



Alaska State Legislature

Senator Matt Claman

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Senate Bill 91

Sponsor Statement – Version S

“An Act relating to telehealth; relating to multidisciplinary care teams; and relating to the practice of medicine.”

Senate Bill 91 expands telehealth providers and services available to Alaskans. In 2022, the legislature passed House Bill 265 to create a framework in statute for telehealth and ensured Alaskans’ access to critical health care.

In the summer of 2022, Senator Claman was contacted by a constituent who was recently diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Upon receiving her diagnosis, Sheila Swanson flew to Seattle to receive specialty treatment. Sheila was told that she could continue to receive care from the physician via telehealth, but would need to fly to Seattle to receive in-person care from the other seven members of her multidisciplinary ALS care team, including a respiratory therapist, speech language pathologist, physical therapist and occupational therapist.

Senate Bill 91 would allow out-of-state multidisciplinary care team members to provide telehealth services when an Alaskan needs to receive ongoing treatment or follow-up care for a suspected or diagnosed life-threatening condition for which the health care services as provided by the multidisciplinary care team are not reasonably available in state.

Senate Bill 91 amends the statute passed by House Bill 265 by adding “multidisciplinary care teams” as an option for telehealth. Senate Health and Social Services amended the legislation to include a definition for the types of health care providers that are eligible to provide services as part of a multidisciplinary care team. Senate Finance further amended the legislation to ensure that multidisciplinary care team members are coordinated by a physician and are licensed to practice their professions in another state.

Version S of SB 91 also includes grounds for disciplinary sanctions on out of state members of multidisciplinary care teams and a fee regime for providers’ businesses to join the State of Alaska’s telehealth registry, including a \$100 registration fee, \$100 renewal fee every two years, and \$50 fee to report changes in the business’s registration information.

Alaskans living with complex illnesses deserve to receive the appropriate care while remaining in their local support network, and Senate Bill 91 will make this possible.