

Alaska Health Care Commission
MEETING OUTCOMES SUMMARY
1st Meeting
February 27-28, 2009
Juneau, Alaska

This organizational meeting of the Alaska Health Care Commission gave the new group a chance to identify commission members' interests and perspectives, and the opportunity to work on some business-related items necessary to support operations. In addition, the group identified a number of short-term priority strategies on which to begin work while the longer range comprehensive health care reform plan is being developed.

Immediate Short Term Priorities Identified

The commission identified 5 short term priorities on which to begin work immediately, and the first steps they will take to address those priorities:

- **The Role of the Consumer in Health Care**
 - Study existing research on successful approaches to incentivizing behaviors for healthy lifestyles and personal responsibility for health care

- **Access to Primary Care for Medicare Patients**
 - Find information on the extent of the problem (report due out from the Institute of Economic and Social Research at UAA by 03/31/09; information from recent forums)
 - Learn about the two Medicare clinic pilot projects/models being planned for Anchorage (one 330-clinic; one private physician practice model)
 - Determine status of "330" federally funded community health centers in Alaska – where they are and how they are funded, including information on \$2 B in the stimulus package for 330 clinics; also, gather information on Federally Qualified Health Clinics, Rural Health Clinics, Health Professional Shortage and Medically Underserved federal designations.

- **Workforce Shortage/Distribution**
 - Compile information on Loan Repayment/Scholarship Programs for health care professionals.
 - Physician education and training needs: Compile information on status and issues related to WWAMI seat increase; compile information on post-graduate medical education opportunities for new medical school graduates who may have interest in practice in Alaska (residency programs for family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, and psychiatry)

- **Health Information Technology**
 - Compile information on status, issues, and next steps related to electronic health record deployment in Alaska, the Alaska eHealth Network (health information exchange network), economic stimulus package opportunities for HIT, and pending legislation

- **Establish Commission in Statute**
 - Draft legislation based on Administrative Order #246 in order to facilitate a long range comprehensive, rather than short-term ad-hoc, approach to health care system improvement. A subcommittee was formed to draft the bill.

Themes that Emerged During Conversation

Elements of health care reform for Alaska must address:

- **Cost** of health care – decreasing the current rate of inflation
- **Access** to health care, both in terms of financial coverage and provider availability
- **Quality**, including safety of health care
- **Prevention** of costly health conditions (chronic and other avoidable illness and injury)

The reform plan must be based on:

- **Sustainability**
- Management **efficiencies**
- Health care practice efficiencies and **effectiveness**
- **Personal responsibility**
- **Individual choice**

Guidelines for the planning process include:

- Taking an incremental approach
- Defining terms
- Identifying potential unintended consequences of proposed reforms
- Listening to the public/health care consumers
- Planning with, not for, health care providers
- Finding short-term wins at minimal to no cost of state general fund dollars

Formal Decisions Made

Employ Ms. Erickson as Executive Director of the Commission (moved by Mr. Davis, seconded by Rep. Keller, unanimous consent).

Form a subcommittee of the commission to draft legislation to establish the Alaska Health Care Commission in statute (moved by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Stevens, unanimous consent); and pattern the draft legislation to establish the Alaska Health Care Commission on Administrative Order #246 (moved by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Smith, unanimous consent).

The commission also decided they would not take positions on pending legislation for a number of reasons, including: to avoid politicizing their process, to maintain positive relationships with stakeholders, and to be proactive rather than reactive in identifying priority issues and strategies. Instead, they will make their own policy recommendations that may include developing draft legislation (as with this meeting's decision to recommend and draft a bill to establish the commission in statute).

Business/Administrative Decisions

Directed staff to draft the following for commission review, edit, and approval:

- Bylaws
- Executive Director Job Description
- Public Participation/Communication Plan

Next meeting scheduled for: **May 1-2, 2009, in Anchorage**