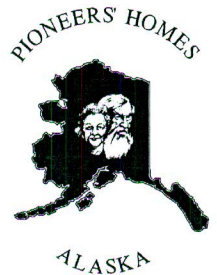


Pioneer Homes Advisory Board

Banarsi Lal, Chair

P.O. Box 110690
Juneau, AK 99811-0690



June 26, 2012

The Honorable Sean Parnell
Governor
State of Alaska
PO Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Parnell:

The Pioneer Home Advisory Board completed their tour of the six Alaska Pioneer Homes during two separate trips. The Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Alaska Veterans & Pioneer Home in Palmer were visited on the first trip in October 2011 and the Ketchikan, Sitka, and Juneau Homes were visited in February/March, 2012. The board met with the Administrators, inspected each home, and conducted a public hearing where family, staff and community members had an opportunity to share their opinions and offer suggestions. The Board noted that all comments were very positive, appreciative of the improvements in the homes, and complimentary of the staff and management.

The Board also observed that Pioneer Home staff continue to provide excellent care to the residents in all of the homes, and that all Homes were tidy and well kept, and the meals continue to be tasty and well-balanced.

The Board was pleased to see that the Anchorage Pioneer Home had finished replacing its lighting system with energy efficient light bulbs that make the home much brighter and cheerful and that the Fairbanks Pioneer Home completed its bathroom remodel. We were also pleased that last year's recommendations to renovate the Fireweed dining area and Tongass tub room in the Ketchikan Pioneer Home and to build a storage facility in the Alaska Veterans and Pioneer Home in Palmer are scheduled for summer of 2012.

Executive Summary/ Recommendations:

The Board continues to be very concerned that the whole array of senior services will be overwhelmed as the baby boomers become senior citizens. The Pioneer Home wait list continues to grow and we are concerned that Alaskan seniors will not be able to obtain the services of a Pioneer Home.

Recommendation/request: We recommend that the Pioneer Homes increase bed capacity by 200 beds over the next ten years, following a plan of phased development laid out in the Study "**Looking Forward- Alaska Pioneer Homes by Fishback Architects (October 2010)**", starting with addition of 24 beds at the Fairbanks Pioneer Home. The

Joseph N. Fields, III

Jean M. Chapman

Sharon A. Howerton-Clark

Hollis Hall

Martha H. Penrose

Robert Sivertsen

Lee Cromwell

Board is of the opinion that additions to existing facilities where land is /or can available, will produce lower costs associated with construction, staffing and administration etc.

Recommendation/Request: The Board wishes to draw your attention to a need for services (such as housing, residential care) for the veterans, specially the younger veterans under the age of 65 with serious physical disabilities and behavioral health challenges. Perhaps a work group with representatives from the State Departments of Health and Social Services, Veterans Affairs, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Alaska Veterans Advisory Council could be assembled and directed to look into this matter.

Recommendation/Request: The Board recommends that initiatives to increase direct care staff continue to be available.

The Pioneer Home Board wishes to work with Administration, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Division of Pioneer Homes to explore the possibility of a Private/Public partnership where a private entity such as a non-profit or a tribal organization builds a smaller facility, and contracts with the state to provide services similar to those currently provided by the Pioneer Homes. The partnerships will likely be sought in areas that are currently unserved/underserved e.g. Barrow, Nome, Kotzebue, Bethel, Dillingham, Kodiak and Kenai Peninsula

The Pioneer Homes Advisory Board appreciates the support you, the members of your administration, and the legislature give to our recommendations. We hope you will continue to support the Homes and the services they provide for our senior citizens. Thank you in advance for your attention to the requests and recommendations set forth in this letter

Sincerely,



Banarsi Lal
Chair

cc: William J. Streur, Commissioner, Department of Health & Social Services
Dave Cote, Director, Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes