

“Healthcare for Alaskans Act of 2018”
A BILL BY INITIATIVE

“An Act relating to Alaska’s Medicaid and Denali KidCare programs”

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

*SECTION 1. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a section to read:

(a) SHORT TITLE. This Act shall be known as the “Healthcare for Alaskans Act of 2018.”

(b) FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

1. Adequate medical care for all Alaskans is crucial to the health and welfare of the State of Alaska.
2. It is essential that all Alaskans have access to medical care, including preventive care, emergency services, and hospital care.
3. Alaska’s Medicaid and Denali KidCare programs provide care to Alaskans who are unable to afford private health insurance and are not eligible for other health coverage. Medicaid and Denali KidCare are vital parts of the Alaska health care system, and it is essential that they continue to provide health care for the most vulnerable citizens of our state.
4. When people do not have access to care they are far more likely to develop chronic conditions, like diabetes or asthma, that often require expensive treatment for a patient’s entire life, resulting in unnecessary suffering and driving up the cost of health care.
5. When medical providers provide care for patients who are not insured, the cost of that care is passed on to others, thus increasing the cost of medical care for all Alaskans.
6. As the cost of medical care increases it becomes less affordable for all, and the cost of medical insurance places a growing burden on those employers who provide health care benefits to their employees.
7. The cost of medical insurance in Alaska is higher than in nearly every other state, largely as a result of the high amount of uncompensated care that is provided to those who are unable to pay for health care.
8. It is critical to the survival of the Medicaid and Denali KidCare programs that they adequately compensate the providers for the care they provide, and the compensation to providers must be adequate to encourage providers to continue to treat patients on Medicaid and Denali KidCare.
9. The purpose of this measure is to preserve and strengthen the Alaska health care delivery system and reduce overall costs for all Alaskans by protecting the Medicaid and Denali KidCare programs so that they can continue to provide medical care to those who are currently eligible, and to adequately compensate those who provide care under those programs.

*SECTION 2. AS 47.07 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 47.07.015. Maintenance of Minimum Eligibility Standards

- (a) The eligibility standards, methodologies and procedures for determining eligibility to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid and Denali KidCare programs shall be no more restrictive than those in effect on January 1, 2017. For purposes of this chapter, individuals who meet the eligibility standards for receiving medical assistance under the Medicaid and Denali KidCare programs as of January 1, 2017 pursuant to AS 47.07.020(a), including under 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(10)(A)(i)(VIII), shall be deemed to be within the category of eligible individuals described in AS 47.07.020(a), notwithstanding any change to federal law and notwithstanding AS 47.07.020(d).
- (b) Nothing herein shall restrict the people acting through initiative, the legislature by statute, or the department through rulemaking from expanding eligibility by adopting less restrictive eligibility standards, methodologies or procedures than those required by subsection (a).
- (c) Notwithstanding AS 47.07.036(a)-(c), payments to providers under the Medicaid and Denali KidCare programs for covered care and services shall be made at a rate not less than 100 percent of the payment rate that applied to such care and services on January 1, 2017. Nothing in this subsection imposes limits on payments to providers who have voluntarily agreed to participate in a demonstration project described under AS 47.07.036(e) or AS 47.07.039 that adopts an innovative payment model other than fee for service.
- (d) For purposes of this section, "Medicaid and Denali KidCare programs" means the medical assistance program under this chapter.

*SECTION 3. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a section to read:

SEVERABILITY. Under AS 01.10.030, if any provision of this Act, or the application of it to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of this Act and the application to other persons or circumstances are not affected.

* * *