



Alaska Native Health Board

3700 Woodland Drive, Suite 300
Anchorage, Alaska 99517

Phone: (907) 562-6006
FAX: (907) 563-2001

May 3, 2006

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
FAX: 202-224-5301

Re: U.S. SB 1955—Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act of 2006

Dear Senator Murkowski:

On behalf of our 23 member organizations, I am writing to express ANHB's opposition to U.S. SB 1955. Although ANHB commends the effort to make health insurance more affordable to small businesses, the negative repercussions of this bill on Alaska Native consumers of private health insurance and on the Alaska Tribal Health System as a whole outweigh any intended benefit.

Currently, an estimated 10% of the Alaska Tribal Health System budget depends on private insurance sources. If SB 1955 were to become law, it would become more difficult for many of our beneficiaries to obtain or keep their private health insurance, and important preventive and treatment services would likely become non-reimbursable by these third party sources. Both of these consequences would have detrimental impacts on Alaska Natives and on the Alaska Native owned healthcare system.

SB 1955 would undermine state regulated consumer protections, including requirements for insurance to cover cancer screening, mental health services, diabetes supplies and education, and well-child care. This would have an especially devastating effect on the disproportionately high number of Alaska Natives who suffer from diseases like cancer and diabetes and for the many who need mental health services.

In addition, SB 1955 would create disincentives for employers to hire Alaska Natives afflicted by chronic health conditions, or who are older—a counterproductive force in our ongoing effort to increase employment among Alaska Natives and eliminate discrimination.

In order to maintain and improve the health and healthcare services of Alaska Natives, ANHB respectfully requests that you vote against U.S. SB 1955.

Sincerely,

Trudy Anderson
President/ CEO

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL CONSORTIUM
ALEUTIAN/PRIIBILOF ISLANDS ASSOCIATION
ARCTIC SLOPE NATIVE ASSOCIATION
BRISTOL BAY AREA HEALTH CORPORATION
CHUGACHMIU T
COUNCIL OF ATHABASCAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS
COPPER RIVER NATIVE ASSOCIATION
EASTERN ALEUTIAN TRIBES

KODIAK AREA NATIVE ASSOCIATION
MANILAQ ASSOCIATION
METLAKATLA INDIAN COMMUNITY
MT. SANFORD TRIBAL CONSORTIUM
NATIVE VILLAGE OF EKLUTNA
NATIVE VILLAGE OF TYONEK
NINILCHIK TRADITIONAL COUNCIL
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH

NORTON SOUND HEALTH CORPORATION
SELDOVIA VILLAGE TRIBE
SOUTH CENTRAL FOUNDATION
SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM
TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE
YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION
VALDEZ NATIVE TRIBE