

February 13, 2025

Senator Forrest Dunbar, Chair
Senate HSS Committee Members
Senate Health & Social Services Committee
State Capitol Room 205
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator.Forrest.Dunbar@akleg.gov
Senate.Health.And.Social.Services@akleg.gov

RE: AHHA Supports SB 76 Complex Care Residential Homes

Dear Chair Dunbar and Committee Members,

For over 70 years, the Alaska Hospital & Healthcare Association (AHHA) has served as a non-profit trade association representing Alaska's hospitals, nursing homes, and a growing number of 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 supports Senate Bill 76, which creates a new facility license type for "complex care residential homes." These entities are defined as a residential setting that provides 24-hour multi-disciplinary care on a continuing basis to not more than 15 individuals with mental, behavioral, medical, or disability-related needs that require specialized care, services, and monitoring.

We believe this legislation can help address a chronic issue crippling our healthcare system. Based on monthly surveys of Alaska's hospitals over the past year, we are finding increasing instances in which patients no longer need to be in an acute care hospital, but remain at the hospital because there is no place for them to go for continued care.

These patients are stuck in the most complex, expensive environment in the healthcare system, and the hospitals caring for them lose key resources as they are not reimbursed for the added stay by Medicare, Medicaid, and insurers because the patients no longer medically require hospitalization. In fact, 1 out of every 7 hospital beds in Alaska are tied up with these individuals, and in 2023, patients in this situation spent 43,646 extra days in the hospital.

This gridlock is a result of many factors, including a lack of services for complex needs in Alaska's continuum of care. Creating a new service delivery mechanism like complex

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care residential homes will help reinforce access to care at an appropriate, lower-level setting in the community. Standing up this service should ultimately help prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and improve discharge delays for those stuck in the healthcare gridlock.

We recognize this is just the first step for establishing access to this type of care, but we think it is an important step to take as soon as possible. For these reasons we support SB 76 and urge its passage. Thank you for your leadership in prioritizing access to quality, sustainable healthcare for all Alaskans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Kosin'.

Jared C. Kosin, JD, MBA
President & CEO