



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

ALPHA RESOLUTION Late Breaker 02- 2008

Provision of State funding in support of the Alaska Area Health Education Center Program

Sponsor: **Interior AHEC at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital –
Lillian Ruedrich**

WHEREAS the Alaska Public Health Association strives toward the goal of a healthy population, it recognizes that a robust health care workforce is necessary to provide adequate health care access for all Alaskans and is a key ingredient in improving the public health of all Alaskans; and

WHEREAS health care occupations are projected to grow twice as fast as overall Alaskan employment thru 2014; and

WHEREAS statewide health care vacancies average ten percent across 119 occupations, with higher rates in rural areas, and some tribal employers exceeding rates of 50%; and

WHEREAS Alaska's hospitals, community health centers, mental health clinics and tribal health organizations spent conservatively \$24 million in 2006 on recruitment, and of that \$24 million, more than half was spent on itinerant providers, many of whom come from the Lower 48 and do not invest in our local economy; and

WHEREAS Alaska's Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program is part of a national program through the Health Resources and Services Administration to build infrastructure for health workforce development, currently operating with four regional centers to address workforce shortage gaps and serve as a bridge between education and the local healthcare industry; and

WHEREAS Alaska's AHEC program feeds the health care workforce pipeline with youth recruitment into health careers, coordination of student clinical rotation placements, and improved retention of rural providers through greater access to continuing education and professional development opportunities; and

WHEREAS State government support is critical as the AHEC program transitions from federal funding and continues to build partnerships to build an Alaska based health care workforce;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alaska Public Association supports the sustainability of Alaska's Area Health Education Center Program and will advocate for the necessary authorizing and fiduciary legislation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association will promote and advocate for state funding of the Alaska Area Health Education Center Program and engage in low and no-cost advocacy efforts for this purpose such as:

- Circulation of advocacy action requests to members, partners and other individuals,
- Posting of ALPHA resolutions on the Alaska Public Health Association's website,
- Contact with policy makers via phone, letter, email and/or in-person meetings,
- Public testimony in legislative hearings, town hall meetings, and other public forums,
- Distribution of this resolution statement to policy makers and key officials.