

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 2001-2002 8672

10222 HOUSE HEALTH EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES



Tanana Valley Clinic

Family Medical Care
Since 1959

March 8, 2002

Representative Fred Dyson
State Capital, Room #104
Juneau, AK 99801-2199

Dear Representative Dyson:

A few weeks ago when we met to discuss the proposed changes to the State's Certificate of Need law, you requested information on the fiscal impact of eliminating the law in other states. I have assembled several citations regarding the subject. The following information is summary in nature – I will be obtaining the complete text of the articles this week and will provide you with them as soon as possible.

"There is no evidence of a surge in acquisition of facilities or in costs following removal of CON regulations." Conover CJ, Sloan FA. *"Does Removing Certificate of Need Lead to a Surge in Health Care Spending?" Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 23, No. 3 (June 1998): 455-481.

"Our examination of states that repealed CON provides evidence of a surge in supply in some states, at least immediacy following repeal, which suggests that CON indeed restricted supply of some services.any such surges are temporary and are often the result of a supply level that was lower than the national rate before repeal.In addition, initial surges are sometimes followed by periods of shakeout and stabilization. Therefore, while short term supply increases do appear at times after CON repeal, such surges have been

OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY

Karl B. Benwick, M.D.
Doris K. Heilman, M.D.
Richard C. Hess, M.D.
Nigel D. Weyant, M.D.
Thad Dier, PA-C
Amy Holladay, ANP

SURGERY

Joe Lieberman, M.D.
David Wiggley, M.D.

INTERNAL MEDICINE

Arva Chiu, M.D.
Cina Escobar, M.D.
Linda L. Garro, M.D.
Kronoth C. Starks, M.D.

PEDIATRICS

Martin E. Bergeson, M.D.
J. Timothy Frote, M.D.
Michelle Hacc, M.D.
Nancy J. Skelton, M.D.
Marionna D. Woodward, M.D.
Judy Kuehnert, ANP

FAMILY PRACTICE

B.J. Albrecht, M.D.
Vicky Darling, U.O.
Donald Ives, M.D.
Hunter LaBine, M.D.
Corynn Laubkow, M.D.
Charles Strasser, M.D.
Jean M. W. Tilgner, M.D.
Philip Crapp, PA-C
Scott Crivener, PA-C
Stephanie Gibb, PA-C
Eric McElroy, PA-C
Deanna Rogers, PA-C

ORTHOPAEDICS

Richard H. Cobble, M.D.
Jim Thmas, M.D.
Laura Catalano, PA-C

ADMINISTRATION

Brian Stachura, Administrator
Marionna D. Woodward, M.D., Medical Director
Cathy Martin, Chief Financial Officer

insufficiently studied to determine if there are any persistent effects on cost....”
Effects of Certificate of Need and Its Possible Repeal – Report 99-1, page 13,
State of Washington, Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, January 8,
1999.

“CON laws, born out of an effort to control cost, may actually increase health care costs by suppressing competition, as noted by Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Ed Thompson in his 1995 response to PEER questions. A Daniel N. Mendelson and Judith Arnold study, based on extensive empirical analysis of hospital costs, concluded that CON programs have not held down hospital costs. These researchers also found no evidence of increased costs in the initial twelve states that repealed CON requirements” *Former Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, in an address to the Mississippi Legislature, 1999*, from the Mississippi state web page (www.govoff.state.ms.us/main/gc/gc020299.html);

I hope that you find the above citations useful in your upcoming HESS Committee hearings on Certificate of Need. I will send you the complete text of the articles as soon as I get them. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance with this matter. I look forward to meeting with you again as the HESS committee prepares for hearings on the CON law.

Sincerely,



Brian Slocum, FACMPE
Administrator

Rep John Davies
State Capital Bldg
Jamez, Ok. 73751

Dear John,

I urge you to strengthen, not
weaken the existing coalition of
lawyers, by opposing HB 407 and HB 485

I think the current CAD system is
an adequate competition for the
community. If a service can prove it is
better or substantially better, CAD can be
obtained. Each of the proposals for the
evaluation fairly and the best one granted
a CAD.

Again please do not support
HB 407 and HB 485.

Sincerely,
Pat Leavelly
4525 W. Main Dr.
Tulsa, Ok 74109
1-1-96

March 7, 2002

Representative John Davies
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davies:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB256, HB407, HB485.

The current CON regulations are fair. If there's no need, then the community needs to be able to say "no". If there is a need then we should be able to have a say in who gets to build it.

It's not a normal business. How can health care be cheaper in the long run if we let the providers (physicians) themselves build the facilities and buy equipment without showing somebody that they have done their homework and that it is really needed? Maybe they just want it and are planning to have us pay for it.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my opinion.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Mormon
300 Howland Rd. #2
Fairbanks, AK. 99712-1533
907-457-1411

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate Hess
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, Senate Hess

March 7, 2002

Representative John Davies
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davies:

There are several bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407, and HB 485.

Changing the CON requirements will encourage a greater number of smaller, self-interested providers. Competition will over a period of general usage increase health care cost to the patient due to staffing considerations and less cost absorption. While the bottom line will appear to be stable, the actual cost to the patient in dollars spent will increase while actual care expertise will decrease resulting from a lack of technically qualified technologists and providers.

Raising or eliminating the CON threshold will have the effect of diluting the quality of healthcare for the above stated reasons. The current CON policy ensures that the government has a say in who and how the community healthcare is provided. I believe that this policy is fair and competitive. I say this being an individual with over 20 years experience in health care provision and management.

Please take under advisement my opinions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip E. Shenk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "S".

Philip E. Shenk (ARRT)(MR)
519 Keeling Road
North Pole, Alaska 99705-5032

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative John Davies
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davies:

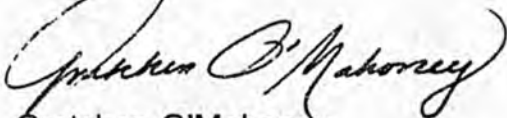
There are several bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407, and HB 485.

As a new resident to the beautiful state of Alaska, I cannot begin to stress the importance of these not being passed and implemented. I have lived in several locations where this was utilized. Everyone automatically believes that this "competition" will bring down the cost of healthcare. I can assure you that it does not, in fact it is the opposite. The market becomes so saturated that there is not enough business for all of the providers. In order for the providers to survive, it drives the cost of healthcare up, not down.

I implore you to give serious consideration to not pass these bills.

Thank you for your consideration of my opinion.

Sincerely,



Gretchen O'Mahoney
212 Wedgewood Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99709

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Senator Pete Kelly
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Kelly

I am writing to ask you to oppose several bills that are currently before the legislature this session. These bills would allow changes to the Certificate of need process that exists here in the state of Alaska. More specifically I am talking about HB 407, HB 485 and SB 256.

It is my perception that these bills would allow parties to duplicate services in a market that for the most part is having it's needs fulfilled.

My concern over these bills is related to the long term healthcare services for the people in the interior of Alaska. I believe competition is a needed item in certain markets. However it does not make sense in this one. We have the lowest cost healthcare in the state with our present system and provide services that have a real need not just ones that are money makers. This has been accomplished with our current system.

One of my concerns stems from the availability of healthcare personnel. There is a nationwide shortage of nurses and other healthcare employees. By introducing duplicate services the already strained system could be forced to operate with less personnel per facility and this would result in lower quality healthcare.

I think that our present system has provided us with the services we need. If a service can prove it is needed in the community it should go thru the current CON process. This process doesn't give any preference to one party or the other. They are all evaluated and the best one is granted authorization to proceed.

Please show your support for this community by opposing these bills and allowing a system that works work the way it should.

Sincerely,



Ed Gerhauser

3010 Davis B14
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 5, 2002

Rep. John Davies
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Rep. Davies,

I am concerned about the proposed amendments being considered in this legislative session that would weaken the current Certificate of Need laws.

Small communities in Alaska need STRONGER C.O.N. laws not weaker ones.

'Healthy competition' does not benefit the people of rural Alaska in this situation. What it does is drive up the cost of healthcare and can necessitate that smaller hospitals must drop less profitable services, such as; mental health, hospice, long-term care and home care.

I urge you to not weaken the quality of the health care currently available to the people of Alaska by not weakening the current C.O.N. laws.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this point of view.

Sincerely,



Patrick Schooley
207 Steeihead Rd.
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708
907 455 4744

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 10, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

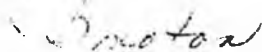
Dear Representative Coghill:

I am writing you to express my opinion on some bills that are going before the legislature in it's current session. More specifically I am referring to SB256, HB 407 and HB 485. It is my understanding that these bills would amend our current Certificate of Need requirements in the state of Alaska. I am against changing the current process and do not feel this would be a benefit to our community.

Should the current process be amended as proposed in the above bills I think it would weaken our ability to provide services with a true need that are not profitable. I have lived in this community for over twenty years and have seen many changes to the services provided here. If SB 256 is passed then the health resources will be poisoned by for profit centers that have no compassion for the people living here in the interior.

Please consider the effect the proposed bills will have for us here going into the future and do not let them pass.

Sincerely,



Joan Moton
PO Box 58044
Fairbanks, Alaska 99711

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Dyson, Chair, House HESS

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

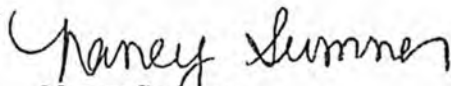
Dear Representative Coghill,

It is my opinion the CON should remain in place. Without demonstrating true need community hospitals risk losing their fiscally strong services which in turn help alleviate the losses of other services, such as Mental Health, Home Health Care.

I feel the CON regulations are fair. The Con has never stood in the way of this community receiving the health care we need.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Nancy Sumner
601 Carlcrosman Way
North Pole, AK 99705
(907) 490-2464

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 6, 2002

Representative Hugh Fate
State Capitol
Room 416
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Fate,

I am writing to you about the bills being considered this legislative season related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws. Those bills are SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I understand that changing the laws might allow an outside group to open an Outpatient Surgery Clinic here in Fairbanks, even though one may not be needed. Fairbanks Memorial Hospital is a community hospital, involved in the community in a non-profit role. I feel that a for profit provider is more interested in revenues than the best interest of the patients.

I urge you to strengthen existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, *Judith Davis*

Judith Davis
1097 Vicki Lane
North Pole, AK 99705

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative John Davies
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

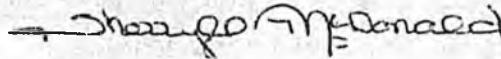
Dear Mr. Davies:

I am writing to tell you I oppose legislation currently under consideration concerning changing the Certificate of Need process. (SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485)

I believe that increasing the CON threshold of \$1,000,00 or eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in larger communities will seriously place our community and our community hospital at risk.

Our community is fortunate to have a Cancer Treatment Center and an adequate inpatient mental health facility because the hospital was able to provide these services. It is well known they do not pay for themselves and must be subsidized by the hospital. Without a viable, non-profit hospital the needs of the community will not be met. If you make it easy for profit seekers to take away the viable service of the hospital, our community will most definitely suffer.

Sincerely,



Sherryl McDonald
1440 Pickering Drive
Fairbanks, AK. 99709

Copies to:
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 11, 2002

Senator Gene Therriault
State Capitol, Room 121
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Therriault:

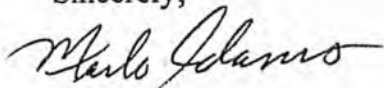
I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 256. If the Certificate of Need process is eliminated then many unneeded facilities will most likely be constructed.

This in turn will cause an excess of care facilities, which will drive costs to patients up and quality of care will certainly suffer.

Please take into consideration what is stated above as you make your decision regarding SB 256.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Marlo Adams

Cc: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green
Representative Fred Dyson

WILLIAM H. DOOLITTLE, MD FACP
P.O. Box 71046
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1046
Telephone: (907)456-8881
FAX:(907)456-2047
Email: doolittle@ptialaska.net

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Coghill,

Thank you for listening to me last week in regard to HB 407. I still encourage that this bill not advance. Based on 35 years of experience in health care in Fairbanks, I feel very strongly that legislation that alters the present Certificate of Need represents a clear, if not immediate, risk to health care in Fairbanks and its environs.

The economics of Health Care do not conform to the usual model of competition in business, since the only "business" attraction is the few services in health care that can be profitable. There is no competition for the services where the margins won't carry new construction and new equipment costs. For-profit Health Care Providers profit from picking off these few services, and take their money and run. The One Hospital Community has a hospital that must continue to provide the marginal or losing services, and must remain open and staffed when the For-Profits go home at night. The single community hospital must continue to take the complicated cases from the For-Profit Centers when the day is done, and it must provide the wide array of services for which reimbursement is marginal, and where there is no For-Profit group clamoring to share. The result is pretty apparent. There has to be a decrease in the services offered by the hospital. To the extent that some of these services may be offered in a modified form, accreditation may suffer and the attractiveness of the hospital to new physicians being recruited to the community will change.

The Fairbanks area does not have a burgeoning population, or high expectation of monster new industry. CON as it now stands, is designed to protect the health care delivery potential for communities just like ours. It might not be required in larger cities. The only constant in health care in Fairbanks over the past 30 years has been the Hospital. Clinic operations have come and gone, and first one then another is the largest. The CON as it now stands has protected the community of Fairbanks from compromised services while providing a standard for progress. Please, don't tinker with what has been successful over time. The insidious deterioration in health care services wrought by the contemplated changes will become apparent in your lifetime, but probably not mine. The recovery will not come to pass until your grandchildren reach maturity.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the interior of Alaska. Please help us with this.

Sincerely,



William H. Doolittle, M. D.

Cc: Senator Pete Kelley
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House Hess

March 25, 2002

Ouida S. Paden
2090 Ravenwood Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Coghill,

I am writing with respect to House Bill 407, affecting the Certificate of Need (CON) program. I strongly oppose the amendments as outlined in this bill.

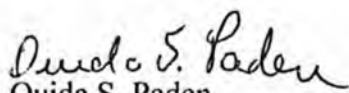
In particular I oppose the amendment to section 1, subpart (a)4, regarding expenditure and population limits for health care facility construction. The proposed amendment would eliminate the requirement for a certificate of need in an organized borough with a population greater than 55,000. I believe this amendment will allow construction of projects with no demonstrated need, such as private, for-profit surgery centers, or radiology facilities, to name a few. This, in turn, may directly lead to shortages in specialized staff for the facilities, and increases in hospital costs related to running multiple facilities below capacity.

Certificates of need ensure that unnecessary facilities are not built. If there is no need, then the community should be able to say "no" to new construction. Conversely, if there is a need, the community should have a say in who profits from such construction. The current CON program is fair, and provides a forum for public involvement in decisions to expand capacity and to make major investments in healthcare technology.

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital was built with great effort and sacrifice by many citizens of our community. Its viability should not be placed at risk by construction of unnecessary health care facilities. Thank you very much for taking my opinions into consideration when deliberating on this legislation.

Something of this importance should have public hearings, I feel.

Sincerely,


Ouida S. Paden

CC: Fred Dyson

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK. 99801

Dear Rep. Coghill,

I am in favor of a reasonable level of state oversight of the establishment of new programs. However if the current CON regulations are changed or worse eliminated the results would have a negative impact on the Fairbanks Community and the only interior hospital that has effectively served this community since 1972.

The population in the City of Fairbanks and the surrounding North Star Borough is not large enough to support the unnecessary facilities that would spring up if the current CON regulations are changed or eliminated. Research has shown that in states with no CON the quality of care declines after the CON is removed. The study done by the University of Iowa shows that hospitals in non-CON states have lower patient levels but higher treatment costs per patient.

I oppose HB 407 and respectfully request that you strengthen not weaken our CON regulations so that the Interior population will have access to the high quality of care that already exists locally.

Thank you for consideration of this perspective.
Sincerely,

Marty O'Loe
3825 Ridgeview Dr.
Fairbanks, AK. 99709-2717

Home ph. 907-474-4056
work ph. 907-458-5491

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green Chair Sen. HESS
Rep. Fred Dyson Chair House HESS

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-3719
Fax: 907-465-3258

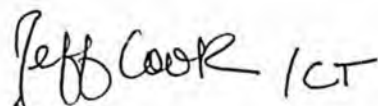
Dear Representative Coghill,

I urge you to delay all action for this session on Certificate of Need (CON) legislation. The CON has worked well for nearly 20 years and Fairbanks has benefited with outstanding health care. If you feel the CON needs attention, please bring the issue home and hold hearings this summer and fall so the people most impacted by HB 407 can be heard in the community you represent.

The changes in the CON will negatively impact Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH). I sit on the board and Executive Committee for the FMH Foundation. We have provided services no one else would provide. We have provided cancer treatment and psychiatric care. We have not just provided the most profitable services that will be promoted in the future by those who will benefit from your proposed changes to the CON.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns. You can contact me days at 488-5104 or evenings at 457-6066, if you have questions. I truly believe the best interests of your constituents will be served by delaying all action on HB 407 this session.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jeffrey J. Cook in black ink, with the initials 'JCT' written to the right of the signature.

Jeffrey J. Cook
458 Terrace Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99712

CC: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 25, 2002

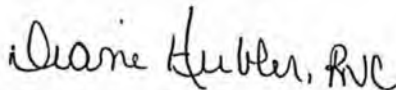
Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-3719
Fax: 907-465-3258

Dear Representative Coghill,

This is in regards to Senate Bill 256 / House Bill 407, which affects Certificate of Need legislation.

If the legislation is changed as proposed, it will harm our community hospital, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) and in turn, it will harm the community. The hospital provides care to all people, regardless of their ability to pay for services. Medicare/Medicaid, other payors and charity care have a large impact on maintaining the viability of our hospital. It has been shown over time by studies that the hospital is able to provide the needed services for our community. To allow other groups to come in and try to provide only high paying services, the hospital's needed revenue will be negatively affected. This in turn will affect the hospital's ability to keep other, lesser paying services available. The hospital has demonstrated over time the partnership it values with our community. Management staff serve on various boards, hospital staff are one of the largest contributors to the communities United Way, plus they volunteer for a great variety of activities in the community, from health fairs to baseball coaches. By maintaining the Certificate of Need, unnecessary and for profit business does not take away from one of our community's wonderful assets, our hospital. I strongly urge you to consider the overall financial impact this has on the hospital and the people of our community.

Sincerely,



Diane Hubler, RNC
P.O. Box 82542
Fairbanks, AK 99708
(907)479-5001

CC: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801


Dear Representative Coghill:

I am writing today asking you to oppose HB 407. The current language of this bill is not the answer for meeting the needs of the Fairbanks community. If this is a subject that you personally feel strongly about, then please kill it this session and bring it back home so you can gather data and make the best decision for Fairbanks.

The Bill (HB 407) allows for profitable services to be cherry picked. We, as a community, must protect these hospital-based revenues. These services: surgery, radiology, pharmacy, and laboratory provide the funds necessary to support inpatient nursing, mental health services, long term care, charity care, and home care. These are the types of services our community expects their community hospital to provide. Please, please do not get sucked in by those that claim Fairbanks would benefit from the model of competition that HB 407 would promote.

As a Fairbanks resident since 1969, I have watched this community grow and mature. I am proud to be a product of the local public school system and a graduate of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I have been employed both by the Tanana Valley Clinic and Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and have been witness to the excellent care that both entities provide to their patients. I care deeply about the future of this community, as I know you do. Please consider heavily the long term effects of this bill. It will not meet the needs of the Fairbanks consumer. I encourage you and your peers to study this issue in earnest.

Sincerely,



Jim Lynch
105 Bentley Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99701
HIn# 907-479-7514
Wk# 907-458-5575

Cc: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
~~Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS~~

March 25, 2002

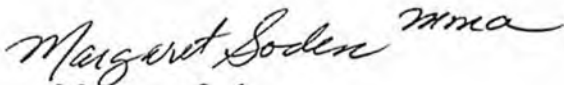
Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Coghill:

I think the current Certificate of Need system is fair and competitive. If a services is needed in Fairbanks, then the CON can be obtained and doesn't give any preference to any applicant because all application are evaluated and the best one is granted a CON and may proceed with the project.

Perhaps it will be determined that the service is not needed, then no CON is granted to any applicant. Fairbanks Memorial provides many services that are not profit generating (mental health, home health care, Medicare and Medicaid) and would be harmed if profit-making services are siphoned off by profit-seeking entities who would only offer table services. Please reconsider your support for this legislation.

Sincerely,



Margaret Soden
PO Box 61328
Fairbanks, AK 99706
907-479-6793

Cc: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol Room 602
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Coghill:

I am writing out of concern of SB256 + HB407.
Health Care is a complex market unlike any other... especially in Alaska.
These bills will weaken the state's oversight of health care, will not lower
prices & will increase state expenditures. Unneeded facilities will be
built, profitable (non medicare/medicaid) patients will be diverted to
them, resulting in less profitable patients cared for only @ FMH.
Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) is a community owned & operated
hospital. It has provided top quality care at the lowest cost
within Alaska. Why would you even consider jeopardizing this
vital service?

When other states changed their CON laws in the manner that
is currently being proposed in SB256 + HB407, they found themselves
facing shortages in specialized staff such as nurses + pharmacists.
These staff shortages were directly linked to a decrease in healthcare
quality. Another serious problem that occurred was an increase
in hospital costs related to running multiple facilities far below
capacity.

There is a nationwide shortage of nurses & other health care
personnel. I'm worried that the new services that would start
up under a revised CON policy like the one you're suggesting
might skimp on the quality & quantity of their staff just
to keep it open.

Please do not allow this to happen to our community!

Cc: Senators: Pete Kelly
Gary Wilken
Gene Theriault
Representatives: John Davis
Jim Whilaker
Hugh Fate
Jeanette James
Joe Hayes
~~_____~~

Thank you,

Karen Losinski
3479 Sharon Rd
North Pole, AK 99705
j.losinski@ucsalaska.net
907 488-5518

March 26, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

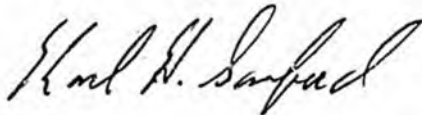
Dear Representative Coghill,

I would like to address HB 407 currently being sponsored by you. This bill is contrary to the state of Alaska's own determination that no additional surgery beds are needed. This came after a review by the state CON reviews in 1999.

It is obvious that the driving force behind this bill is to "cherry pick" our local hospital. If this bill passes, there will be irreparable harm done to healthcare in Fairbanks.

During a time when the state is looking to save dollars, this will no doubt increase the expenditure in the state budget. Losses in jobs and financial reimbursement will have an impact that will have many secondary effects in our community. I urge you and the other Legislators to not pass HB 407.

Thank you,



Karl Sanford

Cc: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 25, 2002


Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-3719
Fax: 907-465-3258

Dear Representative Coghill,

If SB 256 or HB407 move forward into legislation, I believe the community of Fairbanks ultimately will be hurt. The government needs to maintain control over the CON process as it is currently doing. Some industries need regulation to prevent a decline in pricing, quality, access, education and research.

We need a strong CON law in Alaska to provide a measure of discipline to the market. By loosening the standards, you will open the door to a host of problems. I urge you to consider strengthening the CON, lowering the cost threshold and requiring more projects to be reviewed instead of only a handful.

Sincerely,



Carol Barnett
1696 Dredgeview Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99712
(907)455-7456

CC: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Coghill:

I am writing this letter regarding the legislation affecting Certificate of Need legislation (House Bill 407). I am opposed to any changes to the current Certificate of Need process.

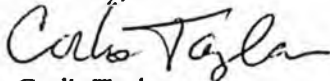
I understand representative Coghill that you are concerned with competition. The cost of healthcare is too high not just in Fairbanks but in the entire country. As a Fairbanksan, I know that Fairbanks Memorial Hospital is the lowest cost provider in the state-7% lower than Providence and 20% lower than Alaska Regional-both hospitals are competitive in a larger market. Your proposed legislation hurts Fairbanks and will have a tremendous financial impact for the community and for the state.

Unlike other businesses in healthcare, I can't choose what to buy and what not to buy. I listen to physician's advice. I am afraid that I will end up getting advice because the physician will gain personally by the options he or she is suggesting.

If there is going to be competition in healthcare then let it be fair competition. If I am in a car accident on the Park's Highway, I am willing to bet Fairbanks Memorial Hospital will be the only facility open at 2 am to provide needed trauma surgery. That is what a community hospital does. A surgery center would not provide a competitive choice—they wouldn't be open.

As a representative of the Interior, I am counting on you to give serious consideration to House Bill 407 and how it will truly affect the residents in this area. I do not support HB 407. The current CON regulations are fair and are important for small communities.

Sincerely,



Corlis Taylor
1335 Viewpointe Dr.
Fairbanks, AK 99709
907-479-3224

Cc: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-3719
Fax: 907-465-3258

Dear Representative John Coghill:

I am very concerned about the proposed changes outlined in House Bill 407 and SB 256 affecting requirements for a Certificate of Need. I am confident that a careful review of the details will show that the proposed changes are not in the best interest of the Fairbanks community. Please consider the following points:

The elimination of C.O.N. in communities with populations greater than 55,000. C.O.N.'s do not prohibit or restrict services—C.O.N.'s ensure that providers build only when a genuine need can be demonstrated thus protecting against unnecessary duplication and fragmentation. In 1999 the State of Alaska determined that there was no need for an additional outpatient surgery center in Fairbanks. If a genuine need existed I would be supportive of another facility. As the building manager of the Medical Dental Arts Building at 1919 Lathrop St. I am in a unique position as I interface with many private practice physicians and yet am an employee of FMH. The Fairbanks community has a very unique and very healthy community run non-profit hospital that is committed to the well being of the citizens of Fairbanks and the Interior. One must consider the possible negative impact of unnecessary duplication of services that could occur if the safeguards of C.O.N.'s are removed. Currently FMH costs and pricing run lower than those in Anchorage. Other states have found that similar changes to the C.O.N.'s raised hospital costs and drained specialized staff. We already face a national shortage in nursing. One must consider the inevitable drain of staffing.

The simplistic first glance response would reason that lessening the C.O.N. would eliminate "red tape" and boost competition with the hopeful result of driving down prices...but the facts spell out a different outcome. There is substantial documentation that proves that it is in the best interest of the Fairbanks community to keep the C.O.N. safeguards intact. FMH/DC has a proven commitment to the community: who else could run a Home Medical Equipment Department at a loss solely out of a sense of responsibility to the community? Programs for Mental Health, Senior Care and Alcohol Treatment are very much needed in this community. Again, FMH has come through for us all with programs that are not profitable but vital! I hate to think that the proposed C.O.N. changes could negatively impact our current health care network with unnecessary inflationary pressures. As a concerned citizen I urge you to meet with community leaders and take the time to consider the complexities surrounding the issues. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Brad Clark 458-5144w 457-5473h
3000 Moose Mt Rd
PO BOX 81368
Fairbanks AK 99708

Cc: The Interior Delegation
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 7, 2001

Representative John Davies
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, Ak. 99801-118?

Dear Representative Davies:

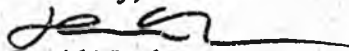
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session to amending the Current Certificate of Need Laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

It is a great concern of mine living in a single provider community setting that adequate and accessible healthcare is available to its entire people. If lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000.00 or, eliminating the Certificate of Need in communities larger than 55,000.00 residents; will erode the health of our community hospitals.

I urge you to strengthen not weaken the existing laws by opposing HB 256 or require providers interested in opening new health care services in a community show a real need exists. Community hospitals will be placed at great risk of loosing fiscal stability which places in harms way such programs as mental health, hospice, home care and charity programs for uninsured residents.

Thank you for your time and thought concerning this most important health care issue that is being placed before the Alaska State Legislature-second session.

Sincerely,



David Naylor
P.O. Box 82848
Fairbanks Ak. 99708
907-479-7949

March 7, 2002

Representative Jeanette James
State Capitol
Room 214
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Jeanette James:

I am concerned about a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I am in favor of a reasonable level of state oversight of the establishment of new health care programs. The government should ensure that there is a good chance that the project can be built for a reasonable amount of money, that it can be staffed appropriately, that it is likely to have the volumes necessary to achieve economies of scale, and a likely prospect of producing good outcomes. The existing CON program does these things now, and I think it would be a big mistake to try an untested experiment of allowing programs to spring up wherever providers think they can make some money.

It would be very detrimental to our community to make it easy for others to open a health care facility accepting only those patients with high paying insurance coverage. The existing facilities would be left with only those patients with little or no health benefits causing undue financial hardship and disruption to our community.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Norman D. Pembert
3986 Sharon Rd
North Pole, AK 99705
488-6075

CC: Interior Delegation

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS

Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 11, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Coghill:

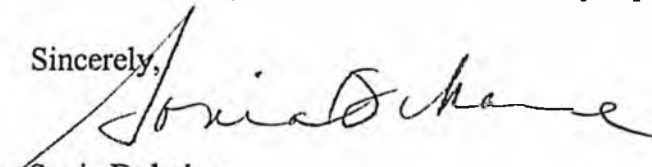
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

The choice of providing healthcare in the small community hospital towns of Alaska is of great concern to me. I am concerned that increasing the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or, worse yet, diminishing the need for a Certificate of Need in communities greater than 55,000 residents, will jeopardize the health of our state's community hospitals.

I urge you not to weaken, but to strengthen the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering additional health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new type of service (such as an arr:bulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Sonia Duhaime
105 Faulk County Rd
Fairbanks, AK. 99709
907-479-7293

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative Hugh Faite
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

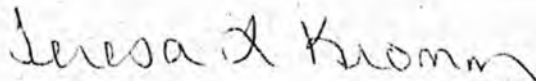
Dear Mr. Faite:

I am writing to tell you I oppose legislation currently under consideration concerning changing the Certificate of Need process. (SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485)

I believe that increasing the CON threshold of \$1,000,00 or eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in larger communities will seriously place our community and our community hospital at risk.

Our community is fortunate to have a Cancer Treatment Center and an adequate inpatient mental health facility because the hospital was able to provide these services. It is well known they do not pay for themselves and must be subsidized by the hospital. Without a viable, non-profit hospital the needs of the community will not be met. If you make it easy for profit seekers to take away the viable service of the hospital, our community will most definitely suffer.

Sincerely,



Teresa Kromm
P.O. Box 80827
Fairbanks, AK. 99708

Copies to:

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HE.
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative Hugh Fate
State Capitol
Room 416
Juneau, AK 99807-1182

Dear Representative Fate,

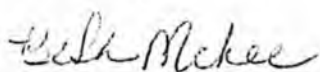
I am not a person who is in favor of government control. However, I feel that I must write to you regarding SB 256.

Competition in most industries is a good thing. However, studies have shown that competition in healthcare actually causes an increase in cost, rather than a decrease. Changing the CON requirements will encourage more for-profit, self-serving providers. My concern is that the not-for-profit facility will suffer financially. If that happens, where will they get the funding for the less profitable, but very necessary programs, such as alcohol and mental health treatment?

I ask that you withdraw your proposed amendment to the CON statute.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Beth McKee
P.O. Box 74366
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

March 7, 2002

Senator Pete Kelly
State Capitol
Room 518
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

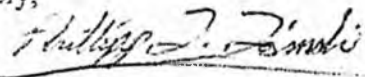
Dear Senator Pete Kelly:

I am writing to you out of concern for the community I live in and you represent. I am specifically concerned about a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I understand that several doctors in the Anchorage area want to build a surgical center in our community. I suspect their plan is to biased off the patients with high paying insurance benefits and leave the other patients on Medicare, Medicaid or no insurance for the clinics already here. I strongly object to this. I firmly believe that the requirement of a Certificate of Need (CON) will prevent these leaches to our community. If there's no need for a facility, yet a group of doctors builds one, I know that there's a potential conflict of interest there. If they tell me to go to their facility, how am I going to know that they're saying that because it's the best thing for me?

Thank you for your listening.

Sincerely,



Phillipp Losinski
3479 Sharon Rd
North Pole, AK 99705
(907) 488-5518

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Senator Gary Wilken
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Mr. Wilken,

I am writing to tell you I oppose legislation currently under consideration concerning changing the Certificate of Need process. (SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485)

I believe that increasing the CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in larger communities will seriously place our community and our community hospital at risk.

Our community is fortunate to have a Cancer Treatment Center and an adequate inpatient mental health facility because the hospital was able to provide these services. It is well known they do not pay for themselves and must be subsidized by the hospital. Without a viable, non-profit hospital the needs of the community will not be met. If you make it easy for profit seekers to take away the viable services of the hospital, our community will most definitely suffer.

Sincerely,

Danny Williams

2652 Doc John Drive
Fairbanks, Ak. 99709

Copies to:
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative John Davies
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davies:

There are several bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407, and HB 485.

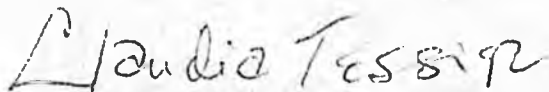
Changing the CON requirements will encourage a greater number of smaller, self-interested providers. If the provider is "for profit" the best interests of the patients may not be the most profitable. When you jeopardize your health care, the consequences could be of a very grave nature.

Raising or eliminating the CON threshold will have the effect of diluting the quality of healthcare. The current CON policy ensures that the government has a say in who and how the community healthcare is provided. I believe that this policy is fair and competitive.

Please take under advisement my opinions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Claudia Tessier
439 Fairway Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99709

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative John Davies
State Capitol
Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davies:

There are several bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SE 256, HB 407, and HB 485.

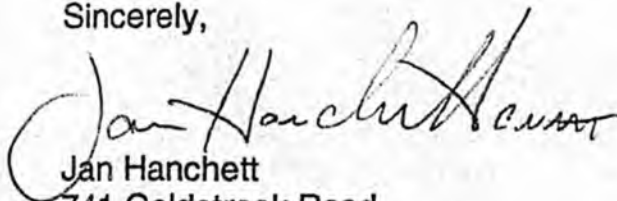
Intelligent oversight is provided by the current CON process. It provides a forum for the public's involvement in decisions to expand capacity and to make major investments in healthcare technology.

I am in favor of a reasonable level of state oversight of the establishment of new programs. The government should ensure that there is a good chance that the project can be built for a reasonable amount of money, that it can be adequately staffed, and that the overall outcomes will be favorable. The existing CON program does these things now. I think that it would be a serious mistake to allow programs to be implemented wherever providers think they can make a monetary gain.

I hope that you give my thoughts some serious consideration.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jan Hanchett
741 Goldstreak Road
Fairbanks, AK 99712

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

John Coghill
Room 518
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Mr. Coghill,

My parents and I adamantly oppose legislation related to the changing the Certificate of Need process – specifically SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

Sincerely,



Michael G. Smith
1293 Rangeview Road
Lakloey Hill
North Pole, AK 99705

cc:

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Mr. Joe Hayes
Room 422
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Mr. Hayes,

This letter is to tell you that I **oppose** current legislation to change the **Certificate of Need** process.

The current CON regulations are fair. If there's no need, then the community needs to be able to say "no." And if there is a need, then we should be able to have a say in who gets to build it.

Certificates of Need ensure that unnecessary facilities are not built. If there's no need for a facility, yet a group of doctors builds one, I know that there's a potential conflict of interest there. If they tell me to go to their facility, how am I going to know that they're saying that because it's the best thing for me?

Thanks,



Jakki Stern
1915 Ada, Apt 1
Fairbanks, AK 99701

cc:

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

WILLIAM H. DOOLITTLE, MD FACP
P.O. Box 71046
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1046
Telephone: (907)456-8881
FAX:(907)456-2047
Email: doolittle@ptialaska.net

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Coghill,

Thank you for listening to me last week in regard to HB 407. I still encourage that this bill not advance. Based on 35 years of experience in health care in Fairbanks, I feel very strongly that legislation that alters the present Certificate of Need represents a clear, if not immediate, risk to health care in Fairbanks and its environs.

The economics of Health Care do not conform to the usual model of competition in business, since the only "business" attraction is the few services in health care that can be profitable. There is no competition for the services where the margins won't carry new construction and new equipment costs. For-profit Health Care Providers profit from picking off these few services, and take their money and run. The One Hospital Community has a hospital that must continue to provide the marginal or losing services, and must remain open and staffed when the For-Profits go home at night. The single community hospital must continue to take the complicated cases from the For-Profit Centers when the day is done, and it must provide the wide array of services for which reimbursement is marginal, and where there is no For-Profit group clamoring to share. The result is pretty apparent. There has to be a decrease in the services offered by the hospital. To the extent that some of these services may be offered in a modified form, accreditation may suffer and the attractiveness of the hospital to new physicians being recruited to the community will change.

The Fairbanks area does not have a burgeoning population, or high expectation of monster new industry. CON as it now stands, is designed to protect the health care delivery potential for communities just like ours. It might not be required in larger cities. The only constant in health care in Fairbanks over the past 30 years has been the Hospital. Clinic operations have come and gone, and first one then another is the largest. The CON as it now stands has protected the community of Fairbanks from compromised services while providing a standard for progress. Please, don't tinker with what has been successful over time. The insidious deterioration in health care services wrought by the contemplated changes will become apparent in your lifetime, but probably not mine. The recovery will not come to pass until your grandchildren reach maturity.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the interior of Alaska. Please help us with this.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. H. Doolittle', written in a cursive style.

William H. Doolittle, M. D.

Cc: Senator Pete Kelley
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House Hess

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-3719
Fax: 907-465-3258

Dear Representative Coghill,

I am writing to make an appeal to stop legislation eliminating the Certificate of Need (CON) in the State of Alaska.

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital has consistently provided services to this community that are desperately needed, but are not reimbursed. We have identified the need for adolescent psychiatric beds in Fairbanks, to allow families to remain close in this time of difficulty. Our ability to subsidize this type of unprofitable service is dependent on those services, such as surgery and imaging, which are reimbursed. Elimination of the CON will essentially kill any chances of providing this service in the future.

This only gives one example of the loss of vital services in every community in the State of Alaska. Please consider the impact elimination of the CON will have on our people.

Thank you for your consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jana Walters
P.O. Box 81293
Fairbanks, AK 99708
(907)458-5319

CC: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-3719
Fax: 907-465-3258

Dear Representative Coghill,

I urge you to oppose HB 407 regarding "Certificate of Need". The present system for CON works well, and should be left alone.

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) offers complete care and subsidizes some costs from it's revenue from operations. To allow private groups to selectively undercut FMH would severely undermine the benefit of FMH to the Fairbanks community.

At the very least, at the next session (2003-4), schedule hearings in the Fairbanks area so that the public can have input.

Sincerely,

William Mendenhall /ct

William Mendenhall
1907 Yankovich Rd.
Fairbanks, AK 99709

CC: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone 907-465-3719
Fax: 907-465-3258

Dear Representative Coghill:

Certificates of Need (CON) is necessary to ensure fairness.

The Fairbanks Community currently has a hospital which provides programs such as mental health, home care, cancer treatment and inebriate care. By eliminating the CON process, other groups will set up business here, taking the few areas which help the hospital generate money which support these other programs. Surgery centers generate money, inebriate care doesn't. Who will take care of this community problem?

This is an issue which affects Fairbanks. Let the people of Fairbanks know about it. Bring it home and let's talk about it.

Sincerely,

Carol Swinburn
2256 Jack Street
Fairbanks, AK 99709
907-458-8825

cc: Senator Pete Kelley
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Theriault
Representative John Davis

Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fata
Representative Jeanette Jones
Representative Joe Hayes
~~Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS~~

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

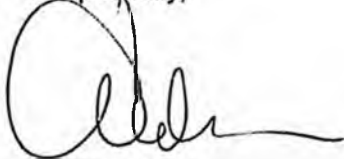
Dear Representative Coghill:

I am writing you regarding my opposition to HB-407. I believe that my community benefits greatly from the Certificate of Need (CON) process. CON limits the potential for abusing the monopoly power that providers, both hospitals and physicians, have to the consumer. Both of these entities need to be regulated by being required to present well designed business planning and proof of need to justify providing new facilities in my community. By ensuring that our community gets only the facilities that we need, the CON helps to maintain the volumes necessary to ensure services are delivered to each patient consistent with the highest possible quality standards.

The CON process has never stood in the way of this community getting the healthcare it needs, but it has stood in the way of getting infrastructure that we do not need. If Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) were not an efficient, accountable entity in my community their position would be different on this issue as are the proponents of this bill. Because the hospital takes on all the burdens of my community that other entities are not willing to provide since there is no profit in these services ie mental health, long term care, etc., please do not allow these other entities to "cherry pick" my community hospital.

I truly believe that the hand of government in the form of a CON is necessary in a community the location and size of mine. We as a community have not truly been heard from on this very sensitive issue. Travel to Juneau is not as easy for some of us as it is for others. If you are not convinced of this please kill this bill for now and bring the issue back home so that the voice of my community can be heard on this issue.

Respectfully,



Joe Walden
2418 Englewood Court
Fairbanks, AK 99709
907-474-8484

Cc: Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Gene Therriault
Representative John Davies
Representative Jim Whitaker
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Jeanette James
Representative Joe Hayes
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 25, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Phone 907-465-3719
Fax 907-465-3258

Dear Representative Coghill

I would like you to re-consider your House bill 407. It would be a mistake to, in effect, eliminate the C.O.N. requirement. If there really were a need it would already be allowed under the current laws.

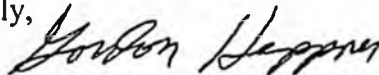
This bill would harm Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, in that it would allow doctors to take the well-insured or wealthy patients to their facility and leave the uninsured and poor to the hospital. The profitable cases at the hospital now offset the costs of money loosing cases and average out the picture.

Since the hospital is a non-profit hospital, no money will be pocketed at the expense of another. Also any extra money is put back into the community, upgrading and expanding the hospital to better serve the community.

Since we, as patients, have very little, if any, say when it comes to where we get tests or surgeries done, a doctor would naturally take us to "his" facility, unless we had no insurance or could not pay.

I think you need to look at the big picture on this bill and leave the C.O.N law as is. It has worked just fine up to this point.

Sincerely,



Gordon Heppner
Box 55203
North Pole, Alaska 99705
907-488-6355

Cc: Interior Delegation
Representative Fred Dyson, Chairman House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative Jeanette James
State Capitol
Room 214
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Jeanette James:

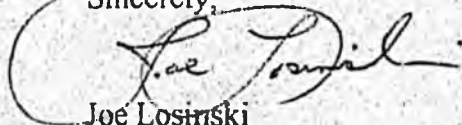
I am writing to you as a voting, tax paying citizen residing in the community you represent. I am quite concerned about a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

When other states changed their CON laws in the manner that is currently being proposed in SB 256, they found themselves facing shortages in specialized staff. These staff shortages were directly linked to a decrease in healthcare quality. Another serious problem that occurred was an increase in hospital costs related to running multiple facilities far below capacity.

By raising the threshold, you will be eliminating CON review for all but the most expensive programs. These are the very programs where the planning is most likely to be the most thorough, and where consequently, the value of outside CON review the least effective. We need to be concerned about the smaller programs, where a provider might be playing a hunch or making a bet. I think that the threshold should remain where it is, or perhaps lowered, so that we don't have providers spending money on things we don't need.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Joe Losinski
3479 Sharon Rd
North Pole, AK 99705
(907) 488-5518

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative Hugh Fate
State Capitol
Room 416
Juneau, AK 99807-1182

Dear Representative Fate,

I am writing to you regarding the bills being considered this legislative season related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws. Those bills are SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

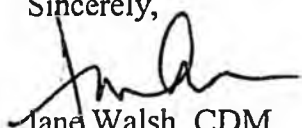
I urge you to consider leaving the current Certificate of Need laws as they are. The current laws protect small community hospitals, such as Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. With changes to the law, this hospital could be in danger of losing the strong programs that "keep the doors open."

By ensuring that our community has only the facilities that it needs, the Certificate of Need laws help to maintain the volumes necessary to ensure a variety of high quality services are available to all people.

I urge you to strengthen the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jane Walsh, CDM
1097 Vicki Lane
North Pole, Alaska 99705
907-490-2379

March 7, 2002

Representative John Coghill
State Capitol
Room 102
Juneau, AK 99807-1182

Dear Representative Coghill,

This letter is in regards to bills being considered this legislative season related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws. Those bills are SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

If SB 256 is passed, I fear the healthcare market in Fairbanks will be flooded with for-profit facilities, gleaning the high revenue outpatient surgeries from the hospital. If this were to happen, where would Fairbanks Memorial Hospital get it's funding for the less profitable, yet very necessary programs, such as mental health, hospice and home care?

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital plays a vital role in promoting good health and wellness. Passing SB 256 threatens the quality and variety of health care that this hospital provides.

I urge you to strengthen the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Laurie Struthers, RD
1319 3rd Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
907-455-6314

CC: Interior Delegation
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair House HESS

March 7, 2002

John Coghill
Room 102
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear John,

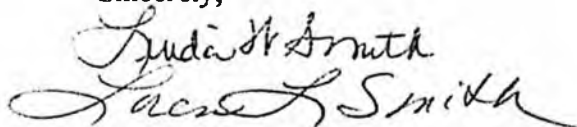
Loren and I continue to vigorously oppose legislation related to the changing the Certificate of Need process – specifically SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

We cannot understand why the legislature would even consider making it easier for already overpaid physicians to take away some of the few services provided by the hospital that pay for themselves, specifically imaging and out-patient surgery services.

Our 26-year-old son had serious mental health needs during the 90's. I lived in terror that he would need to be admitted to the hospital mental health unit at a time all beds were full. You may not be aware that if beds were full, patients at risk for harming themselves were sent to the jail to be kept under lock and key.

Thankfully, the hospital had the funds to enlarge their mental health unit and my worst-case scenario was never realized. Unfortunately, we cannot say that for all of your constituents. Please, please do not take away the hospital's ability to continue to look out for those who cannot pay or services that do not pay for themselves – such as the Cancer Treatment Center, Home Care, Charity Program, Denali Center, etc.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Loren and Linda Smith in cursive script.

Loren and Linda Smith
1293 Rangeview Road
Lakloey Hill
North Pole, AK 99705

cc:

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Pete Kelly
Room 518
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Pete,

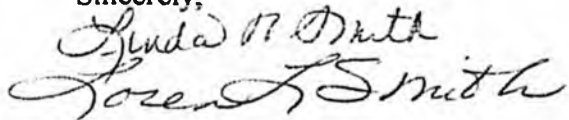
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Thankfully, the hospital had the funds to enlarge their mental health unit and my worst-case scenario was never realized. Unfortunately, we cannot say that for all of your constituents. Please, please do not take away the hospital's ability to continue to look out for those who cannot pay or services that do not pay for themselves – such as the Cancer Treatment Center, Home Care, Charity Program, Denali Center, etc.

Sincerely,



Loren and Linda Smith
1293 Rangeview Road
Lakloey Hill
North Pole, AK 99705

cc:

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

Subject: Victory! Anti-choice Judicial Nominee Charles Pickering Defeated!

Date: Fri, 15 Mar 2002 12:23:55 -0800 (PST)

From: Planned Parenthood Action Network <actionnetwork@rc.plannedparenthood.org>

To: Wes_Keller@legis.state.ak.us

*Free
FYI*

Dear Wes,

In a very real display of the power of grassroots, Judge Charles Pickering's nomination was defeated yesterday in the Senate Judiciary Committee. This is a very exciting and hard fought victory. When this battle began, very few thought there was any chance to defeat the nomination. Through incredible grassroots efforts, including tens of thousands of letters to the Senate Judiciary Committee, and patch-through phone calls with a visible message strategy, the seemingly impossible became a clear victory. The vote was ten to nine.

Thanks to all of you who contributed to the 42,000 messages generated through the Planned Parenthood Action Network. Your voice was a critical factor in this important defeat.

For further updates on this and other judicial nominations, visit our website at <http://www.saveROE.com>

~~~~~  
Encourage others to promote and protect reproductive health rights by joining the Planned Parenthood Action Network at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/action/join.asp>

~~~~~  
You received this message because wes_keller@legis.state.ak.us is a member of the Planned Parenthood Action Network. You can change your personal information (such as email or street address) by visiting our online profile editor at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/action/profile.asp>

To unsubscribe from this mailing list, send an email to actionnetwork@rc.plannedparenthood.org from wes_keller@legis.state.ak.us with the word "remove" in the subject line. If you have questions or comments about this alert, please send an email to actioncenter@ppfa.org.

~~~~~

March 8, 2002

Senator Pete Kelly  
State Capitol  
Room 415  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Kelly

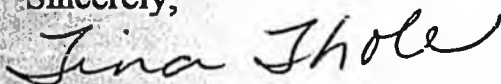
I am writing as a long term resident of Fairbanks. The purpose of this letter is to ask for your support opposing a couple of bills before the legislature this session. These bills would change the Certificate of Need process as it currently exists in the state of Alaska. The specific bills I am talking about are SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I firmly believe that the process as it exists now is a fair and just process. The current CON process requires that all providers interested in offering substantial health services show a real need exists in a community before any new category of service is allowed to be introduced to a community. Should this be taken away I think it will have a negative long term effect on the quality and type of services provided here in the interior.

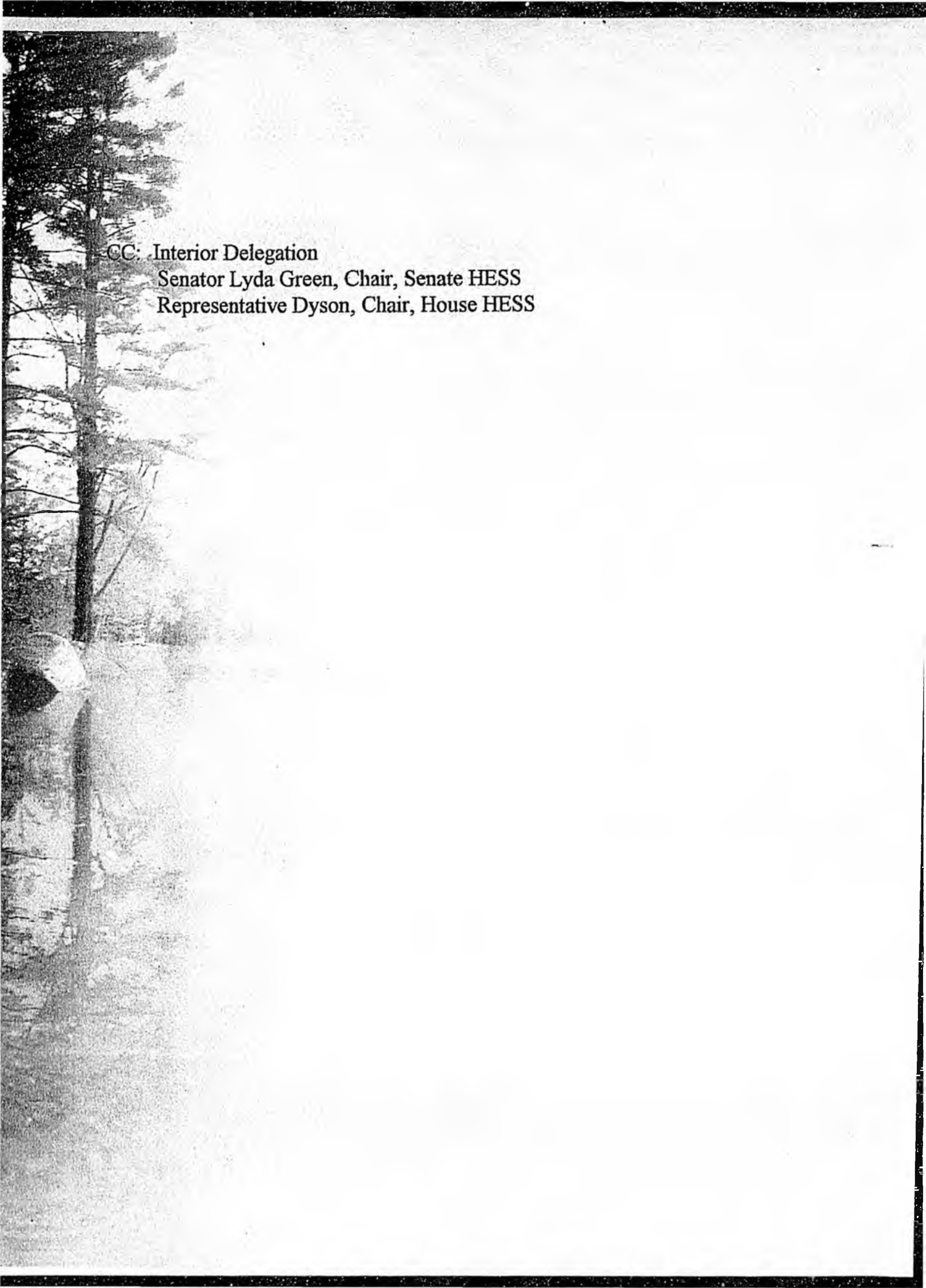
If anything the current dollar limit (\$1,000,000) needs to be lowered to require more projects to be reviewed.

Please show your support for this community by opposing these bills and allowing a system that works work the way it should.

Sincerely,



Tina Thole  
1357 Gilmore Trail  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712



CC: Interior Delegation

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS

Representative Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Senator Gene Therriault  
State Capitol  
Room 121  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Therriault:

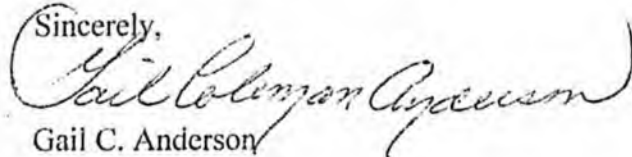
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I think the current CON system is fair and competitive. If a service can prove it is needed in the community, then a CON can be obtained. It doesn't give any preference to one applicant over another – each of the alternate proposals is evaluated and the best one is granted a CON and authorization to proceed. Changing the CON requirements will encourage a greater number of smaller, self-interested providers. If the provider is "for profit" the best interests of the patients may not be the most profitable.

I urge you to strengthen – not weaken – the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering substantive health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new category of service (such as an ambulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Gail C. Anderson  
845 Birch Hill Road  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712  
(907) 452-5880

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

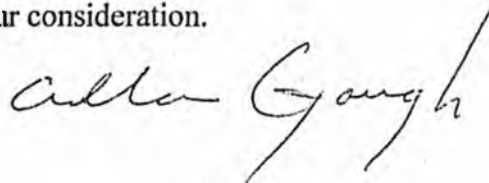
Representative Jeanette James  
State Capitol  
Room 214  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative James:

I am concerned about the bills being considered relating to the current Certificate of Need laws. I fear that lifting the current CON threshold will jeopardize the health of Alaska's community hospitals. By raising the threshold, CON review would be eliminated for all but the most expensive programs, which are already well researched. Allowing niche service providers to selectively pick health-care consumers leaves community hospitals bearing the burden of providing care for the indigent without the ability to offset those expenses. Please don't let this happen in our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Allan Gough  
2316 Ptarmigan  
North Pole, AK 99705  
907-488-5899

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

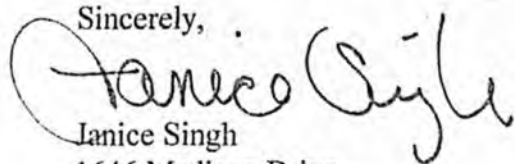
Representative John Coghill  
State Capitol  
Room 102  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Coghill:

I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold will jeopardize the health of Alaska's community hospitals. By raising the threshold, you will be eliminating CON review for all but the most expensive programs, which are already well researched. Allowing the unmonitored establishment of niche services leaves community hospitals bearing the burden of providing care for the indigent without the ability to offset those expenses. Please don't let this happen in our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Janice Singh  
1646 Madison Drive  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
907-474-3455

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Senator Gary Wilken  
State Capital  
Room 514  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Wilken:

I have become aware of three pieces of legislation being considered for this legislative session, dealing with the Certificate of Need (CON) process (SB 256, HB 407, and HB 485).

I am concerned about the possibility of the CON process being eliminated in communities with a population of less than 55,000. This process was designed to protect communities from "diluted" forms of health care resources. When unplanned growth occurs in health care options, it saturates markets, stretches much needed resources too thin and result in a lower quality of care.

I am concerned not only about maintaining the high quality health care standards that we have in the Interior, which I truly believe will be jeopardized by passage of these bills, but I am also concerned that not-for-profit facilities (like FMH) will suffer financially. If that happens, who is going to fund programs like mental health care, cancer treatment, and alcohol treatment?

I have always received personalized, quality, professional care at our hometown hospital and I'm very proud that we have such a fine facility in Fairbanks. To consider relaxing the CON process, to me, will be detrimental to communities like Fairbanks. Though I do not like the state making rules and regulations that challenge my way of life here in the Last Frontier, in this case, it is much needed to protect our quality healthcare system for the greater good.

I ask you to consider very carefully your decision on this very important issue and urge you to leave the CON process as it is.

Thank you for your consideration on this issue.

Sincerely,



Hal Meyer  
4250 Aspenwood Drive  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
907-474-8520

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

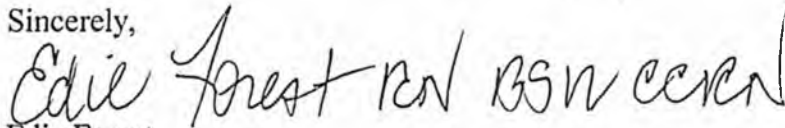
Representative Gene Therriault  
State Capitol  
Room 121  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Therriault:

I am concerned about the bills being considered this legislative session that relate to the current Certificate of Need laws. I fear that lifting the current CON threshold will jeopardize the health of Alaska's community hospitals. By raising the threshold, CON review would be eliminated for all but the most expensive programs, which are generally well-researched in the first place. Allowing specialty service providers to selectively pick the more lucrative cases leaves community hospitals bearing the burden of providing care for the indigent and infirm without the ability to offset those expenses. Please don't let this happen in our community.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edie Forest RN BSN CCRN".

Edie Forest  
15.1 CHSR  
Two Rivers, AK 99712  
907-488-2436

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 9, 2002

Senator Gary Wilkin  
State Capitol  
Room 514  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Wilkin:

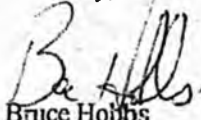
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

If the SB 256 is passed, then the market will be flooded with for-profit facilities. My concern is that the not-for-profit facilities will suffer financially. If that happens, where will they get the necessary funding for the less profitable, yet necessary programs, such as mental health and alcohol treatment?

By ensuring that our community gets only the facilities we need, the CON helps to maintain the volumes necessary to ensure services are delivered to each patient consistent with the highest possible quality standards.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Bruce Hobbs  
P.O. Box 83911  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Senator Pete Kelley  
State Capitol  
Room 518  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Kelley:

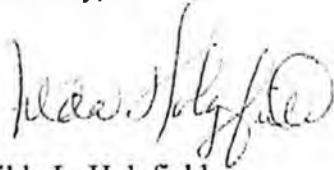
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I am in favor of a reasonable level of state oversight of the establishment of new programs. The government should ensure that there is a good chance that the project can be built for a reasonable amount of money, that it can be staffed appropriately, that it is likely to have the volumes necessary to achieve economies of scale, and a likely prospect of producing good outcomes. The existing CON program does these things now, and I think it would be a big mistake to try an untested experiment of allowing programs to spring up wherever providers think they can make some money.

I urge you to strengthen – not weaken – the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering substantive health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new category of service (such as an ambulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Nilda L. Holyfield  
1223 Wildrose Ave.  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 452-6373

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Senator Pete Kelly  
State Capital  
Room 518  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Senator Kelly

I have concerns about a number of bills being considered in this legislative session. Those bills are related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws (bills SB 256, HB 407, and HB 485).

Certificates of Need (CON) ensure that unnecessary facilities are not built. If there's no need for a facility, yet a group of doctors builds one, I know that there's a potential conflict of interest there. If they tell me to go to their facility, how am I going to know that they're saying that because it's the best thing for me?

The current CON regulations are fair. If there's no need, then the community needs to be able to say "no." And if there is a need, then we should be able to have a say in who gets to build it.

Thank you for considering my comments and I urge you to defeat the bills and support the current CON laws for the protection of the residents of Fairbanks as well as the rest of the State.

Sincerely,

*Connie Moore*

Connie Moore  
P.O. Box 74784.  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707  
907-479-5145

CC. Interior Delegation

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 9, 2002

Representative Joe Hayes  
State Capitol  
Room 422  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Hayes

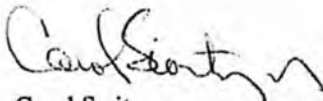
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

When other states changed their CON laws in the manner that is currently being proposed in SB 256, they found themselves facing shortages in specialized staff. This staff shortage was directly linked to a decrease in healthcare quality. Another serious problem that occurred was an increase in hospital costs related to running multiple facilities far below capacity.

We need a strong CON law in Alaska to provide a measure of discipline to the market. By loosening the standards, you will open the door to a host of problems. I urge you to consider strengthening the CON, lowering the cost threshold and requiring more projects to be reviewed instead of only a handful.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Carol Switzer  
2256 Jack Street  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
907-458-8825

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 5, 2002

Representative John Coghill  
State Capitol  
Room 102  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Coghill:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

The challenge of providing optimal access to healthcare in the unique and fragile sole-community hospital towns of Alaska is of great concern to me. I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or, worse yet, eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in communities greater than 55,000 residents, will jeopardize the health of our state's community hospitals.

The current CON regulations are fair. If there's no need, then the community needs to be able to say "no." And if there is a need, then we should be able to have a say in who gets to build it.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



John Cotter  
794 Quasar Drive  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative Jim Whitaker  
State Capitol  
Room 411  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Whitaker:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

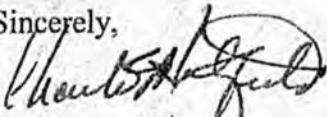
The challenge of providing optimal access to healthcare in the unique and fragile sole-community hospital towns of Alaska is of great concern to me. I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or, worse yet, eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in communities greater than 55,000 residents, will jeopardize the health of our state's community hospitals.

Intelligent oversight is provided by the current CON process. It provides a forum for the public's involvement in decisions to expand capacity and to make major investments in healthcare technology. Where good planning can be demonstrated, the current CON policy is not an impediment. Where there is not good planning, the current CON policy provides a reasonable check on the unrestrained proliferation of unnecessary services.

I urge you to strengthen – not weaken – the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering substantive health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new category of service (such as an ambulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Holyfield  
1223 Wildrose Ave.  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 452-6373

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative Gary Wilken  
State Capitol  
Room 514  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Wilken:


You are known for your attention to the statewide impact of passing any legislation. I strongly recommend you evaluate proposed changes to the Certificate of Need program in SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

These changes will effectively remove the CON process. This process is specifically designed to protect the consumer from unsafe practices and huge increases in healthcare costs. The CON has never stood in the way of this community getting the healthcare it needs, but it has stood in the way of getting infrastructure that we don't need.

Please make a thorough evaluation of these bills before letting them move through our legislative system. What may seem a small thing now could have major impacts on the long-range healthcare availability to all Alaskans.

Thank you for keeping the best interests of all Alaskan's in the forefront.

Sincerely,



Marionette D. Stock  
485 Ballaine Rd  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative John Coghill  
State Capitol  
Room 102  
Juneau, AK 99801

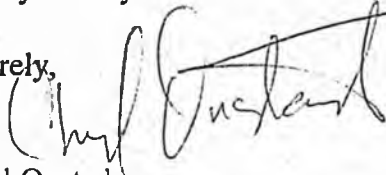
Dear Representative Coghill:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold would place our state's community hospitals in financial jeopardy. If specialty services are allowed to avoid the CON process and pluck the high payors from the market, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs. This will leave them struggling to provide the sorely needed but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services. Please don't let this happen to our community.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Onstad  
1308 28<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
907-457-1852

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative John Davies  
State Capitol  
Room 415  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davies,

I wanted to let you know how I feel about SB256, HB407 and HB485. These bills, which deal with healthcare and Certificates of Need, are being debated and voted on this week and I am keeping a close eye on what happens.

By changing the existing law, you would encourage a number of new, for-profit healthcare clinics. If these clinics were owned by the doctors, which they would most likely be, then the doctors would be faced with the dilemma of how to increase their savings accounts while practicing good medicine. I worry that either my family or myself will undergo unnecessary treatment, just because my insurance will pay for it.

Please do not pass SB256, HB407 and HB485. Thank you for your time. Keep up the good work.

Very truly yours,



Clover Tiffany  
P.O. Box 329  
Ester, AK 99725

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Senator Pete Kelly  
State Capitol  
Room 518  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Kelly:

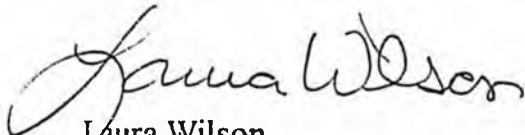
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Needs laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

The challenge of providing optimal access to healthcare in the unique and fragile sole-community hospital towns of Alaska is of great concern to me. I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or, worse yet, eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in communities greater than 55,000 residents, will jeopardize the health of our state's community hospitals.

I urge you to strengthen - not weaken - the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering substantive health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new category of service (such as an ambulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Laura Wilson  
1162 Kiowa Ct Rd  
North Pole, AK 99705  
907-488-0163

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Senator Pete Kelly  
State Capitol  
Room 518  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Kelly:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Needs laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

The challenge of providing optimal access to healthcare in the unique and fragile sole-community hospital towns of Alaska is of great concern to me. I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or, worse yet, eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in communities greater than 55,000 residents, will jeopardize the health of our state's community hospitals.

I urge you to strengthen - not weaken - the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering substantive health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new category of service (such as an ambulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Mark Roberts  
2618 Lee Ln  
North Pole, AK 99705  
907-488-0163

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 5, 2002

Senator Gene Therriault  
State Capitol  
Room 121  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Therriault:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

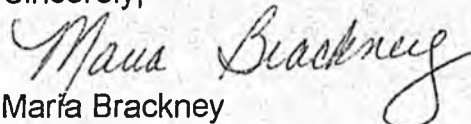
The challenge of providing optimal access to healthcare in the unique and fragile sole-community hospital towns of Alaska is of great concern to me. I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or, worse yet, eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in communities greater than 55,000 residents, will jeopardize the health of our state's community hospitals.

The CON has never stood in the way of this community getting the health care it needs, but it has stood in the way of it getting infrastructure that we don't need.

Certificates of Need (CON) ensure that unnecessary facilities are not built. If there's no need for a facility, yet a group of doctors builds one, I know that there's a potential conflict of interest there. If they tell me to go to their facility, how am I going to know that they're saying that because it's the best thing for me?

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Marfa Brackney  
1923 Parham-McCormick  
North Pole, AK 99705  
907-488-0959

CC: Interior Delegation

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS

Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative John Coghill  
State Capitol  
Room 102  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Coghill:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws and I am concerned regarding their unintentional consequences.

I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 will jeopardize the health of our state's community hospitals. By raising the threshold, you will be eliminating CON review for all but the most expensive programs. These are the programs where planning is most thorough but where outside CON review the least valuable. We need to be concerned about the smaller programs where a provider might be playing a hunch, thus increasing the risk to which the community is exposed. I think that the threshold should remain where it is so that we don't have providers spending money on things we don't need.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Barbara Czopek  
1216 28<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
907-456-1827

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative Jim Whitaker  
State Capitol  
Room 415  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Whitaker:

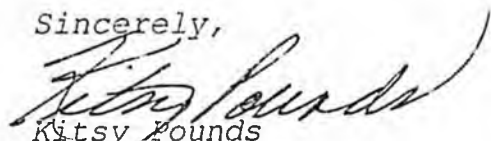
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I believe that lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or, worse yet, eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in communities greater than 55,000 residents, will cause more harm than good.

Competitive markets, even for specific services, will not be created in Alaska by the addition of several new providers of services. The action of other factors make it impossible. And, since the introduction of the new providers into markets is likely to create excess capacity, it is also likely to result in higher prices rather than lower ones. Please do not pass SB 256.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Kitzsy Pounds  
929 15<sup>th</sup> Ave, #2  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
(907) 452-5852

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Senator Gary Wilken  
State Capitol  
Room 514  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Wilken:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

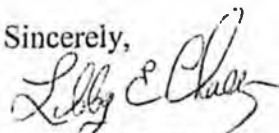
I don't see how the current CON regulations are anti-competitive. We all know that patients and doctors aren't equal players in the game of healthcare. When I go to the doctor, I don't know what I need, how much it should cost, or even which specialist is the best for my particular need. I rely on my doctor to tell me, and I don't want the doctor's opinion to be influenced by how he or she will financially benefit.

I agree that health care is a very imperfect market where other controls are required. CON is one of them. Your proposal effectively abolishes CON for all but the very largest projects, and this is a mistake.

I urge you to strengthen – not weaken – the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering substantive health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new category of service (such as an ambulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Libby E. Chavez  
1211 Grenac Road  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
(907) 479-6328

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative Jeanette James  
State Capitol  
Room 214  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Jeanette James:

I am writing to you out of concern about a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I agree that health care is a very imperfect market where other controls are required. CON is one of them. Your proposal effectively abolishes CON for all but the very largest projects, and this is a mistake.

There is a nationwide shortage of nurses and other health care personnel. I'm worried that the new services that would start up under a revised CON policy like the one you're suggesting might be forced to skimp on the quality of their staff just to keep it open.

It's not a normal business. How can health care be cheaper in the long run if we let the providers (physicians) themselves build facilities and buy equipment without showing somebody that they've done their homework and it's really needed? Maybe they just want it. And they're going to get all of us to pay for it. In health care, I can't really choose what to buy and what not to buy. I listen to the physician's advice. I'm afraid that I'll end up getting tainted advice because the physician will gain personally by the option he or she is suggesting.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

*Christy Everett*  
2308 Robinson Circle  
North Pole, AK 99705  
482-8361

CC: Interior Delegation

Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS

Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative John Davies  
State Capitol  
Room 415  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davies:

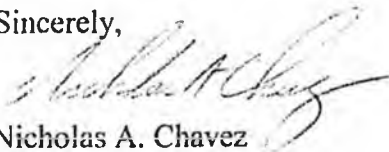
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I think the current CON system is fair and competitive. If a service can prove it is needed in the community, then a CON can be obtained. It doesn't give any preference to one applicant over another – each of the alternate proposals is evaluated and the best one is granted a CON and authorization to proceed. Changing the CON requirements will encourage a greater number of smaller, self-interested providers. If the provider is “for profit” the best interests of the patients may not be the most profitable.

I urge you to strengthen – not weaken – the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering substantive health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new category of service (such as an ambulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Nicholas A. Chavez  
1211 Grenac Road .  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
(907) 479-6328

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative John Davies  
State Capitol  
Room 415  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davies:

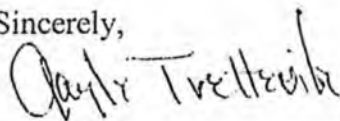
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or, worse yet, eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in communities greater than 55,000 residents, will create more problems than good.

Competition in most industries is a good thing, but changing the existing CON policy would not create a positive competitive market. There simply is not enough volume to support additional, duplicative services. This increased supply would lead to higher prices, not lower, as the conventional model of competition would imply. To pass SB 256 would be to increase supply and therefore increase cost.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Gayle Trettevik  
2672 Bonanza Trail  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
907/452-3292

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Senator Gary Wilken  
State Capital  
Room 514  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Senator Wilken,

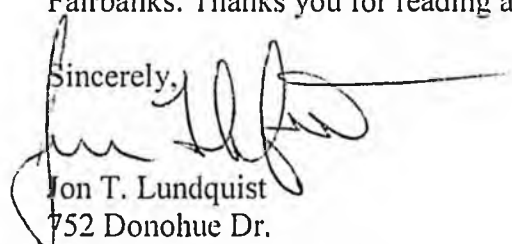
I have concerns about a number of bills being considered in this legislative session. Those bills are related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws (bills SB 256, HB 407, and HB 485).

I believe that there is a need for strong CON laws to prevent unnecessary facilities from being built. In Fairbanks we have a non-profit community hospital that has maintained some of the lowest prices, if not the lowest, in the state for services. They have been very responsive to community needs to the point of putting in services that don't necessarily pay for themselves, but are direly needed by the community. If unneeded Facilities are allowed to come into the community and allowed to undermine the Hospital that this community has worked so hard to build it would be a great disservice to the people living here.

A strong CON law that preserves the current threshold allows review of projects before they are built and for Fairbanks this is what we need. These laws would not preclude someone from building a facility if they can show a need was present in the community. The CON law helps avoid the unneeded facilities and the problems they cause, such as having two underutilized facilities causing inefficiencies and driving costs up not bringing them down.

I urge you to oppose changes in the current CON laws to protect the people of Fairbanks. Thanks you for reading and considering my perspective on this subject.

Sincerely,



Jon T. Lundquist  
752 Donohue Dr.  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712  
907-457-2203

CC. Interior Delegation

Senator Lyda Green. Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 9, 2002

Senator Gary Wilkin  
State Capitol  
Room 514  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Wilkin:

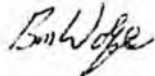
This letter is written to express my feelings on the bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

The current CON regulations are fair. If there's no need, then the community needs to be able to say NO. And if there is a need, then we should be able to have a say in who gets to build it.

We're not talking about providers not being allowed to provide services that they can show are needed. The current CON rules let them do that already. We are talking about a proposal to allow providers to build facilities without having to show that they are needed. The doctors will tell us where to go for services - we won't really decide for ourselves what's best, because we won't know.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



Ben Wolfe  
593 Terrace Drive  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative John Coghill  
State Capitol  
Room 102  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Coghill:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Needs laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

The challenge of providing optimal access to healthcare in the unique and fragile sole-community hospital towns of Alaska is of great concern to me. I am concerned that lifting the current CON threshold of \$1,000,000 or, worse yet, eliminating the need for a Certificate of Need in communities greater than 55,000 residents, will jeopardize the health of our state's community hospitals.

I urge you to strengthen - not weaken - the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering substantive health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new category of service (such as an ambulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Jerry Wilson  
1162 Kiowa Ct Rd  
North Pole, AK 99705  
907-488-0163

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 7, 2002

Representative Jeanette James  
State Capitol  
Room 214  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Jeanette James:

I am writing to you out of concern about a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

I agree that health care is a very imperfect market where other controls are required. CON is one of them. Your proposal effectively abolishes CON for all but the very largest projects, and this is a mistake.

There is a nationwide shortage of nurses and other health care personnel. I'm worried that the new services that would start up under a revised CON policy like the one you're suggesting might be forced to skimp on the quality of their staff just to keep it open.

In health care, I can't really choose what to buy and what not to buy. I listen to the physician's advice. I'm afraid that I'll end up getting tainted advice because the physician will gain personally by the option he or she is suggesting.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



2299 Freedom Rd  
North Pole, AK 99705

488-3216

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative John Coghill  
State Capitol  
Room 415  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Coghill:

I am writing you to ask for your support concerning bills that are currently before the legislature this session. These bills would allow changes to the Certificate of need process that exists here in the state of Alaska. I am specifically interested in HB 407, HB 485 and SB 256.

My concern over these bills is related to the long term healthcare services for the people in the interior of Alaska. I believe competition is a needed item in certain markets. However it does not make sense in this one. We have the lowest cost healthcare in the state with our present system and provide services that have a real need not just ones that are money makers.

If I understand these bill correctly they would take away/amend the current CON process and allow other entities to come in and provide duplicate services that would erode our ability to provide the services we need here in our community. I am not saying that providers would not be allowed to provide services that they can show are needed. Our current CON process let them do that already. I am talking about the ability to allow providers to build facilities without having to show they are needed. The current CON has never stood in the way of this community getting the healthcare it needs.

Please show your support for this community by opposing these bills and allowing a system that works work the way it should.

Sincerely,



Linette Jordan  
3350 Thomas lot 8  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 9, 2002

Senator Gary Wilkin  
State Capitol  
Room 514  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Wilkin:

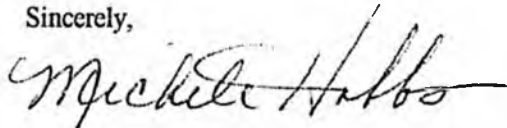
I am writing you to comment on the bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

Certificates of Need (CON) ensure that unnecessary facilities are not built. If there's no need for a facility, yet a group of doctors builds one, I know that there's a potential conflict of interest there. If they tell me to go to their facility, how am I going to know that they're saying that because it's the best thing for me?

Research has proven that in states with no CON, the quality of care declines after the CON is removed. The same study, done by the University of Iowa, also shows that the hospitals in non-CON states have lower patient levels, but higher treatment costs per patient. It would be a shame to pass SB 256 and destroy our healthcare system here in Alaska.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



Michele Hobbs  
P.O. Box 83911  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 8, 2002

Representative John Coghill  
State Capitol  
Room 102  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Coghill:

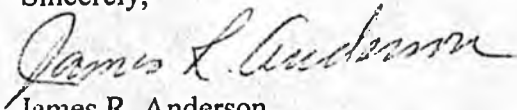
There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

The current CON regulations are fair. If there's no need, then the community needs to be able to say "no." And if there is a need, then we should be able to have a say in who gets to build it. We're not talking about providers not being allowed to provide services that they can show are needed. The current CON rules let them do that already. We are talking about a proposal to allow providers to build facilities without having to show that they are needed. The doctors will tell us where to go for services – we won't really decide for ourselves what's best, because we won't know.

I urge you to strengthen – not weaken – the existing Certificate of Need laws by opposing SB 256, or requiring that all providers interested in offering substantive health services demonstrate a real need exists in a community before any new category of service (such as an ambulatory surgery center) is introduced to a community. Without demonstrating true need, community hospitals will be at great risk of losing their fiscally strong programs to providers not able or willing to address important, but unprofitable services such as mental health, long-term care, hospice, home care, or routine nursing services.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



James R. Anderson  
845 Birch Hill Road  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712  
(907) 479-6328

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

Daniel A. Johnson  
1215 Saint Anton Drive  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

March 7, 2002

Representative Hugh Fate  
State Capitol  
Room 416  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative

I am writing to you concerning legislation that will affect the current Certificate of Need laws, SB 256 and HB 485.

Certificates of Need help to ensure that unnecessary and expensive medical facilities are not built. In addition, they support the concept of community hospitals where all patients and all conditions are treated. Without certificates of need, facilities can be built which "cherry pick" or treat only the most lucrative patients, thus undermining community hospitals. In addition, for a community like Fairbanks, redundant facilities divide the health care market among several facilities will only undermine efficiencies and economies of scale.

There are many other reasons to support strong Certificate of Need laws, but I feel very strongly that the current laws benefit the community and have proven themselves to be reasonable and effective.

I urge you to support the strengthening, not weakening of our Certificate of Need Laws.

Sincerely,

*Daniel A. Johnson SCS*

Daniel A. Johnson

Cc: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS

March 6, 2002

Representative Hugh Fate  
State Capitol  
Room 415  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Fate:

There are a number of bills being considered this legislative session related to amending the current Certificate of Need laws, including SB 256, HB 407 and HB 485.

The current CON regulations are fair. If there's no need, then the community needs to be able to say "no." And if there is a need, then we should be able to have a say in who gets to build it. Furthermore, where good planning can be demonstrated, the current CON policy is not an impediment. Where there is not good planning, the current CON policy provides a reasonable check on the unrestrained proliferation of unnecessary services.

I also think the current CON system is fair *and* competitive. If a service can prove it is needed in the community, then a CON can be obtained. It doesn't give any preference to one applicant over another – each of the alternate proposals is evaluated and the best one is granted a CON and authorization to proceed.

Thank you for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,



Carol Barnett  
1696 Dredgeview Drive  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712  
455-7456

CC: Interior Delegation  
Senator Lyda Green, Chair, Senate HESS  
Representative Fred Dyson, Chair, House HESS