



## ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE SPONSOR STATEMENT

Sponsor: Representative Norman Rokeberg  
Current Version: CSHB 29 (L&C)(title am)  
Contact: Heather Nobrega  
Date: April 28, 2006

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**Title: An Act relating to the Comprehensive Health Insurance Association; granting a 50 percent premium tax credit for assessments against members of the Comprehensive Health Insurance Association; requiring members to provide information to the association's board of directors or the director of the division of insurance; modifying voting rights for the association members by basing their exercise on a member's share of assessments; basing assessments on major medical premiums; modifying the manner of determining members' liabilities for losses; and changing the definition of "major medical" coverage for purpose of state health insurance and providing for exclusions to major medical coverage.**

The Alaska Comprehensive Health Insurance Association (ACHIA) was established to provide access to health insurance to all residents of the state who are unable to find or are denied health insurance or who are considered uninsurable. It is also required coverage for those federally eligible individuals under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). The plan was first implemented in 1993 and is funded through premiums collected from insureds and assessments received from health insurers transacting business in Alaska. Prior to the time the State of Alaska became self-insured, the State was also a participant in providing funds to ACHIA (through assessments received from its health insurer). The effect of the Knowles' Administration's decision not to stay in ACHIA was to reduce ACHIA's funding by approximately \$400,000 per year.

At the end of December 2003, there were 484 insured individuals participating in ACHIA. As the insurer of last resort, it is necessary that we make sure that ACHIA remains viable and in place. During 2003, over \$4 million was collected in assessments from ACHIA members (those companies or entities who do business in Alaska and pay into ACHIA) and over \$2.6 million was collected in premiums from insured individuals. ACHIA paid out over \$6.6 million in claims expenses in that same year.

The majority of Alaskans that receive health care benefits do not contribute to our high-risk pool, thereby shifting the cost to only those individuals and small groups that purchase health insurance. This is poor public policy, particularly on an unfunded Federal mandate.

Many of the self-insured companies objected to the original version of the bill. Therefore, in order to accommodate the needs of ACHIA, this bill has been modified to grant a tax credit to the insurance companies who are currently assessed for the entire ACHIA shortfall by using a small portion of the premium taxes paid into the state. A premium tax credit is justifiable given the importance of maintaining the viability of the Association and its requirement under HIPAA.

When viewed against the demands of the general fund, the viability of this organization far exceeds those of most other legislation before the legislature. I urge your support of this legislation.