



Official Business

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR THOMAS H. WAGONER

- Chair, Senate Resources Committee
- Vice-Chair, Senate State Affairs Committee
- Member, Community & Regional Affairs
- Member, Legislative Council
- Member, World Trade

Session: January – May

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SPONSOR STATEMENT SENATE BILL 244

With health care costs rising and the general health of the public decreasing, people are looking everywhere for places to help lower their costs and improve their health. One place that is well worth looking into, is adding licensed acupuncturists to the list of health care providers that cannot be unfairly discriminated against by insurance companies that offer group policies.

Acupuncture, when used alone or in conjunction with conventional western medicine, has proven to have a significant cost-savings while improving patient's health. In 1993 a study in Sweden showed that an estimated \$26,000 per patient was saved when acupuncture was part of their treatment. A study was done on patients scheduled for knee surgery that showed and estimated \$9,000 in savings, per patient, and some were able to cancel their surgeries. In worker's compensation cases, involving low back pain, a significantly larger number were able to return back to their original or equivalent jobs when receiving acupuncture treatment along with standard care.

Acupuncture has been cited by the World Health Organization to treat over 43 conditions; asthma, allergies, back pain, carpal tunnel, depression, headaches, heart problems, sciatica, tendonitis and addictions are just a few examples. Senate Bill 244 makes it possible for Alaskans to have the option of choosing acupuncture as part of their health plan.