

AHHA Meeting and Legislative Fly-In Brief - Feb 4-7, 2025

With our CEO and our consultant and his staff, I attended the Alaska Hospital and Healthcare meeting on Feb. 5, and legislative briefings on Feb. 5 & 6. Along with meeting other healthcare professionals across the state and insurance representatives, AHHA attendees listened to presentations on a variety of healthcare challenges and some of the strategies for addressing them. Due to some of the President's recent Executive Orders, this created a bit of uncertainty in how some things will be able to move forward, but for the most part that did not dominate the discussion.

Some of the topics covered in the AHHA meeting included the Patient Prior Authorization process to expedite access to care, a review of workforce issues and the impact to local communities--and it was noted there is a need to find 1400 registered nurses annually to meet demand, discussion on healthcare infrastructure and investment from various revenue streams, recommended advocacy for maintaining the "Certificate of Need" regulatory process that demonstrates local need for healthcare resources, advocacy for full funding of Medicaid, and multiple conversations regarding delayed discharge of patients due to inadequate post-hospitalization options for continued care, among other areas of concern.

One session also featured a panel of legislators who highlighted their particular concerns and focus areas regarding aspects of and access to healthcare.

Key points in our full schedule of meeting with legislators touched on AHHA's priority items, but discussions were heavily weighted toward outlining our success thus far in planning for and beginning construction of our new hospital site and facility. The statewide budget deficit is foremost in everyone's minds, however there may be some avenues for funding and moving on to the next phases of the project.

We also discussed the Kinderskog program with legislative staff, who were very interested in knowing some of the nuts and bolts of the program. We were able to provide financials and an overview of program certifications, highlight enrolled families who are served, review various other aspects of the program, and share some plans for the future, all of which were well-received.

During our visit with Senator Stedman, I also extended the invitation to tour the new hospital site and WERC building the next time he visits Petersburg.

Cindi Lagoudakis, PMC Board Vice-President