

Electronic Mail: shss@akleg.gov

February 9, 2023

Senator David Wilson
Chair, Senate HSS Committee
State Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: AHHA Supports SB 58 Postpartum Medicaid Coverage

Dear Chair Wilson and Senate HSS Committee members,

For 70 years, the Alaska Hospital & Healthcare Association (AHHA) has served as a non-profit trade association representing Alaska's hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare partners across the continuum of care. AHHA members play an invaluable role, both as community providers and essential employers, in cities, towns, and villages across Alaska.

AHHA is pleased to offer our support for SB58, to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months.

AHHA and our member hospitals work in partnership with Department of Health, Division of Public Health / Women's, Children's, and Family Unit to reduce severe maternal morbidity and mortality. AHHA works with the Maternal Child Death Review Committee to understand the drivers of maternal mortality and complications of pregnancy and to bring forward prevention opportunities. Extending postpartum Medicaid to 12 months is an evidence-based action the State can take to support families and improve care.

A review of Alaska's maternal mortality data shows that many of these deaths are preventable and occur after pregnancy-related Medicaid coverage ends. From 2016-2022, the Alaska Maternal Child Death Review Committee found that almost half of recent maternal deaths in Alaska were associated with barriers to healthcare access.

The postpartum period is an especially vulnerable time for parents who may be recovering from substance use disorders, face chronic complex medical conditions, or experience mental health conditions after birth. Maternal mental health is intimately tied to the health and development of the child and can lead to delayed cognitive, social-emotional, and behavior development in children. These consequences start in infancy, but they can affect the child into adulthood.



This bill matters to Alaskans because it will increase healthcare access and improve maternal and child health outcomes. Extending insurance coverage through the first year postpartum will more adequately address both chronic and pregnancy-related medical conditions.

AHHA urges the passage of SB 58 to ensure mothers receive the care needed to support a strong start to their child's life.

Thank you for your consideration and support in working to solve Alaska's healthcare challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Kosin', is written over a circular stamp.

Jared C. Kosin, JD, MBA
President & CEO