

Alaska State Legislature

Session:
State Capitol, Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-6600
Fax: (907) 465-3805



Interim:
600 E. Railroad Ave.
Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone: (907) 376-3370
Fax: (907) 376-3157

Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee Senator Lyda Green, Chair

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Contact: Sen. Lyda Green, (907) 465-6600

HESS Establishes Health Care Task Force

(JUNEAU) – The Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee introduced a resolution on Thursday that would create a task force to review the costs of providing health care to Alaskans.

State funded health care, including the Medicaid program, is the fastest growing portion of the state budget. Approximately \$10 million dollars per week is spent on Medicaid in Alaska. At the same time Medicaid spending is rapidly growing, state revenues are level or declining.

“It is important that we examine all of the areas of spending in our state budget, including health care,” said Sen. Lyda Green (R-Matanuska-Susitna), chair of the Health, Education and Social Services Committee. “We have been talking a lot in the Legislature about the fast rise of health care costs, and many of us are concerned. I think it’s necessary to look into the industry, as well as corresponding statutes.”

Senate Concurrent Resolution 7 would establish a Health Care Cost Review Task Force to study state and federal statutes, as well as the public and private health care sectors, to determine ways of containing or reducing the cost of providing publicly funded health care in Alaska. The task force would start with recommendations for Fiscal Year 2002.

The task force would include three members each from the Alaska Senate and the state House, one gubernatorial appointee, and four public representatives of the major industries in the state. This group, along with representatives of health care providers, third-party payors, health care recipients and experts in the field of health care would review Alaska’s health care system and provide recommendations to the Legislature by Jan. 31, 2002.

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