



ASHNHA's statement on Governor Dunleavy's budget

Contact: Becky Hultberg, (907) 209-9293 or becky@ashnha.com

ANCHORAGE – February 13, 2019- The Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association (ASHNHA) today reacted to Governor Dunleavy's proposed budget.

"Governor Dunleavy's budget plan, if enacted, would destabilize Alaska's health care system, eliminate access to health care for tens of thousands of Alaskans, and make Alaska less safe and less secure," said ASHNHA president and CEO Becky Hultberg.

"This budget is outrageous. Hospitals will close, health care specialists will leave Alaska, and crime will continue to increase as Alaskans lose access to addiction and behavioral health treatment. The state will be less healthy, less safe, and in a state of despair for the future. While Governor Dunleavy may not believe government has a role in health care, his belief is disconnected from the reality that our current health care system relies on government payments for a significant percentage of total services, and our entire system will crumble without them. This is a classic example of ideology taking precedent over practicality, and all Alaskans will feel the consequences.

The governor's cuts will lead to thousands of lost jobs in the health care sector, which will have huge ripple effects on the state's economy. During the recent recession, health care was one of the few industries adding jobs. To willingly damage one of the only growing industries in the state will plunge Alaska back into recession.

Article VII of the Alaska Constitution says that the legislature shall provide for the promotion and protection of public health. The governor's budget does not uphold this constitutional mandate, and ASHNHA urges the legislature to craft its own reasonable and responsible state budget. ASHNHA stands ready to work alongside elected officials and policy makers who want to move Alaska forward by improving health care access and outcomes for Alaskans while helping drive the state economy."

The Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association represents more than 65 hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare organizations that employ more than 10,000 Alaskans. Its membership spans geographically from Ketchikan to Utqiagvik.

###