



# ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

## Legislative Bills of Interest to ALPHA

| <b>Bill #</b>  | <b>Sponsor</b> | <b>Title/ Summary<br/><i>(Short Title in Italics)</i></b>  | <b>ALPHA<br/>Position</b> | <b>Advocacy<br/>Involvement</b> |
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| SB 212   | DAVIS          | <p><i>Medical Assistance Eligibility</i> is an Act relating to eligibility requirements for medical assistance for certain children and pregnant women; and providing for an effective date.</p> <p>This legislation would increase the income eligibility requirements for Denali KidCare to 200% of the FPL.</p> | Support                   | HIGH                            |
| <p><b>SB 212</b> <a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=SB%20212&amp;session=25">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=SB%20212&amp;session=25</a></p> |                |  |                           |                                 |

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| HB 234  | JOHNSON<br>Co-sponsor: Buch      | <p><b><i>Education Loan Repayment Program</i></b> is an Act relating to the education loan repayment program and establishing the education loan repayment fund."</p> <p><b><u>ALPHA Comments:</u></b><br/>The proposal may not help with recruiting new providers since a person would have to be employed for 12 months before becoming eligible for the loan repayment program.</p> <p>The definition of severe shortage needs clarity. This legislation proposed a shortage is defined as a 15% vacancy rate in any profession.</p>  | Support  | HIGH |
| <b>HB 234</b> <a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=HB%20234&amp;session=25">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=HB%20234&amp;session=25</a> |                                  |  |  |      |
| HB 337  | RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR | <p><b><i>Health Care: Plan/Commission/Facilities</i></b> is an Act establishing the Alaska Health Care Commission and the Alaska health care information office; relating to health care planning and information; repealing the certificate of need program for certain health care facilities and relating to the repeal; annulling certain regulations required for implementation of the certificate of need program for certain health care facilities; and providing for an effective date.</p> <p><b><u>ALPHA Comments:</u></b><br/>HB 337 and SB 245 would:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a Health Care Commission</li> <li>2. Establish Healthcare Information Office [HealthCare Transparency] – a website to compare different provider and healthcare service costs.</li> <li>3. Repeal of Certificate of Need</li> </ol> <p><a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=HB%20337&amp;session=25">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=HB%20337&amp;session=25</a> <b>HB 337</b></p> | Support<br>Health<br>Commis<br>sion<br>Needs<br>amend-<br>ment | HIGH |

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|  |  | <p><b><u>ALPHA Comments:</u></b></p> <p>The vision of the Alaska Public Health Association is that Alaskans shall have the knowledge and the means to live free of preventable illness and injury.</p> <p>Two of the three major parts of the Governor’s bill (HB337/SB245) are consistent with that vision: (1) a Health Care Commission could contribute to development of solutions to big challenges in health system redesign to address Alaska’s population needs, and (2) a Healthcare Information Office [HealthCare Transparency] could be an effective means for improving at least the knowledge to live free of preventable illness and injury.</p> <p>A website could be a good way to provide health promotion and prevention information, risk self-assessments, and even some cost information regarding alternative approaches. However the element providing for comparison of different provider and healthcare service costs will require a completely new reporting system for freestanding facilities and programs as well as restructuring of hospital reporting, with attendant costs that will have to be borne either by government or the providers and ultimately the public.</p> <p>The third component of the original bill would repeal Certificate of Need, which ALPHA does not support, since it falsely assumes that free market forces apply to the health care field. Certificate of Need provides for expansion of services where population based need is demonstrated by current levels of use and expected growth in demand for services.</p> |  |  |
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|        |                                  | The bill ignores the CON “negotiated rulemaking” process completed last month (January) that many health care leaders just gave many hours to accomplish. Repeal of CON opens the door to “boutique clinics” competing with community hospitals, provides no relief to Medicaid program for handling bills for procedures that the State may believe should not be provided, and fails to take into account experience of other states that have repealed CON. ALPHA also disagrees with either partial or phased repeal of CON. ALPHA supports instead the development of a state health plan that includes a facilities plan and a workforce development plan that could provide more effective guidance for health services development. |         |      |
| HB 325 | RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR | <b><i>Teachers/Health Care Profess Housing Loan is an Act relating to the teachers' and nurses' housing loan program in the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation; and providing for an effective date. See SB 233.</i></b><br><br><a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=HB%20325&amp;session=25">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=HB%20325&amp;session=25</a> <b>HB 325</b>   | Support | HIGH |
| SB 233 | RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR | <b><i>Teachers/Health Care Profess Housing Loan is an Act relating to the teachers' and nurses' housing loan program in the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation; and providing for an effective date.</i></b><br><br><a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=SB%20233&amp;session=25">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=SB%20233&amp;session=25</a> <b>SB 233</b>   | Support | HIGH |

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| SB 245 | RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR                   | <p><b>Health Care: Plan/Commission/Facilities</b> is an Act establishing the Alaska Health Care Commission and the Alaska health care information office; relating to health care planning and information; repealing the certificate of need program for certain health care facilities and relating to the repeal; annulling certain regulations required for implementation of the certificate of need program for certain health care facilities; and providing for an effective date.</p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=SB%20245&amp;session=25">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=SB%20245&amp;session=25</a> <b>SB 245</b></p> <p><b>ALPHA Comments:</b> See HB 337.</p>   | Support   | HIGH |
| SB 160 | <p>FRENCH<br/>Co-Sponsors: Ellis, Wielechowski</p> | <p><b>Mandatory Universal Health Care</b> is an Act establishing an Alaska health care program to ensure insurance coverage for essential health services for all residents of the state; establishing the Alaska Health Care Board to define essential health care services, to certify health care plans that provide essential health care services, and to administer the Alaska health care program and the Alaska health care fund; establishing the Alaska health care clearinghouse to administer the Alaska health care program under the direction of the Alaska Health Care Board; establishing eligibility standards and premium assistance for persons with low income; establishing standards for accountable health care plans; creating the Alaska health care fund; providing for review of actions and reporting requirements related to the health care program; and providing for an effective date.</p> <p><b>SB 160</b><br/><a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=SB+160">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=SB+160</a></p> | Support concept of universal coverage, engage in discussion on bill | HIGH |

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|  |  | <p><b><u>ALPHA Comments:</u></b></p> <p>Maintains dependence on insurance (administrative overhead higher than public programs); Insurers may not participate in market; more expensive than purchase of care; thus costs much more than purchase of care (expansion of Medicaid and Medicare); and does not address seasonal workers or non-resident workers (definition and coverage of these).</p> <p>Administering the SB160 plan may be expensive – means testing plus keeping track of employers and their offerings, etc. – so there will be administrative costs for both insurance companies and the state.</p> <p>Decisions about what constitutes adequate coverage will need extensive discussion. The first hearing on the bill included disabled appeal and Christian Science appeal. This is just the beginning. An ALPHA role could be to sponsor debate on this – to identify some alternative approaches. The Arizona Medicaid program developed several “low cost” packages to use – we can follow up with them.</p> <p>This bill’s “Commission” has an oversight role that is understandable – but now there is confusion about different types of “health [care] commissions.” Indeed there are a number of different potential roles. Research needs to be done to see what other states have – the Public Health Foundation has tons of info about organizational structures regarding health care, public health, and Medicaid and rate-setting structures elsewhere that might be worth reviewing.</p> |  |  |
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| SB 106 | DAVIS   | <p><b>Community Health Center Appropriation</b> is a budget amendment which would make a \$2.3 million appropriation to the Department of Health and Social Services for payment as a grant to the Alaska Primary Care Association, a nonprofit association, for the community health center program.</p> <p><b>SB 106</b><br/> <a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=SB+106">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=SB+106</a></p>  | Support | HIGH |
| HB 140 | GARA<br>Co-Sponsors: Buch, Kawasaki, Doll, Gardner, Gruenberg | <p><b>Medical Assistance Eligibility</b> amends the income eligibility requirements for the Denali KidCare Program. HB 140 will expand the eligibility requirements for Denali KidCare to 200% of the FPL and offer a co-pay option for children and pregnant women on a sliding scale who are in between 201% and 350% of the FPL. See SB 87.</p> <p><b>HB 140</b><br/> <a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=hb140&amp;submit=Display+Bill+Root">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=hb140&amp;submit=Display+Bill+Root</a></p> | Support | HIGH |
| HB 231 | DOLL<br>Co-Sponsor: Gruenberg                                 | <p><b>Medical Assistance: Kids/Disabled/Pregnant</b> is an Act relating to eligibility requirements for medical assistance for certain children, pregnant women, and disabled persons; and providing for an effective date. HB 231 will expand the eligibility requirements for Denali KidCare to 200% of the FPL.</p> <p><b>HB 231</b><br/> <a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=HB+231">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=HB+231</a></p>   | Support | HIGH |

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| SB 87  | WIELECHOWSKI<br>Co-Sponsors:<br>French, Ellis, Elton,<br>Davis | <p><i>Medical Assistance Eligibility amends the income eligibility requirements for the Denali KidCare program. SB 87 will expand the eligibility requirements for Denali KidCare to 200% of the FPL and offer a co-pay option for children and pregnant women on a sliding scale who are in between 201% and 350% of the FPL.</i></p> <p><b>SB 87</b><br/> <a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=sb+87">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=sb+87</a></p>   | Support | HIGH |
| SB 179 | DAVIS  | <p><i>Dependent Health Insurance; Age Limit</i> would prevent health care insurers who provide coverage of a child through family care insurance from denying enrollment for a dependent child of the insured who is less than 26 years of age. Such insurers would also be prohibited from denying enrollment and disenrolling or eliminating coverage for such dependent children</p> <p><b>SB 179</b><br/> <a href="http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=SB179">http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=25&amp;bill=SB179</a></p> | Support | HIGH |



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|                        |   | <p><b>ALPHA Comments:</b><br/> ALPHA supports HB 271 as an important measure to protect the health of workers and the general public. ALPHA recognizes the public health threat presented by the prevalence of toxic PBDE flame retardants. In light of the emerging science on the inherent toxicity and persistence of PBDEs, evidence of adverse health effects on animals, and the prevalence and rising levels in fish, biota, and human breast milk, immediate action is needed to prevent further environmental contamination and to protect public health. The state should phase out by a certain date the manufacture, sale, and distribution of products containing flame retardants (polybrominated diphenyl ethers and other persistent bioaccumulative toxics (PBTs)).</p>  |        | (3/21/08)<br>House L&C<br>(3/26/08)   |
| <a href="#">HB 364</a> | REPRESENTATIVE(s)<br>COGHILL, Keller,<br>Meyer, Stoltze, Lynn,<br>Johnson, Dahlstrom,<br>Wilson, Neuman,<br>Roses, Kelly, Gatto | <p><i>Notice and Consent for Minor's Abortion</i><br/> "An Act relating to notice and consent for a minor's abortion; relating to penalties for performing an abortion; relating to a judicial bypass procedure for an abortion; relating to coercion of a minor to have an abortion; relating to reporting of abortions performed on minors; amending Rule 24(a), Alaska Rules of Civil Procedure, amending Rule 220, Alaska Rules of Appellate Procedure, and Rule 20, Alaska Probate Rules, relating to judicial bypass for an abortion; and providing for an effective date."</p> <p><b>ALPHA Comments:</b><br/> ALPHA strongly opposes state laws that in any way limit access to safe, legal abortion services, including, but not limited to: mandatory delays and information/counseling that is not science-based, bans on specific abortion procedures, parental consent or notification requirements, targeted regulation of</p> | Oppose | Letters of<br>opposition to<br>(2/26/08):<br>Sponsors<br>House<br>Judiciary |

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|  |  | <p>abortion providers, and limits for advanced practice clinicians in providing abortion services.</p> <p>HB 364 is similar to the law mandating parental consent that was recently struck down by the Alaska Supreme Court in November 2007. Sending this issue through the legislature again uses up resources in a time-strapped legislative session. HB 364 raises serious issues about notification documentation and levies an unjustified burden on physicians who are described as the sole agents able to obtain consent and notification. Despite the intention to protect – mandatory notification and consent may result in a teen delaying speaking to anyone about a pregnancy and delay seeking medical services.</p> <p>ALPHA Resolution 7-2007 Protecting and Enhancing Women’s Ability to Obtain Safe, Legal Abortion Services.<br/> <a href="http://www.alaskapublichealth.org/pdf/resolution/7-2007LateBreakerSafeLegalAbortion.pdf">http://www.alaskapublichealth.org/pdf/resolution/7-2007LateBreakerSafeLegalAbortion.pdf</a></p> |  |  |
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