

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sponsor Statement

SB 133

Alaska health care providers and patients continue to rely on an outdated healthcare infrastructure, with many providers using only paper based systems, which contributes to dangerous drug interactions, missed diagnoses, costly delays, duplicate testing and administrative overhead. According to national studies, these problems contribute to approximately 5% of health care expenditures or \$250 million annually in Alaska and unnecessarily degrade the quality of health care for all Alaskans.

SB 133 modernizes Alaska's healthcare IT infrastructure by developing a secure electronic Health Information Exchange (HIE) system to improve the *safety, cost effectiveness, and quality of healthcare* in Alaska. This standards-based electronic health network will allow individual Alaskans to have their own personal health record and to authorize their health care providers to exchange electronic medical records in a timely, secure manner.

The use of such technology requires careful and strict privacy protection measures. Current Federal and State laws already provide a number of standards protecting a patient's privacy and personal information. The privacy and security rules contained in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) most directly and extensively impact the HIE system. HIPAA establishes individuals' right to review and obtain a copy of their health information, requires notice of privacy practices, limits the use of records and the disclosure of information, and institutes strict security standards.

SB 133 establishes further strict standards to secure and protect the confidentiality of individually identifying health information of a patient. These standards include a secure and traceable electronic audit system to allow patients to see who has viewed their record, restrictions on how information may be used, patient consent requirements, an ability to opt out of the health information exchange system, and notification of confidentiality violations.

When complete, the Health Information Exchange System will have the capability to provide any Alaskan with a secure Personal Health Record, including authorization for their health care providers on the network to have access to electronic records required for continuity of care, such as hospitalization records, prescription information, vaccinations, allergies, imaging records, laboratory results, etc. The Network will support telemedicine services, the transfer of high resolution images for patient care, video conferencing, and Voice over Internet applications for providers.

Over 300 health organizations in Alaska are eager to participate in the electronic Health Information Exchange system.

I urge your support for SB 133.