



The Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities

P.O.Box 241742
Anchorage, Alaska 99524-1742

To facilitate a united provider voice for best practices, advocacy, partnerships and networking.

November 3, 2020

Governor Michael Dunleavy
P O Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Senate President Cathy Giessel
1500 W Benson Blvd
Anchorage, AK 99503

Commissioner Adam Crum
Department of Health and Social Services
3601 C Street, Suite 902
Anchorage, AK 99503

Speaker of the House Bryce Edgmon
1500 W Benson Blvd
Anchorage, AK 99503

Re: Extension of Alaska's Public Health Disaster Emergency Declaration

Dear Governor Dunleavy, Senator Giessel and Speaker Edgmon,

Thank you for your partnership and leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD) has worked very closely with the Department of Health and Social Services, in particular with Senior and Disability Services (SDS) and Public Health, to maintain safe supports for vulnerable Alaskans.

Our service providers are working on the frontlines and the recent spike in cases and deaths in our State increases our concern for the welfare and safety of these Alaskans if the current emergency declaration expires on November 15, 2020 without extension.

We have been informed by SDS that the Appendix K waivers has been approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) through January 1, 2021. Appendix K provisions for the Home and Community Based Services Waivers are critical to maintaining essential supports under pandemic conditions. We are concerned that there will not be alignment of the Federal and State approvals unless the "blanket waivers" by CMS and SB241 provisions are renewed or extended quickly. Many of the recipients of these services have been subjected to more restrictive guidelines and requirements than the general public in the past eight months.

AADD joins with the Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association's request for the current emergency declaration to be extended before it expires on November 15, 2020.

Understanding that the extension requires the legislative body to be called into special session, we are asking for each of you to exercise your legal rights and responsibilities to avoid a lapse in this declaration. We are cognizant of the challenges of convening a physical special session in Juneau, so we are asking for your joint action in the following order:

1. Governor Dunleavy's administration to prepare a new emergency order effective November 16th 2020 which replicate the key provisions form SB241
2. Senate President and Speaker Edgmon to convene a special session in Juneau during the week of November 9th – 13th, 2020 to extend the current emergency declaration, and if this is not feasible, to request that the Governor enact a new emergency order effective November 16, 2020

AADD has an active membership of 57 providers serving thousands of vulnerable Alaskans who would overwhelm the limited hospital capacity if the current support strategies cannot be maintained. COVID-19 is already adversely affecting workforce availability so a failure of a timely extension of the Public Health Disaster Emergency Declaration will exacerbate an already dire situation in our communities. Providers need as much flexibility as possible to meet rapidly changing challenges in these times.

We appreciate your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Amanda Faulkner
AADD President