

# House Bill 500

## Sponsor Statement

**“An Act relating to medical review organizations; and providing for an effective date.”**

[House Bill 500](#) simply adds the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO) to the narrow definition of a “review organization.”

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations is the principle independent organization that performs accreditation of hospitals throughout the United States, including Alaska. JCAHO recently implemented a new program requiring hospitals to undergo a Periodic Performance Review (PPR) to achieve continuous standards compliance and, thus, continuous provision of safe, high-quality health care.

The current statute defines a “review organization” expressly and narrowly and is silent as to the major organization conducting hospital accreditation in our state, JCAHO. Without the change I am proposing in this legislation, a party in an unrelated civil action, could argue vigorously that JCAHO is well known within the health care community as the primary accreditation instrument for hospitals in the United States, and that it would have been a very easy matter for the legislature to have included it in the definition of a “review organization.” It could be asserted that the courts have no business re-writing statutes to include provisions that it thinks the legislature would have included if it had thought of it at the time that provision was enacted. Thus, there is a very real danger that information provided to JCAHO as part of this process would not be treated as confidential.

This legislation is necessary so that hospitals will feel free to fully report all the information required by JCAHO in an open manner.