

Sponsor Statement for SCR 21

Treatment For Disturbed Children

Supporting the development of adequate in-state treatment capacity for severely disturbed children.

Released: February 8, 2002

Contact: Senator Lyda Green's office at (907) 465-6600

Over 300 severely emotionally disturbed Alaskan children are currently receiving treatment in residential facilities in other states. Families are being separated, sometimes for years. The flexibility to provide an appropriate mix of treatment between residential and community based care is lost when children must be sent to out of state for treatment. Millions of state dollars and hundreds of jobs are being exported each year.

Alaska currently lacks the necessary facilities to provide the full continuum of community-based and residential care in Alaska for the treatment of severely emotionally disturbed children. The largest gap in this continuum is the lack of residential treatment beds that can provide the necessary level of care in Alaska. SCR 21 asks the Department of Health and Social Services to work with the Alaska Mental Health Board, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and other interested parties to strengthen this continuum of services and to establish a priority for the development of sufficient in-state residential care to serve emotionally disturbed children who would otherwise be placed in out-of-state facilities.