

Mayor Alice Ruby
City of Dillingham
PO BOX 889
Dillingham, AK 99576

Dear Madam Mayor,

Guardian Flight Alaska is reaching out to you for your support and partnership. Please review the following request for your organization to join us in proclaiming Health Aide Appreciation Day as September 10th. Guardian Flight Alaska has recognized the need for this initiative at the state level. Working with both the house and the senate, a House Bill 198 has been drafted to go to vote during this session. We are requesting the help of health aide organizations, boroughs, and municipalities across the state to ensure the success of this bill.

The work of a Community Health Aide is tireless; they act as round-the-clock first responders, clinicians, travel coordinators, hospitalists, tribal liaisons, and are often related to or close to their patients. Since before statehood, Health Aides have organized and played an integral role in maintaining tribal health and community safety. Through our years of service in rural Alaskan villages, Guardian Flight has first-hand knowledge of the exemplary and compassionate work of the Community Health Aide. Our collaboration with health aide organizations across the state has gifted us with an abiding respect for traditional knowledge and culture. Our partnerships have united us in clinical skill advancement. Guardian Flight Alaska is deeply invested in celebrating Community Health Aides for their broad scope of practice and selfless contributions to their village communities.

Here are ways that you can help:

Declare or proclaim in your region or municipality, a Health Aide Appreciation Day to be celebrated each September 10th. We recognize the importance of each health aide organization in celebrating your staff independently, and this initiative doesn't seek to replace any established celebrations. Aligning with Guardian Flight Alaska on the September 10th date unites all health aide organizations in this effort, and unites the public in honoring them in the same way we honor nurses during nurses week, paramedics during EMS week, etc.

Provide testimony. Currently, our bill is in the process of approval through the House of Representatives. With testimony from important stakeholders, this bill can move forward quicker and with strong support. We will be in touch with language and call-in information as that date nears.

Alaska's community health aide program is garnering national acclaim as other tribal health organizations across the United States adopt the model that Alaska's health aide organizations have used for decades. Now is the time to honor health aides and health aide organizations at the state level. As a vital partner in community service, we hope to align with you in this effort to bring state and national attention to the people who keep our rural village populations safe and healthy.