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Governor Continues Senior Benefits

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Governor Palin Continues Senior Benefits While State Searches for Long-Term Solution

May 23, 2007, Juneau, Alaska – Governor Sarah Palin today ordered senior assistance benefits to continue for Alaska’s neediest seniors. Using an emergency regulation, Governor Palin will authorize cash payments to continue for at least a month after the SeniorCare Program sunsets on June 30, 2007.

Governor Palin had included funding for the Longevity Bonus Program and the SeniorCare Program, in the FY 08 operating budget, however that funding was removed by the Legislature.

“Despite a valiant effort on the part of the Department of Health and Social Services and my staff to keep this program going for the most vulnerable segment of the population, SeniorCare was not reauthorized by the Legislature,” said Governor Palin. “Our seniors cannot go hungry. We cannot wait for a special session this fall – it will be too late to address this emergency situation. Cutting off our seniors with five weeks’ notice is not acceptable. Financial assistance for our seniors has been a priority of mine since before taking office. We need to reach our seniors during this time of need.” The short-term extension will give the state the time needed to develop a plan that will provide assistance for our low-income seniors. Governor Sarah Palin and Department of Health and Social Services Commissioner Karleen Jackson will ask the Lieutenant Governor to sign an emergency regulation which will continue the cash benefits at least through the month of July. The SeniorCare program serves approximately 7,000 Alaska seniors. As of March, 2007, 6,632 seniors were receiving SeniorCare benefits. Seniors are encouraged to call the Senior Information hotline at 1-800-478-6065 (statewide) or 269-3680 (Anchorage). The hotline staff can provide seniors with referrals to other state programs, senior centers and other community resources. ###

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Photo archive: Senator Olson and Representative Joule presented Governor Palin with a signed basketball from the winning Nunamiut Wolves of Anaktuvuk Pass girls high school basketball team. [Enlarge >](#)

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