



Alaska Native Health Board

THE VOICE OF ALASKA TRIBAL HEALTH SINCE 1968

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ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

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HEALTH CORPORATION

CHICKALOON VILLAGE
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

CHUGACHMIUT

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NATIVE ASSOCIATION

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KARLUK IRA
TRIBAL COUNCIL

KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE

KETCHIKAN
INDIAN COMMUNITY

KODIAK AREA
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

MANIILAQ ASSOCIATION

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COMMUNITY

MT. SANFORD
TRIBAL CONSORTIUM

NATIVE VILLAGE
OF EKLUTNA

NATIVE VILLAGE OF EYAK

NATIVE VILLAGE
OF TYONEK

NINILCHIK
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

NORTON SOUND
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SELDOVIA VILLAGE TRIBE

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SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

YAKUTAT TLINGIT TRIBE

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM
HEALTH CORPORATION

VALDEZ NATIVE TRIBE

April 30, 2025

Transmitted via email: christal.hays@alaska.gov

Christal Hays
Medicaid State Plan Coordinator
Alaska Department of Health
3601 C Street, Suite 902
Anchorage, AK 99503

RE: Tribal Consultation – Behavioral Health Service Authorization Removal SPA

Dear Ms. Hays,

On behalf of the Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB), I am writing to express our support for the proposed Medicaid state plan amendment (SPA) to remove service authorization (SA) requirements for specific behavioral health services.

We write in strong support of the proposed changes outlined in the March 31, 2025, Medicaid Tribal Consultation Letter. The removal of prior authorization requirements for behavioral health screenings, intake assessments, pharmacological management, and services provided by community behavioral health providers and mental health physician clinics will significantly improve access to essential mental health and substance use disorder services for Medicaid-eligible Alaska Native and American Indian beneficiaries.

We particularly appreciate the Department's recognition of the barriers that administrative delays can create, especially in rural and remote communities where timely access to behavioral health services is critical. By streamlining service delivery and reducing the administrative burden on providers, this SPA will enhance our ability to offer immediate and patient-centered care, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes for our communities. Furthermore, updating the limitations of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and clarifying case management policies to align with current operations will help ensure consistency and clarity in service provision across the state.

We commend the Department for taking these steps to promote more responsive and accessible behavioral health care and offer our support for the finalization and approval of the proposed SPA. We remain committed to collaborating with the Department to ensure successful implementation and continued improvements to the Medicaid program for the benefit of Alaska Native and American Indian people.

Thank you for your partnership. If you have any comments or questions regarding our recommendations, please contact ANHB at anhb@anhb.org or 907-729-7510.

Sincerely,

Chief William F. Smith, Chairman
Alaska Native Health Board