



Alaska State Legislature

Official Business, State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska, 99801

Secretary Kathleen Sebelius
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

August 5, 2009

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

We write today to urge the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to lift the moratorium on new applicants to Alaska's Medicaid waiver programs as CMS and our Department of Health and Social Services work together to resolve the underlying problems in these programs. Too many of Alaska's most vulnerable citizens will be hurt if these services are put on hold. In turn, we commit to working with CMS and DHSS to implement any statutory changes that would help these programs continue to serve as the most cost-effective, least restrictive form of care for disabled and elderly Alaskans.

We recognize the severity of the problems CMS identified with Alaska's waiver services, and have struggled with some of these issues for years. In fact, this past year, Senate Majority Leader Johnny Ellis introduced Senate Bill 32, which would create a fair and predictable system of rate reviews for home- and community-based service providers, one of the major issues raised by the CMS audit.

The bill is poised to move quickly in the next legislative session, having passed the Alaska Senate unanimously. This legislation holds bi-partisan co-sponsors in both houses of the Alaska Legislature. Senator Ellis has pledged to work with all parties involved, and has offered up his legislation as a vehicle for additional statutory changes that may become necessary during this process.

We hope that our willingness to work with you will be a sign of good faith – Alaska's disabled and elderly populations need us to work together to solve this problem, and can't afford to wait any longer.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Johnny Ellis in black ink.

Senate Majority Leader Johnny Ellis

Handwritten signature of Gary Stevens in blue ink.

Senate President Gary Stevens



Senator Dennis Egan



Senator Hollis French



Senator Linda Menard



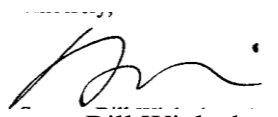
Senator Donald Olson



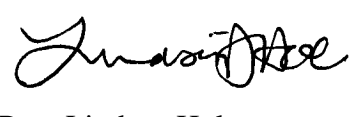
Senator Joe Paskvan



Senator Joe Thomas



Senator Bill Wielechowski



Rep. Lindsey Holmes



Representative Beth Kerttula