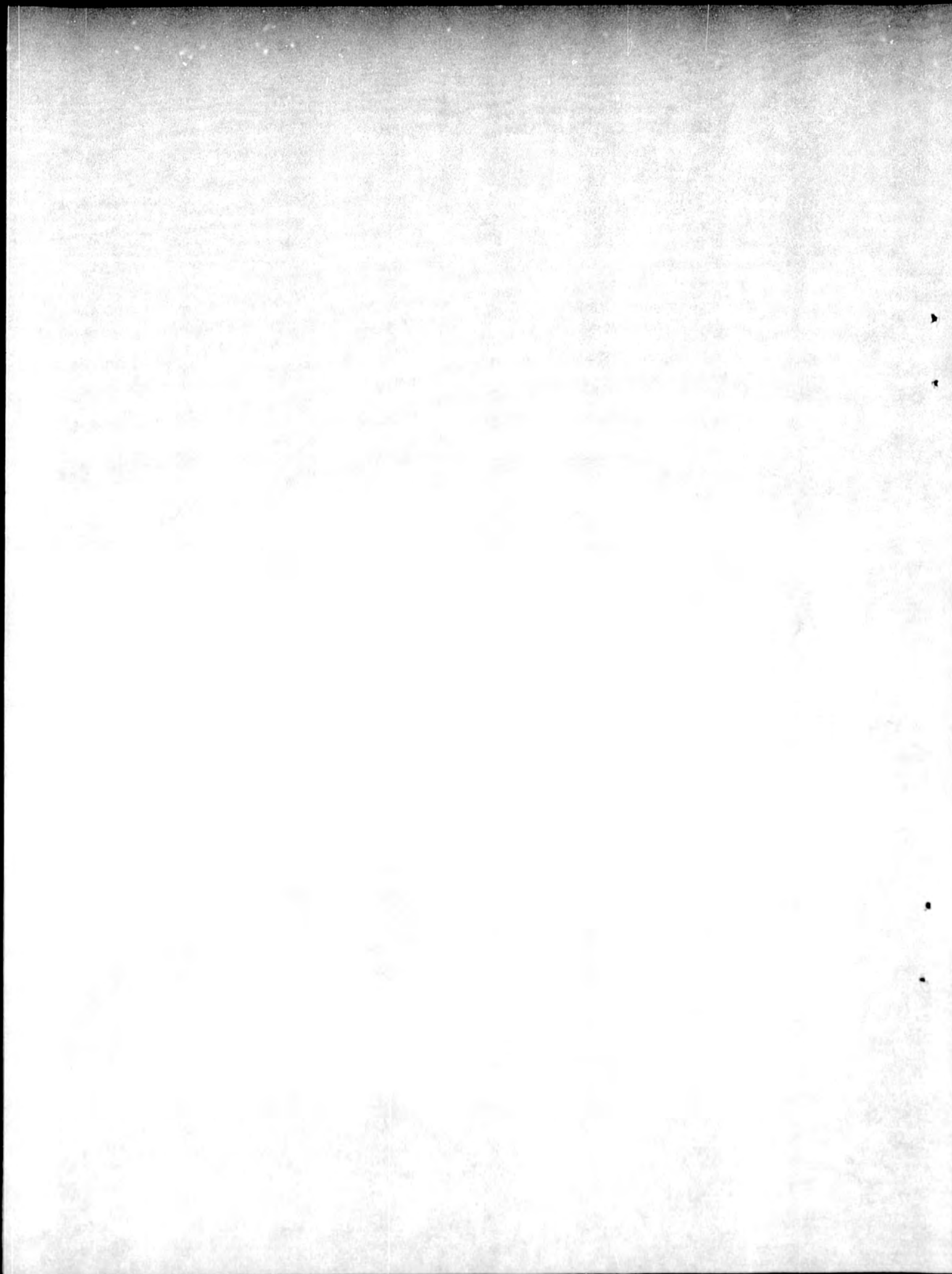
Rep. Mark Boyer, Co-Chair
Karen Perdue, Co-Chair

DELTA JUNCTION

Janice Templin-Weller, a part-time public health nurse, described the impact that low funding levels from the Department of Health and Social Services has on her clients (i.e. lack of privacy in her office (space donated by the senior citizen group), and lack of phone access). Janice further addressed the access problems residents have saying a large portion of the community are either seasonal workers or self-employed and delay treatment because they lack health insurance, and in many cases, must travel to Fairbanks for treatment. If affordable health insurance were available, she believes, many would purchase it, particularly those with children.

TOK

Penny Pfeffer, a public health nurse, spoke to access problems. She stated many residents delay medical care because they must travel to Fairbanks for care, and they lack health insurance. If affordable health insurance were available, she believes many would purchase it, particularly those with children. Penny also expressed concern about the lack of emergency medical services.



SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE AT THE
KOTZEBUE, NOME, AND BETHEL TELECONFERENCE
OCTOBER 15, 1992

Dr. Rodman Wilson, Co-Chair
Trish O'Gorman, Co-Chair

BETHEL

Joan Hamilton, a consumer and IHS beneficiary, stated her concern for non-Natives who have no insurance coverage. She has insurance coverage through her employer for herself, and has purchased insurance for her son because she prefers to have continuity in health care, which is not available through IHS. Joan urged the task force to support preventive services. She also expressed concern regarding the slow reimbursement rate from insurance companies, and questioned the necessity of such complicated forms. She proposed that insurance companies streamline their claim forms.

KOTZEBUE

Arllys Loew, a public health nurse, testified that the health practitioner system is working very well in the villages. However, she stated access is reduced because of high travel and hotel accommodation costs. IHS pays for only one-way airplane ticket and hotel accommodations are the patient's responsibility. As a result, many delay treatment. She urged the task force to support healthy lifestyles and preventive services.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE AT THE
SOLDOTNA/KENAI, HOMER AND SEWARD
COMMUNITY MEETING AND TELECONFERENCE
OCTOBER 19, 1992

Rep. Mike Navarre, Co-Chair
Jerry Near, Co-Chair

SEWARD

Judy Aravis, a nurse, expressed her concern about the high cost of medical care and health insurance. She is in support of a pay-or-play system and preventive services. She further stated she feels it is an individual's responsibility to provide for their own care, but feels some subsidies may be necessary for pregnant women and children.

Sue Clifton, a consumer, shared her experiences with and without health insurance over the years. She urged the task force to support preventive services, low-income subsidies for pregnant women and children, and community rating. She also expressed her concern for the high cost of medical care and the high cost and lack of available health insurance. She also advocated for malpractice reform including a clear and convincing evidence clause. Sue stated it has been cheaper to pay for hospital bills than health insurance premiums.

HOMER

James Hood, testified in support of alternative medical treatment for consumers, and a single payer system.

George Plagenz, a consumer and commercial fisherman, urged the task force to act now and not to wait for the federal government to address the high cost of medical care and health insurance. He supported dedication of funds and feels the public is ready for that kind of a change in the system.

HOMER

Patricia Boily, a health care worker, expressed her concern about the high cost of medical care and health insurance. She further voiced her concern that a select few get health coverage and recommends the State provide health coverage to all Alaskans as soon as possible.

SOLDOTNA

Jeanne Berger, a health care provider, testified that there are no preventive resources available. She urged support of programs which would have facilities and staff available to provide health education, nutritional counseling (particularly for pregnant women and diabetics) preventive services, and health care for pregnant women and children.

Cindy Rae Schoolcroft, a consumer, who has experienced chronic health problems and is now disabled, shared her concern about the lack of available health insurance due to pre-existing conditions. She further expressed support for patient's choice of alternative medicine.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE AT THE
FAIRBANKS COMMUNITY MEETING
OCTOBER 20, 1992

Rep. Mark Boyer, Co-Chair
Dr. David Mather, Co-Chair
Karen Perdue, Co-Chair

FAIRBANKS

Teresa Lyons, President of the Fairbanks Association of Critical Care Nurses, testified in support of fundamental health care reform. She further stated that the reform package should include health care for all Alaskans, and in particular, should address long-term care, prenatal care, basic services, and tort reform.

Anne Harrison, a nurse, spoke in support of the "Nurses Agenda for Health Care Reform", and urged support of a basic health care package. She expressed concerns regarding the pharmaceutical industry's exploitative practices. She urged the task force to support legislation which would empower the consumer.

Phyllis Hunsucker, testified in support of comprehensive health care reform. She stated she is concerned about the high cost of medical care and health insurance premiums.

Dr. Roger Harding, a pathologist at Fairbanks Hospital, expressed his views on the high cost of health insurance, and the necessity for individuals to be personally responsible. He went on to say that Medicare should be available only for those who need it.

Margaret Soden, a pharmacist who works for a small employer, testified that pharmaceutical companies are making outrageous profits. She cited problems with the obtaining insurance, including high premiums, the lack of availability in many cases, and underwriting practices. She expressed support for the Oregon plan, and urged the task force to support a benefit plan for all Alaskans.

Cedar Dvorin, a social worker, urged the task force to consider the National Association of Social Workers' plan. She is in support of a single payer system, but feels it is an individual's responsibility to contribute. She added that the Permanent Fund Dividend could provide a portion of the funding. She also urged the task force to support preventive services and drug and alcoholism treatment.

Patrick Shier, a labor negotiator for the State, testified he believes everyone is responsible for the current health care crisis. He urged all the parties to come to the table, particularly the insurance industry.

Terria Sorensen, a consumer and small business employee with no insurance coverage, expressed concern at the high cost of health care and health insurance. She is worried that should a family member become seriously ill, they would lose their home. Terria added she would be willing to contribute to purchasing health insurance if any affordable plans were available.

Marlene Leak, pediatricist, cited problems with the current system including exclusions for pre-existing conditions on health insurance policies. She opposes government involvement and the pay-or-play system. She supports tax breaks for preventive care, and the creation of pools where the premiums could be invested and later used for the individual's health care needs.

Herb Melchior, a consumer, stated there needs to be massive behavioral changes, providers need to offer better information to patients, and alternative health care should be available.

Mike Mayberry, President-elect of Staff Council for the University of Alaska, testified the University's costs for health insurance is rising dramatically. They are looking at some strategies to control costs and increasing co-payments.

Anita Bush, a critical care nurse and part-time instructor at the University, cited many have mentioned the Oregon plan and reluctantly admitted that it includes rationing. She states that what we now have is rationing, and the criteria is "your ability to pay". She is opposed to the pay-or-play approach. She expressed concern about the profound shortage of nurses, and urged the task force to look at mid-level health care providers as a large part of the solution to the access problem.

Anne Swift, a nurse, cited prevention as a major factor in reducing costs. She went on to say many people delay medical treatment and end up at the emergency room because they do not have a doctor or insurance coverage.

Wendy Rae, health care worker, testified that medical malpractice premiums and the cost of medical supplies are outrageously expensive.

Mary Giuchici, a consumer without health insurance, stated that physicians prescribe unnecessary tests, particularly if a patient has health insurance. She further stated the costs of pharmaceuticals are so much higher for humans than animals, and specifically cited the identical medication for animals are sold at a fraction of the cost.

Linda Holbert, previously employed by the Department of Health and Social Services and presently employed in the health insurance field, stated that technology has outpaced our ability to pay for it. She urged the task force to reallocate how we spend our health care dollars, with particular emphasis on prevention and prenatal care.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE AT THE
KODIAK, DILLINGHAM, AND UNALASKA
OCTOBER 21, 1992

Rep. Mike Navarre, Co-chair
Jerry Near, Co-Chair

KODIAK

Ed Meyers, Administrator of Kodiak Island Hospital, testified in support of the task force's recommendations and legislation introduced last session. He also supported universal access. He commented on the increasing problem of uncompensated care. He further stated that although their hospital is a regional hub, they are not equipped to deal with many of the medical emergencies that arise.

UNALASKA

Mike Barber, health board member, believes there is a lot of overcharging on the part of the hospitals and requests someone investigate it. He shared a personal experience of having to get a second CAT scan because someone got a finger print on the first one. He also spoke to the problems of pre-existing conditions exclusions in health insurance policies, and the practice of defensive medicine in connection with medical malpractice.

Amiee Kniazowski, rural resident, spoke to the problems of living in a very isolated community that has no doctor. She went on to say the community does have a non-profit clinic, with a mid-level practitioner. The clinic provides health care for all the communities around Unalaska. Although they deal with major trauma, their ability to handle it is limited. She asked what kind of access rural Alaska can expect from the recommendations of the task force, and further asked that someone from the task force come to Unalaska to see the conditions they work under.

KODIAK

Harry Felton, a physicians assistant at Kodiak Island Medical Center, spoke to the shortage of health care providers in Kodiak.

Janet Burts, a consumer, Multiple Sclerosis patient, and ex-employee of a large self-insured business was laid-off when she became pregnant and was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. She shared her experience with trying to get health insurance, and being turned down. She already has excessive medical bills and expects more in the future. She is currently on a COBRA policy which will expire in October. She fears it may be necessary to divorce her husband and go on welfare in order to be covered by Medicaid. She spoke in support of insurance pools where an individual could pay on a sliding scale according to their income.

Ed Barrington, President of the Alaska Chiropractic Society, spoke in support of including chiropractic treatment in the benefit package. He stated chiropractic services are no longer covered by workers compensation, or Medicare.

David Wolfe, a full-time temporary employee of the federal government (receives no medical benefits), stated he has been unable to obtain medical insurance due to a pre-existing condition (diabetes).

Tim Feller, Green Party candidate, spoke in support of community rating, and making a state health insurance pool available to all state residents. He went on to say that those who could not afford the premiums could have a portion paid by their Permanent Fund Dividend. He also urged the task force to contact Louise Tate of the Yukon Territory concerning their health system.

Tom Suthard, spoke in support of universal access, citing that all Alaskans should have access to medical care as Alaska Natives do. He supported the idea of using one half of the Permanent Fund Dividend for medical coverage and one half for an education fund.

James Joiner, a student who has no health insurance, testified that he has delayed medical treatment because of the high cost of care and insurance premiums. He urged the task force to support more mid-level health care practitioners (nurses, physicians assistants, and nurse practitioners) by developing an incentive based program.

Greg Rupert, a nursing student, spoke to the need for individuals to have more choices/responsibility for their medical care, and preventive medicine. He also advocates that more mid-level practitioners be available.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE AT THE
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY MEETING
OCTOBER 22, 1992

Rep. Johnny Ellis, Co-Chair
Dr. Rodman Wilson, Co-Chair

Patty Hong, President of the Alaska Nurses Association, testified in favor of the "Nurses' Agenda for Health Care Reform", restructuring of prevention and health promotion programs. She cited the lack of available health insurance as a large problem.

Michael Brogan, a consumer who is self employed, mentioned the problem of excessive fraud in the present system, saying many have boats and snowmachines, but no health insurance for their children. He is opposed to universal access, and is in favor of targeted access for pregnant women and children, and low income individuals.

Daltrice Boehmer, a consumer, spoke to the problems of access for Medicare recipients (i.e. finding a doctor to accept her as a patient). She also spoke in support of alternate forms of medical treatment (including chiropractic and mid-wifery), incentives for healthy lifestyles, and more individual control over the kind of medical treatment covered by insurance.

Lucille Clark, a consumer, testified in support of alternative forms of medicine including vitamin and mineral therapy. She spoke to the problems of the high cost of medical care and health insurance premiums, adding that insurance companies practice discrimination against the aged. She also sees cost-shifting as a great problem, saying she paid \$1004 for two stitches in her hand, and asserted that it was a result of other patients not paying for their care.

Dr. Robert Rowen, a physician, stated the present system is not working because it is designed to suppress symptoms, not to heal or prevent illness. He asserted that pharmaceutical companies are only interested in the profits. He spoke in support of preventive medicine and healthful lifestyles and added that there should be some incentives for those who practice it.

Lillian Wilder, a senior citizen, cited that serious cutbacks in the Department of Health and Social Services budget have impacted the elderly. She spoke in support of home health aides making visits when home deliveries of meals are made in order to regularly monitor the health of those that are home-bound.

Bill Cannon, a retired miner, spoke in support of preventive medicine, incentives for those who practice healthy lifestyles, and a voluntary plan which individuals could contribute a portion of their Permanent Fund Dividend for health insurance.

**RESULTS OF TWO PUBLIC OPINION
SURVEYS**

CITIZEN SURVEY:

**Summary Results of Citizen Survey,
Survey Results from the Community Meetings/Public Hearings,
Survey Results from the Anchorage Daily News Editorial,
Survey Results from the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center,
Survey Results from the Anchorage Rescue Mission, and
Survey Results from Bean's Cafe**

BUSINESS SURVEY:

Survey Results from Alaskan Businesses

The Task Force circulated two surveys asking Alaskans to express their confidence in and concerns about our current health care system. One survey was designed for the general public, the second for business representatives.

Four hundred and sixty-two (462) general public or "citizen" surveys were returned to the Task Force. They included 124 from our community meetings/public hearings, 243 from the Anchorage Daily News (who put the survey in their editorial column), 79 from the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center, 6 from the Anchorage Rescue Mission, and 10 from Bean's Cafe. The summary results of the entire 462 surveys are reported in this appendix as well as, separate reports for each of the different sources.

The business survey was distributed at the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce meeting. Thirty surveys were returned. Those survey results are reported separately.

Obviously, the survey results were not generated using a random method, but nonetheless, they did give the Task Force some indication of the confidence and concerns Alaskans have about our health care system.

Surveys were distributed between October and November 1992.

SUMMARY RESULTS OF CITIZEN SURVEY

Four hundred and sixty-two surveys were returned to the task force from the Anchorage Daily News editorial, Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center, Anchorage Rescue Mission, Bean's Cafe, and community meetings and teleconferences. The following results include the number of responses for each question and percent of respondents for each question.

1. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your overall view of the health care system in Alaska? (450 responded to the question)

11% Responded that on the whole, the health care system works pretty well, and only minor changes are necessary to make it work better. (50 responses)

60% Responded that there are some good things in our health system, but fundamental changes are needed to make it work better. (269 responses)

28% Responded that the Alaskan health care system has so much wrong with it that we need to completely rebuild it. (126 responses)

2. To what extent do you worry about the following problems?

- a. Having to pay very expensive medical bills which are not covered by health insurance (425 responded to the question)

46% A great deal (197 responses)

36% Quite a lot (152 responses)

19% Not much (80 responses)

4% Not at all (15 responses)

0% Not sure (2 response)

- b. That you will have to pay a much larger premium for your current health care plan (439 responded to the question)

40% A great deal (175 responses)

35% Quite a lot (152 responses)

19% Not much (82 responses)

4% Not at all (18 responses)

3% Not sure (12 response)

Summary Results of Citizen Survey
Page Two

- c. That your out-of-pocket costs for medical bills will increase rapidly over the next few years (458 responded to the question)
- 47% A great deal (215 responses)
 - 38% Quite a lot (174 responses)
 - 13% Not much (58 responses)
 - 1% Not at all (6 responses)
 - 1% Not sure (5 responses)
- d. Losing health insurance coverage which you have now (425 responded to the question)
- 38% A great deal (160 responses)
 - 29% Quite a lot (123 responses)
 - 22% Not much (95 responses)
 - 8% Not at all (35 responses)
 - 3% Not sure (12 responses)
- e. That the benefits under your current health care plan will be cut back substantially (425 responded to the question)
- 38% A great deal (160 responses)
 - 37% Quite a lot (159 responses)
 - 19% Not much (79 responses)
 - 4% Not at all (16 responses)
 - 3% Not sure (14 responses)
3. Please indicate below whether you agree that, in the absence of national health care reform, the Alaska state government should play a more active role in:
- a. Controlling rising health care costs? (440 responded to the question)
- 94% Agree (415)
 - 6% Disagree (25)
- b. Ensuring access to basic health services for all Alaskans? (430 responded to the question)
- 96% Agree (413)
 - 4% Disagree (17)
4. How important an issue should the reform of Alaska's health care system be for state officials? (447 responded to the question)
- 21% Single most important issue (93)
 - 76% One of several important issues (341)
 - 3% Not at all important (13)

Summary Results of Citizen Survey
Page Three

5. Do you currently have health care coverage? (440 responded to the question)

85% Yes (375) 15% No (65)

6. In a medical emergency, would you feel financially responsible to help pay the medical bills of some family member who currently does not have health insurance? (354 responded to the question)

67% Yes (237) 33% No (117)

If you answered yes, who are those persons? (Based on 237 "yes" responses)

63% Your child (149 responses)
47% Your parent (111 responses)
42% A sibling (99 responses)
48% Your spouse (113 responses)

7. Are you a health care provider or employed in the health care field? (381 responded to the question)

27% Yes (102) 73% No (279)

SURVEY RESULTS
COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

One hundred and twenty-four surveys were returned to the task force from the community meetings and teleconferences. The following results include the number of responses for each question and percent of respondents for each question.

1. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your overall view of the health care system in Alaska? (118 responded to the question)

- 4% Responded that on the whole, the health care system works pretty well, and only minor changes are necessary to make it work better. (5 responses)
- 69% Responded that there are some good things in our health system, but fundamental changes are needed to make it work better. (82 responses)
- 26% Responded that the Alaskan health care system has so much wrong with it that we need to completely rebuild it. (31 responses)

2. To what extent do you worry about the following problems?

- a. Having to pay very expensive medical bills which are not covered by health insurance (112 responded to the question)

- 42% A great deal (47 responses)
- 38% Quite a lot (43 responses)
- 17% Not much (19 responses)
- 2% Not at all (2 responses)
- 1% Not sure (1 response)

- b. That you will have to pay a much larger premium for your current health care plan (121 responded to the question)

- 30% A great deal (36 responses)
- 48% Quite a lot (58 responses)
- 19% Not much (23 responses)
- 2% Not at all (3 responses)
- 1% Not sure (1 response)

- c. That your out-of-pocket costs for medical bills will increase rapidly over the next few years (122 responded to the question)

- 37% A great deal (45 responses)
- 51% Quite a lot (62 responses)
- 12% Not much (15 responses)

Survey Results from the Community Meetings
and Public Hearings
Page Two

- d. Losing health insurance coverage which you have now (118 responded to the question)
- 33% A great deal (39 responses)
 - 36% Quite a lot (42 responses)
 - 23% Not much (27 responses)
 - 6% Not at all (7 responses)
 - 3% Not sure (3 responses)
- e. That the benefits under your current health care plan will be cut back substantially (121 responded to the question)
- 32% A great deal (39 responses)
 - 45% Quite a lot (55 responses)
 - 20% Not much (24 responses)
 - 2% Not sure (3 responses)
3. Please indicate below whether you agree that, in the absence of national health care reform, the Alaska state government should play a more active role in:
- a. Controlling rising health care costs? (116 responded to the question)
- 97% Agree (112)
 - 3% Disagree (4)
- b. Ensuring access to basic health services for all Alaskans? (119 responded to the question)
- 98% Agree (117)
 - 2% Disagree (2)
4. How important an issue should the reform of Alaska's health care system be for state officials? (118 responded to the question)
- 21% Single most important issue (25)
 - 78% One of several important issues (92)
 - 1% Not at all important (1)
5. Do you currently have health care coverage? (120 responded to the question)
- 84% Yes (101)
 - 16% No (19)
6. In a medical emergency, would you feel financially responsible to help pay the medical bills of some family member who currently does not have health insurance? (99 responded to the question)

Survey Results from Community Meetings
and Public Hearings
Page Three

69% Yes (68)

31% No (31)

If you answered yes, who are those persons? (Based on
68 "yes" responses)

57% Your child (39 responses)

47% Your parent (32 responses)

40% A sibling (27 responses)

41% Your spouse (28 responses)

7. Are you a health care provider or employed in the health
care field? (107 responded to the question)

23% Yes (25)

77% No (82)

SURVEYS RESULTS FROM
ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS EDITORIAL
OCTOBER 25, 1992

Results from the 243 Anchorage Daily News surveys returned to the task force are as follows:

1. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your overall view of the health care system in Alaska? (237 responded to the question)

9% Responded that on the whole, the health care system works pretty well, and only minor changes are necessary to make it work better. (22 responses)

55% Responded that there are some good things in our health system, but fundamental changes are needed to make it work better. (131 responses)

35% Responded that the Alaskan health care system has so much wrong with it that we need to completely rebuild it. (84 responses)

2. To what extent do you worry about the following problems?

- a. Having to pay very expensive medical bills which are not covered by health insurance (241 responded to the question)

44% A great deal (105 responses)

37% Quite a lot (90 responses)

16% Not much (38 responses)

3% Not at all (8 responses)

- b. That you will have to pay a much larger premium for your current health care plan (231 responded to the question)

48% A great deal (112 responses)

30% Quite a lot (69 responses)

18% Not much (41 responses)

2% Not at all (5 responses)

2% Not sure (4 responses)

Survey Results from Anchorage Daily News
Page Two

- c. That your out-of-pocket costs for medical bills will increase rapidly over the next few years (242 responded to the question)
- 54% A great deal (131 responses)
 - 32% Quite a lot (78 responses)
 - 12% Not much (29 responses)
 - 1% Not at all (3 responses)
 - .5% Not sure (1 responses)
- d. Losing health insurance coverage which you have now (220 responded to the question)
- 44% A great deal (97 responses)
 - 25% Quite a lot (56 responses)
 - 21% Not much (47 responses)
 - 8% Not at all (18 responses)
 - 1% Not sure (2 responses)
- e. That the benefits under your current health care plan will be cut back substantially (222 responded to the question)
- 44% A great deal (98 responses)
 - 33% Quite a lot (73 responses)
 - 19% Not much (43 responses)
 - 2% Not at all (4 responses)
 - 2% Not sure (4 responses)
3. Please indicate below whether you agree that, in the absence of national health care reform, the Alaska state government should play a more active role in:
- a. Controlling rising health care costs? (235 responded to the question)
- 93% Agree (219) 7% Disagree (16)
- b. Ensuring access to basic health services for all Alaskans? (220 responded to the question)
- 95% Agree (209) 5% Disagree (11)
4. How important an issue should the reform of Alaska's health care system be for state officials? (238 responded to the question)
- 21% Single most important issue (51)
 - 75% One of several important issues (178)
 - 4% Not at all important (9)

Survey Results from Anchorage Daily News
Page Three

5. Do you currently have health care coverage? (225 responded to the question)

92% Yes (208) 8% No (17)

6. In a medical emergency, would you feel financially responsible to help pay the medical bills of some family member who currently does not have health insurance? (168 responded to the question)

62% Yes (104) 38% No (64)

If you answered yes, who are those persons? (Based on 104 who answered yes to the question)

69% Your child (72)
47% Your parent (49)
46% A sibling (48)
47% Your spouse (49)

7. Are you a health care provider or employed in the health care field? (180 responded to the question)

24% Yes (43) 76% No (137)

SURVEY RESULTS FROM
ANCHORAGE NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTER

Results from the 79 surveys returned to the task force from the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center are as follows:

1. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your overall view of the health care system in Alaska? (76 responded to the question)

28% Responded that on the whole, the health care system works pretty well, and only minor changes are necessary to make it work better. (21 responses)

64% Responded that there are some good things in our health system, but fundamental changes are needed to make it work better. (49 responses)

8% Responded that the Alaskan health care system has so much wrong with it that we need to completely rebuild it. (6 responses)

2. To what extent do you worry about the following problems?

- a. Having to pay very expensive medical bills which are not covered by health insurance (56 responded to the question)

66% A great deal (37 responses)

29% Quite a lot (16 responses)

38% Not much (21 responses)

4% Not at all (2 responses)

2% Not sure (1 response)

- b. That you will have to pay a much larger premium for your current health care plan (71 responded to the question)

28% A great deal (20 responses)

30% Quite a lot (21 responses)

21% Not much (15 responses)

13% Not at all (9 responses)

8% Not sure (6 responses)

Survey Results from Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center
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- c. That your out-of-pocket costs for medical bills will increase rapidly over the next few years (78 responded to the question)
 - 40% A great deal (31 responses)
 - 37% Quite a lot (29 responses)
 - 17% Not much (13 responses)
 - 3% Not at all (2 responses)
 - 4% Not sure (3 responses)
 - d. Losing health insurance coverage which you have now (71 responded to the question)
 - 30% A great deal (21 responses)
 - 25% Quite a lot (18 responses)
 - 24% Not much (17 responses)
 - 11% Not at all (8 responses)
 - 10% Not sure (7 responses)
 - e. That the benefits under your current health care plan will be cut back substantially (67 responded to the question)
 - 30% A great deal (20 responses)
 - 36% Quite a lot (24 responses)
 - 18% Not much (12 responses)
 - 9% Not at all (6 responses)
 - 7% Not sure (5 responses)
3. Please indicate below whether you agree that, in the absence of national health care reform, the Alaska state government should play a more active role in:
- a. Controlling rising health care costs? (76 responded to the question)
 - 93% Agree (71) 7% Disagree (5)
 - b. Ensuring access to basic health services for all Alaskans? (77 responded to the question)
 - 96% Agree (74) 4% Disagree (3)
4. How important an issue should the reform of Alaska's health care system be for state officials? (77 responded to the question)
- 17% Single most important issue (13)
 - 79% One of several important issues (61)
 - 4% Not at all important (3)

Survey Results from Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center
Page Three

5. Do you currently have health care coverage? (79 responded to the question)

67% Yes (53) 33% No (26)

6. In a medical emergency, would you feel financially responsible to help pay the medical bills of some family member who currently does not have health insurance? (73 responded to the question)

75% Yes (55) 25% No (18)

If you answered yes, who are those persons? (Based on 55 who answered yes to the question)

58% Your child (32)
44% Your parent (24)
40% A sibling (22)
56% Your spouse (31)

7. Are you a health care provider or employed in the health care field? (78 responded to the question)

41% Yes (32) 59% No (46)

SURVEY RESULTS FROM
ANCHORAGE RESCUE MISSION

Results from the 6 surveys returned to the task force from the Anchorage Rescue Mission are as follows:

1. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your overall view of the health care system in Alaska? (4 responded to the question)

0% Responded that on the whole, the health care system works pretty well, and only minor changes are necessary to make it work better. (0 responses)

100% Responded that there are some good things in our health system, but fundamental changes are needed to make it work better. (4 responses)

0% Responded that the Alaskan health care system has so much wrong with it that we need to completely rebuild it. (0 responses)

2. To what extent do you worry about the following problems?

- a. Having to pay very expensive medical bills which are not covered by health insurance (6 responded to the question)

50% A great deal (3 responses)

17% Quite a lot (1 responses)

17% Not much (1 responses)

17% Not at all (1 responses)

- b. That you will have to pay a much larger premium for your current health care plan (6 responded to the question)

50% A great deal (3 responses)

17% Quite a lot (1 responses)

33% Not much (2 responses)

Survey Results from Anchorage Rescue Mission
Page Two

- c. That your out-of-pocket costs for medical bills will increase rapidly over the next few years (6 responded to the question)
 - 67% A great deal (4 responses)
 - 33% Quite a lot (2 responses)
 - d. Losing health insurance coverage which you have now (6 responded to the question)
 - 17% A great deal (1 responses)
 - 50% Quite a lot (3 responses)
 - 17% Not much (1 responses)
 - 17% Not at all (1 responses)
 - e. That the benefits under your current health care plan will be cut back substantially (6 responded to the question)
 - 17% A great deal (1 responses)
 - 50% Quite a lot (3 responses)
 - 0% Not much (0 responses)
 - 33% Not at all (2 responses)
 - 2% Not sure (4 responses)
3. Please indicate below whether you agree that, in the absence of national health care reform, the Alaska state government should play a more active role in:
- a. Controlling rising health care costs? (4 responded to the question)
 - 100% Agree (4) 0% Disagree (0)
 - b. Ensuring access to basic health services for all Alaskans? (6 responded to the question)
 - 100% Agree (6) 0% Disagree (0)
4. How important an issue should the reform of Alaska's health care system be for state officials? (6 responded to the question)
- 0% Single most important issue (0)
 - 100% One of several important issues (6)
 - 0% Not at all important (0)

Survey Results from Anchorage Rescue Mission
Page Three

5. Do you currently have health care coverage? (6 responded to the question)

67% Yes (4) 33% No (2)

6. In a medical emergency, would you feel financially responsible to help pay the medical bills of some family member who currently does not have health insurance? (6 responded to the question)

83% Yes (5) 17% No (1)

If you answered yes, who are those persons? (Based on 5 who answered yes to the question)

60% Your child (3)
17% Your parent (1)
0% A sibling (0)
33% Your spouse (2)

7. Are you a health care provider or employed in the health care field? (6 responded to the question)

0% Yes (0) 100% No (6)

SURVEY RESULTS FROM
BEAN'S CAFE

Results from the 10 surveys returned to the task force from Bean's Cafe are as follows:

1. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your overall view of the health care system in Alaska? (10 responded to the question)

20% Responded that on the whole, the health care system works pretty well, and only minor changes are necessary to make it work better. (2 responses)

30% Responded that there are some good things in our health system, but fundamental changes are needed to make it work better. (3 responses)

50% Responded that the Alaskan health care system has so much wrong with it that we need to completely rebuild it. (5 responses)

2. To what extent do you worry about the following problems?

- a. Having to pay very expensive medical bills which are not covered by health insurance (10 responded to the question)

50% A great deal (5 responses)

20% Quite a lot (2 responses)

10% Not much (1 responses)

20% Not at all (2 responses)

- b. That you will have to pay a much larger premium for your current health care plan (10 responded to the question)

40% A great deal (4 responses)

30% Quite a lot (3 responses)

10% Not much (1 responses)

10% Not at all (1 response)

10% Not sure (1 response)

Survey Results from Bean's Cafe
Page Two

- c. That your out-of-pocket costs for medical bills will increase rapidly over the next few years (10 responded to the question)
- 40% A great deal (4 responses)
 - 30% Quite a lot (3 responses)
 - 10% Not much (1 response)
 - 10% Not at all (1 response)
 - 10% Not sure (1 response)
- d. Losing health insurance coverage which you have now (10 responded to the question)
- 20% A great deal (2 responses)
 - 40% Quite a lot (4 responses)
 - 30% Not much (3 responses)
 - 10% Not at all (1 responses)
- e. That the benefits under your current health care plan will be cut back substantially (9 responded to the question)
- 33% A great deal (3 responses)
 - 44% Quite a lot (4 responses)
 - 0% Not much (0 responses)
 - 11% Not at all (1 responses)
 - 11% Not sure (1 responses)
3. Please indicate below whether you agree that, in the absence of national health care reform, the Alaska state government should play a more active role in:
- a. Controlling rising health care costs? (9 responded to the question)
- 100% Agree (9) 0% Disagree (0)
- b. Ensuring access to basic health services for all Alaskans? (8 responded to the question)
- 88% Agree (7) 12% Disagree (1)
4. How important an issue should the reform of Alaska's health care system be for state officials? (8 responded to the question)
- 50% Single most important issue (4)
 - 50% One of several important issues (4)
 - 0% Not at all important (0)

Survey Results from Bean's Cafe
Page Three

5. Do you currently have health care coverage? (10 responded to the question)

90% Yes (9) 10% No (1)

6. In a medical emergency, would you feel financially responsible to help pay the medical bills of some family member who currently does not have health insurance? (8 responded to the question)

63% Yes (5) 38% No (3)

If you answered yes, who are those persons? (Based on 5 who answered yes to the question)

60% Your child (3)
100% Your parent (5)
100% A sibling (5)
60% Your spouse (3)

7. Are you a health care provider or employed in the health care field? (10 responded to the question)

20% Yes (2) 80% No (8)

SURVEY RESULTS FROM ALASKAN BUSINESSES

Thirty-three surveys were returned to the Health Resources and Access Task Force on Business' Views on the current health care system. The following results include the number of responses for each question and percent of respondents for each question.

1. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your overall view of the health care system in Alaska? (30 responded to the question)
 - 37% On the whole, the health care system works pretty well, and only minor changes are necessary to make it work better (11 responses)
 - 47% There are some good things in our health care system, but fundamental changes are needed to make it work better (14 responses)
 - 17% The Alaskan health care system has so much wrong with it that we need to completely rebuild it (5 responses)
2. Do you currently have health care coverage? (32 responded to the question)
 - 97% Yes (31 responses) 3% No (1 response)
3. Do you provide health care coverage to your full-time workers? (28 responded to the question)
 - 79% Yes (22 responses) 21% No (6 responses)
4. To what extent do you or your workers worry about the following problems? (Please check the appropriate item, indicating the degree to which you are concerned about each.)
 - a. Having to pay very expensive medical bills which are not covered by health insurance (29 responded to the question)
 - 31% A Great Deal (9 responses)
 - 14% Quite A Lot (4 responses)
 - 48% Not Much (14 responses)
 - 7% Not At All (2 responses)

Survey Results from Alaskan Businesses
Page Two

- b. That you will have to pay a much larger premium for your current health care plan (31 responded to the question)
- 29% A Great Deal (9 responses)
32% Quite A Lot (10 responses)
29% Not Much (9 responses)
10% Not At All (3 responses)
- c. That your out-of-pocket costs for medical bills will increase rapidly over the next few years (30 responded to the question)
- 40% A Great Deal (12 responses)
30% Quite A Lot (9 responses)
30% Not Much (9 responses)
0% Not At All (0 responses)
- d. Losing health insurance coverage which you have now (29 responded to the question)
- 24% A Great Deal (7 responses)
34% Quite A Lot (10 responses)
24% Not Much (7 responses)
17% Not At All (5 responses)
- e. That the benefits under your current health care plan will be cut back substantially (28 responded to the question)
- 21% A Great Deal (6 responses)
57% Quite A Lot (16 responses)
18% Not Much (5 responses)
4% Not At All (1 responses)
5. If you do not provide health care coverage for your full-time workers, have you ever tried to get coverage and (answer both a and b)
- a. been denied coverage because of the type of work you do? (11 responded to the question)
- 0% Yes (0 responses) 100% No (11 responses)
- b. been denied coverage because of the health status of your workers or their dependents (10 responded to the question)
- 20% Yes (2 responses) 80% No (8 responses)

Survey Results from Alaskan Businesses
Page Three

- c. been offered coverage but at a very high rate that was unaffordable to you. (10 responded to the question)

40% Yes (4 responses) 60% No (6 responses)

6. Please indicate below whether you agree that, in the absence of national health care reform, the Alaska state Government should play a more active role in:

	Agree	Disagree
a. Controlling rising health care costs? (29 responded)	79% (23)	21% (6)
b. Ensuring access to basic health services for all Alaskans? (28 responded)	57% (16)	43% (12)

7. How important an issue should the reform of Alaska's health care system be for state officials? (Please check one) (30 responded to the question)

0% Single most important issue (0 responses)

77% One of several important issues (23 responses)

23% Not at all important (7 responses)

8. a. Are you a health care provider or employed in the health care field? (28 responded to the question)

4% Yes (1 responses) 96% No (27 responses)

- b. Are you employed in the health care field? (31 responded to the question)

3% Yes (1 response) 97% No (30 responses)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

For each of the following guiding principles, please tell us whether you agree or disagree with each principle.

1. All Alaskans should have access to timely, appropriate, and adequate health care without regard to personal financial means. (Please check one.) (30 responded to the question)

23% Strongly Agree (7 responses)
40% Somewhat Agree (12 responses)
20% Slightly Opposed (6 responses)
17% Very Opposed (5 responses)

2. A basic level of health care should include prevention, primary care, early diagnosis and treatment and incentives for healthful lifestyles. (Please check one.) (29 responded to the question)

41% Strongly Agree (12 responses)
41% Somewhat Agree (12 responses)
7% Slightly Opposed (2 responses)
10% Very Opposed (3 responses)

3. All Alaskans have a responsibility to obtain and pay for adequate health care for themselves and their dependents. It is the responsibility of society at large to adequately finance care for those unable to pay. (Please check one) (27 responded to the question)

15% Strongly Agree (4 responses)
33% Somewhat Agree (9 responses)
33% Slightly Opposed (9 responses)
19% Very Opposed (5 responses)

4. Responsibility for the financing of care should be equitably distributed among payers. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

25% Strongly Agree (7 responses)
36% Somewhat Agree (10 responses)
25% Slightly Opposed (7 responses)
14% Very Opposed (4 responses)

Survey Results from Alaskan Businesses
Page Six

10. Individuals should have an informed and reasonable choice in selecting health care providers. However, they may be restricted to certain providers in cases where such arrangements are more cost-effective. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

29% Strongly Agree (8)
46% Somewhat Agree (13)
7% Slightly Opposed (2)
18% Very Opposed (5)

11. Systems to maintain and expand access and control costs should be as simple to administer as possible. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

86% Strongly Agree (24)
11% Somewhat Agree (3)
0% Slightly Opposed (0)
4% Very Oppose (1)

12. Design of programs should be sensitive to cultures and community needs, including the special problems in rural areas of access and availability of providers. (Please check one.) (26 responded to the question)

27% Strongly Agree (7)
58% Somewhat Agree (15)
12% Slightly Opposed (3)
4% Very Opposed (1)

13. A public health system based on the core functions of assessment, policy development, and assurance of essential public health services must be established and maintained as the foundation of an effective health program for Alaska. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

14% Strongly Agree (4)
43% Somewhat Agree (12)
29% Slightly Opposed (8)
14% Very Opposed (4)

Survey Results from Alaskan Businesses
Page Five

5. Health care costs can be extended to everyone only if overall costs are contained. Duplicate coverage should be avoided. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

54% Strongly Agree (15)
36% Somewhat Agree (10)
7% Slightly Opposed (2)
4% Very Opposed (1)

6. Use of cost sharing may be considered to control excessive utilization but should take into account ability to pay. (Please check one.) (26 responded to the question)

12% Strongly Agree (3)
62% Somewhat Agree (16)
12% Slightly Opposed (3)
15% Very Opposed (4)

7. Health care should be provided in the most efficient and cost effective manner and location and may include contractual arrangements for patient management and utilization controls. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

50% Strongly Agree (14)
36% Somewhat Agree (10)
7% Slightly Opposed (2)
7% Very Opposed (2)

8. Payments to providers should be reasonable and fair. (Please check one.) (29 responded to the question)

72% Strongly Agree (21)
24% Somewhat Agree (7)
0% Slightly Opposed (0)
3% Very Opposed (1)

9. Health services based on disease prevention, health promotion, and health protection must be promoted as a major influence on cost containment. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

43% Strongly Agree (12)
50% Somewhat Agree (14)
4% Slightly Opposed (1)
4% Very Opposed (1)

Survey Results from Alaskan Businesses
Page Six

10. Individuals should have an informed and reasonable choice in selecting health care providers. However, they may be restricted to certain providers in cases where such arrangements are more cost-effective. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

29% Strongly Agree (8)
46% Somewhat Agree (13)
7% Slightly Opposed (2)
18% Very Opposed (5)

11. Systems to maintain and expand access and control costs should be as simple to administer as possible. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

86% Strongly Agree (24)
11% Somewhat Agree (3)
0% Slightly Opposed (0)
4% Very Oppose (1)

12. Design of programs should be sensitive to cultures and community needs, including the special problems in rural areas of access and availability of providers. (Please check one.) (26 responded to the question)

27% Strongly Agree (7)
58% Somewhat Agree (15)
12% Slightly Opposed (3)
4% Very Opposed (1)

13. A public health system based on the core functions of assessment, policy development, and assurance of essential public health services must be established and maintained as the foundation of an effective health program for Alaska. (Please check one.) (28 responded to the question)

14% Strongly Agree (4)
43% Somewhat Agree (12)
29% Slightly Opposed (8)
14% Very Opposed (4)