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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Health Commissioner announces Health Council draft plan

Six preliminary goals recommended by the Health Care Strategies Planning Council under discussion

(Anchorage, AK) — At the Alaska Health Summit in Anchorage today Health and Social Services Commissioner Karleen Jackson shared the preliminary recommendations currently under discussion by the Health Care Strategies Planning Council.

Gov. Sarah Palin issued an administrative order in early 2007, establishing the Health Council to develop a statewide plan to address access, cost and quality of health care for Alaskans.

“This plan is not just a product of the Council’s recent efforts, but represents a distinct synthesis of work produced prior to the establishment of the Council,” said Commissioner Jackson. “I am confident that the work and recommendations of the Health Council will serve as a catalyst for Alaskans to address the challenges our citizens of Alaska face in achieving and maintaining optimal health.”

The Council’s preliminary recommended goals and sample strategies currently under consideration support their vision for Alaskans to be the healthiest people in the nation:

- Health costs for all Alaskans will consistently be well below the national average.
 - Publish a Web site with comparative information about health.
- Alaska will have a sustainable health care work force.
 - Assess the state’s health care workforce and develop policies to alleviate the shortage of health care workers.
- All Alaskan communities will have appropriate and sustainable clean and safe water and wastewater systems.
- Quality health care will be accessible to 100 percent of Alaskans to meet their health care needs.
 - Decrease the use of emergency rooms for primary medical care, and improve primary care in rural areas through community health centers and public health nursing.

- Personal responsibility and prevention in health care become a top priority for government, private sector, communities, families, and individuals.
 - Develop incentives (such as cost saving for taking action on prevention) and disincentives (such as the Tobacco tax) to encourage to Alaskans improve their health.
- Develop and foster the statewide leadership necessary to support a comprehensive statewide health care policy.
 - Ask the Governor to take the lead in promoting good health and creating an Alaska Health Care Commission.

Today, the Health Care Strategies Planning Council will hold roundtable discussions from 1:30 to 3 p.m., a meeting from 3:30 to 5 p.m., and will host a public comment period from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Josephine's on the 15th floor of the Sheraton Anchorage Hotel, 401 E. Sixth Ave. Written comment will be accepted until 5 p.m., Dec. 10. Address correspondence to Health Care Strategies Planning Council c/o Tara Horton, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Commissioner's Office, 3601 C St., Suite 902, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. To submit public comment online, visit the Health Care Strategies Planning Council Online Public Forum at <http://akhealthcare.proboards56.com/index.cgi>

The Health Care Strategies Planning Council will deliver its final plan with recommended short and long-term strategies to the Governor and Legislature by Jan. 1, 2008. For more information about the plan, visit <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/hspc/>.

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