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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health and Social Services seeking public participation in Certificate of Need program reform committee

(Juneau, Alaska) — Health and Social Services Commissioner Karleen Jackson is seeking individuals to work on a committee charged with finding solutions and coming to consensus on a comprehensive package of Certificate of Need program reforms, including solutions to regulations currently under development. People affiliated with a health-care facility and health-care providers — including physicians in individual or group practices — are urged to apply.

The department's Certificate of Need program reviews applications by health care providers on facility projects, and evaluates such factors as service development, rational health planning, health-care quality, access to health care, and health-care cost containment. A wide divergence of opinion among health care providers exists on the effectiveness of the program.

Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest to Kevin Henderson, Medical Assistance Administrator, Office of the Commissioner, P.O. Box 110601, Juneau AK 99811-0601. Letters of interest may also be submitted by e-mail to: kevin.henderson@alaska.gov or fax (907) 465-3068. Letters must be received no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 5, 2007. The public notice is posted at: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/publicnotice/>

Recently, the department sought public comment on proposed changes to Certificate of Need regulations; public comment closed on Aug. 10. The regulations specifically defined Independent Diagnostic Testing Facilities and physicians' offices, and specified when such entities need to participate in the program. Many of the comments went well beyond the scope of the proposed regulations, including proposals that would require statutory changes by the Legislature.

Anna Kim, Special Assistant in Governor Sarah Palin's office, was named convener of the negotiated rule-making process, which is detailed in AS 44.62.710 – 44.62.800. The convener researched whether stakeholders thought it was possible to have a committee reach consensus on Certificate of Need program reforms, including a solution to the regulations under development. Anna Kim concluded that the effort had merit and the department should proceed with forming such a committee.

The current Certificate of Need statute and regulations and the statute governing the negotiated regulation making process are available at:

http://www.hss.state.ak.us/commissioner/Healthplanning/cert_of_need/law/default.htm.

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