THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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January 26, 2026

Re: Tribal Notice of Mandatory State Plan Amendment – Broadened Vaccine Guidance for Coverage & Coverage of Certain Drugs During Shortage

Dear Tribal Health Leaders,

On behalf of the Department of Health (the department) and in keeping with the responsibility to conduct tribal consultation, I am writing to inform you of a proposed future Medicaid state plan amendment (SPA). This opportunity for consultation is concurrent with the public notice period for the proposed SPA.

Purpose and content of the proposed amendment:

The department intends to submit a SPA (and partner Alternative Benefit Plan amendment) for two changes. The first is to allow more than the currently listed advisory body related to vaccines to allow for provider-family choice in administering vaccinations. Currently, the state plan lists the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) as the sole source of immunization guidance. This SPA will broaden the guidance to include other governing bodies or professional organizations that provides evidence-based recommendations for vaccine administration.

Secondly, the SPA will cover select prescribed drugs that are not covered outpatient drugs (including drugs authorized for import by the Food and Drug Administration) are also covered when medically necessary during drug shortages identified by the Food and Drug Administration.

Anticipated impact on Medicaid-eligible Alaska Native/American Indian beneficiaries:

The proposed amendment is expected to have a positive impact on Medicaid-eligible Alaska Native and American Indian beneficiaries. By broadening the sources of evidence-based immunization guidance beyond ACIP, the department will support provider and family choice while maintaining clinically appropriate standards of care. In addition,

coverage of select prescribed drugs that are not otherwise covered outpatient drugs, when medically necessary during FDA-identified drug shortages, will help ensure continuity of care for Alaska Native and American Indian beneficiaries who may be disproportionately affected by supply disruptions due to geographic remoteness and reliance on limited pharmaceutical distribution channels.

Anticipated impact on tribal health programs and the Indian Health Service:

The proposed amendment is expected to support tribal health programs and the Indian Health Service by increasing operational flexibility while preserving evidence-based clinical practice. Overall, the amendment is anticipated to facilitate continuity of services and administrative alignment across Medicaid, tribal health programs, and the Indian Health Service without imposing new requirements or burdens. Finally, alignment of the Alternative Benefit Plan will ensure that all categories of Medicaid eligibility will have access to these services.

Mechanism and timeline for comment

Written comments or questions regarding the proposed amendment are due no later than the close of business, February 25, 2026. If seeking an in-person meeting regarding the proposed changes, please provide a written request within 15 days of the date of this letter. Please direct all written correspondence to Christal Hays, Alaska Department of Health, 3601 C Street, Suite 902, Anchorage, AK 99503, or christal.hays@alaska.gov.

Sincerely,

Christal Hays

Christal Hays
Medicaid State Plan Coordinator