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September 1, 2026

Medicaid Advisory Committee
c/o Jen Griffis

Re: Department of Health Response – Alaska MAC/BAC Annual Report (July 1, 2025 -2026)

Dear Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC),

Thank you for the Committee's Annual Report and for the sustained work of the Medicaid Advisory Committee and the newly formed Beneficiary Advisory Council over the report period. The Department values the MAC's engagement, and we recognize the BAC's launch as a significant milestone for the Alaska Medicaid Program. We appreciate the collaborative spirit in which the Committee's recommendations were offered, and we are pleased to respond to each below.

Recommendation 1: Hardwire the BAC into Medicaid Advisory Workflows
Build routine, visible pathways for BAC topics, recommendations, and member experience to inform MAC agendas, DOH discussions, annual reporting, and policy/programmatic feedback loops.

> **DOH Response:**
> The Department agrees that BAC should have a routine, visible path into MAC agendas and Departmental discussions rather than remaining an occasional or informal touchpoint. DOH supports the dual enrollment of BAC members into the BAC, and we look forward to working with the Committee to define their future involvement per MAC/BAC direction.

Recommendation 2: Elevate the MAC and BAC Proactively in Policy and Program Discussions
Engage the MAC and BAC early in policy development, implementation planning, and operational changes, consistent with federal guidance that positions these bodies as advisory partners on policy development and effective program administration.

> **DOH Response:**

The Department supports engaging the MAC/BAC earlier in meaningful policy development and implementation planning. While DOH will do their best to include the MAC/BAC as much as possible, we also ask for understanding that some aspects of DOH's decision making and operational changes are dictated by federal authority, are internal to DOH's processes and workflow, and are not always applicable for stakeholder input.

In 2026, we have partnered with Alaskans Together For Medicaid (ATFM) to encourage the input and guidance of stakeholders regarding changes to the Medicaid program per H.R. 1 (2025). We actively encourage members of the MAC/BAC to partner with ATFM to attend and support these workgroups to streamline input to the Department and strengthen partnership and communication pathway with the larger community.

We ask the Committee's patience and understanding as we work internally to identify the points in our policy development process where this engagement will be most useful, and for the ability for MAC/BAC to response nimbly to the requests.

Recommendation 3: Resource MAC and BAC Operations to Support Continuity and Meaningful Engagement

Provide structured DOH support for committee formation, strategic planning, agenda planning, member onboarding, meeting preparation, accessible participation, and follow-through on recommendations.

3a. Compensation for BAC Members: Provide opportunities to compensate BAC members for their participation in BAC meetings. This aligns with the federal rule, and other BACs nationwide, and recommended was upheld by the Alaska stakeholders who helped design the BAC.

DOH Response

The Department recognizes that dedicated staffing, structured onboarding, and BAC member compensation meaningfully improve a committee's ability to function and sustain engagement over time. However, the Department is currently operating under budget constraints that limit our ability to fund certain committee improvements or travel support at this time. This constraint also affects our ability to commit to BAC member compensation within the upcoming and current budget cycle.

Where possible, we will look for lower-cost ways to support continuity, for example, if the MAC/BAC develops onboarding materials DOH can use these in the future, DOH can continue to offer virtual meeting options, and continues to offer existing staff time already allocated to committee support.

As future budget periods are being planned, DOH will rely on MAC/BAC to produce compensation estimates and other financial needs for department advocacy. In the future, we welcome the Committee's input on which of these needs would be most valuable to prioritize with future funding.

Recommendation 4: Conduct MAC/BAC Formation and Strategic Planning Session
Use the session to align on purpose, operating model, annual priorities, committee norms, workgroup structure, BAC integration, member recruitment needs, and expected recommendation pathways.

DOH Response

The Department is willing to attend and support the MAC/BAC administration of a strategic planning session and will help with agenda development and facilitation. We ask MAC/BAC to take an active role in strategic planning to direct and prioritize their priorities for future committee needs. Given the budget limitations noted above, we recommend the session be structured to minimize travel costs — for example, a virtual or hybrid format — and ask the Committee's flexibility on format if in-person travel funding is not available.

Workgroup structure, integration, recruitment, and development of recommendation pathways will need direction and input from MAC/BAC with collaboration from the Department.

Recommendation 5: Recruit New Members for Continuity and Diverse Stakeholder Representation
Prioritize recruitment that reflects Alaska's healthcare continuum, beneficiary experience, geography, Tribal health, rural and remote communities, providers, post-acute care, behavioral health, aging and disability services, and community-based organizations.

DOH Response

The Department strongly supports recruiting members who reflect Alaska's full healthcare continuum, including Tribal health, rural and remote communities, and beneficiary perspectives, and will support outreach and recruitment efforts as able. Per 42 CFR 432.12(c) the State will create a process for recruitment and selection of members, but the state is not required to actively recruit. The Department encourages the MAC/BAC to assist the Department with process development, and to actively use community connections to recruit potential members.

We welcome the Committee's ideas on how to support meaningful participation and active development of the necessary materials and processes.

Recommendation 6: Celebrate and Communicate Wins from MAC/DOH Collaboration
Share progress from workgroups, and discuss efficacy of workgroup sustainability over MAC membership terms.

DOH Response
The Department agrees that communicating progress and successes from this collaboration is valuable, both to sustain momentum and to demonstrate the Committee's impact. Because the MAC/BAC are closest to the beneficiary and stakeholder experience, we anticipate and would welcome the Committee's

guidance in determining which successes to highlight and how best to communicate them — including audience, format, and cadence.

The Department is grateful for the Committee's continued partnership and for the candor and thoroughness reflected in this report. We recognize that several of these recommendations will require creative, lower-cost approaches given current budget realities, and we look forward to working through those constraints together. We appreciate the renewed effort of the MAC/BAC and look forward to continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Emily Ricci
Deputy Commissioner/State Medicaid Director

CC: Katy Ardvison, Medicaid Advisory Committee, Vice-Chair
Christal Hays, Department of Health, MAC/BAC Department Facilitator

