

April 30, 2025

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair
Senate Labor & Commerce Committee
State Capitol Room 105
Juneau AK, 99801
Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov

RE: AHHA Supports Senate Bill 159 – Increase STEP Diversion Rate

Dear Chair Bjorkman 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 SB 159 and we view its proposed increase to the diversion from employee unemployment insurance contributions to the State Training and Employment Program (STEP) as a valuable investment for addressing Alaska's workforce development needs.

Our association and members have relied on STEP funding to help support training and education that allows Alaskans to work while they learn and become certified in high-demand entry level clinical positions. Over the last five years, STEP funding has helped support over 300 individuals earn their Certified Nursing Assistant certification.

The Alaska Workforce Investment Board regularly receives far more STEP funding requests than are available for grants. At the same time, the cost of delivering high-quality training continues to rise, making each dollar more stretched than in years past. By connecting more Alaskans with opportunities to gain skills and secure steady employment, we are building a stronger, resilient workforce that is crucial for our state and Alaska's healthcare system. We urge you to pass SB 159.

Thank you for considering this legislation and for your commitment to advancing healthcare for Alaska.

Sincerely,



Jared C. Kosin, JD, MBA
President & CEO