



Alaska State Legislature Senate Majority News

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Senator Gary Stevens Legislation to Study Hospital Acquired Infections Passes House

(JUNEAU) - The Alaska House of Representatives today unanimously passed SJR 19, creating the Task Force to Assess Public Reporting of Healthcare-Associated Infections. SJR 19 is sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Gary Stevens (R-Kodiak).

SJR 19 will establish a ten-member panel that will include two senators, two representatives, the Chief of Epidemiology for the State of Alaska, one healthcare consumer from rural Alaska, one healthcare consumer from urban Alaska, a representative of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, a representative from the Alaska Chapter of the Association of Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, and a representative of the Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association.

The group will meet during the 2006 Legislative Interim to develop legislative recommendations for hospitals to disclose hospital acquired infection rates.

“Some 2 million infections a year are acquired in hospitals and an estimated 90,000 people die as a result of these infections, making it the sixth-leading cause of death in the country. The cost to the consumers is also enormous between \$4.5 and \$11 billion a year,” Sen. Stevens said. “Given these alarming statistics, it is vital for consumers to have full knowledge of how medical facilities fare with infection rates. I believe the task force will come up with the appropriate way to address this issue.”

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