



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

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March 10, 2017

Representative Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska State Capitol, Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Subject: Support for CSHB 123, Disclosure of Health Care Costs

Dear Representative Spohnholz:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to offer our support for CSHB 123, a bill authored by you and co-sponsored by Representatives Chris Tuck, Harriet Drummond, Justin Parish, Les Gara, and Geran Tarr, that would require health care providers to publicly disclose medical care price information.

The aging of Alaska's population presents unique challenges for our health care delivery system. Older Alaskans are particularly vulnerable to increases in medical costs as many live on fixed incomes. From the standpoint of older citizens, having access to health care price information will allow patients to make informed decisions regarding their health care *before* they receive services as well as to encourage meaningful conversations between patients and their health care providers. We especially appreciate CS subsection added under Article 4, Sec. 18.23.400 (d) which provides health care providers with the flexibility to add a disclaimer on their postings stating that the "un-discounted price" listed may be different than the actual amount paid by patients depending on their insurance provider, eligibility for sliding scale fee services, and other factors.

The *need to improve transparency of medical health care pricing* was a priority issue identified by seniors and other public members participating in the Medicaid Redesign community forums conducted by the Commission at senior centers. Seniors and other public member participants viewed this item as a key factor that could lead to improved quality and more affordable health care services. We believe that HB 123 addresses this concern head-on in a manner that is compliance manageable for health care providers.

The Commission supports CSHB 123 and appreciates your leadership on this legislation. We believe that HB 123 will benefit health care consumers of all ages regardless of where they live. Seniors, more than any other age group, are consumers of health care. Recognizing that there may be other enhancements made to this bill down the road, the Commission supports CSHB 123 as a first step to promote greater consumer awareness about the cost of health care. For further information about our position, please contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director (465-4879).

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of David A. Blacketer in blue ink.

David A. Blacketer
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Denise Daniello in blue ink.

Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

Cc: Representative Chris Tuck
Representative Harriet Drummond

Representative Les Gara
Representative Geran Tarr

Representative Justin Parish