

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Alaska Commission on Aging

March 17, 2011

The Honorable Senator Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
The Honorable Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 518 and Room 516
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

SEAN PARNELL, GOVERNOR

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Subject: Support for Senior Meal Budget Increment, Senior and Disabilities Services

Dear Chair Hoffman & Chair Stedman:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) respectfully asks for your support of the \$300,000 increment amendment for Community Senior Community Based Grants, Home Delivered & Congregate Meals appropriated to Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS) that was approved by the Senate Finance/Health and Social Services Sub-Committee in CSSB 47. In consideration of increased costs for food and fuel this past year, especially in rural Alaska, these additional funds are critically needed and will be most appreciated by Alaska seniors and their caregivers.

In 2010, there were xxx older Alaskans who received meals through the senior nutrition program, according to data provided by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. The senior meal program targets vulnerable seniors including those who are low-income, disabled, recovering from surgery or other medical conditions, and those with special health care needs including Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD). These services not only make it possible for older Alaskans to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible, they provide support for family caregivers, which help to delay the need for more costly assisted living or nursing home care.

For an elderly person who is unable to prepare their own meal due to financial or health reasons, the home-delivered meal may be their one and only nutritious meal for that day. In addition to providing food, the home-delivery meal driver performs a welfare check to monitor the older person's safety and well-being and a social visit which, for a homebound person living alone, can be almost as important as the food delivered. Lunchtime congregate meals served at community senior centers offer good nutrition and an opportunity to socialize with other seniors and to take part in senior center activities, which are all important for good health and positive aging.

ACoA appreciates your support of this increment for Alaska's senior nutrition program. Thank you for your ongoing support of older Alaskans.

Sincerely,



Sharon Howerton-Clark
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,



Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director (465-4879/denise.daniello@alaska.gov)

Cc: Senator Donald Olson
Senator Dennis Egan

Senator Joe Thomas
Senator Johnny Ellis

Senator Lesil McGuire