



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Anchorage

3601 C Street, Suite 902
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5923
Main: 907.269.7800
Fax: 907.269.0060

Juneau

350 Main Street, Suite 404
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Main: 907.465.3030
Fax: 907.465.3068

May 9, 2025

Re: Behavioral Health SA Removal SPA

Dear Tribal Health Leaders,

Thank you for your time in responding to the tribal consultation notice sent by the Department of Health (the department) on March 31, 2025. Please see the department's responses below.

Tribal Comment #1 – Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB)

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.

Department Response –

We appreciate your support and partnership in ensuring access to important behavioral health services in Alaska.

Tribal Comment #2 – ANHB

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.

Department Response –

We appreciate your support and partnership in identify key issues and solutions that can ensure access to care for all Alaskans.

Tribal Comment #3 – ANHB

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.

Department Response –

Thank you for your partnership. We look forward to continuing to work with our tribal partners on this and future endeavors.

Tribal Comment #4 – Southcentral Foundation (SCF)

SCF strongly supports the proposed changes outlined in the March 31, Medicaid Tribal Consultation letter. The removal of prior authorization requirements for behavioral health screenings, intake assessments, medication 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 customer-owners.

Department Response –

We appreciate your support and partnership in ensuring access to important behavioral health services in Alaska.

Tribal Comment #5 – SCF

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, is appreciated. By streamlining service delivery and reducing the administrative burden on providers, this SPA will enhance the ability to offer timely patient-centered care, contributing to better health outcomes for Alaskan communities. Furthermore, updating the limitations of Medication for Addiction Treatment (MAT) and clarifying case management policies to align with current operations will ensure consistency and clarity in service provision across the state.

Department Response –

We appreciate your support and partnership in ensuring access to important behavioral health services in Alaska.

Tribal Comment #6 – SCE

Thank you for taking these steps to promote more responsive and accessible behavioral health care. We look forward to further collaboration with the department to ensure successful implementation and continued improvements to the Medicaid program for the benefit of Alaska Native and American Indian people.

Department Response –

Thank you for your partnership. We look forward to continuing to work with our tribal partners on this and future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christal Hays". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Christal" and last name "Hays" clearly legible.

Christal Hays

Medicaid State Plan Coordinator