



COMMONWEALTH  
NORTH

*Illuminating Alaska's Issues*

**HEALTH CARE ACTION GROUP**  
**JANUARY 21, 2010**  
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium  
MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting was called to order at 7:05am by Co-chairs Duane Heyman and Tom Nighswander

**Members/Guests Present:** Brian Richardson, Matt Dupre, Deb Erickson, Pat Luby, Jeff Ranf, Mark Foster, Carolyn Heyman-Layne, Rosylnd Frazier, Ward Hurlburt, Ann Ringstad, Elizabeth Ripley, Larry Weiss, Natalie Hale

**Staff Members Present:** Josh Wilson

2. **Current National Health Care Update – Pat Luby**
  - Tuesday's election of a Republican Senator for Massachusetts could change everything. Now the Democrats may not be able to push through a health care bill
  - A lot of people are sick of negotiating a health care bill so it is unlikely that the process will begin again like Senator McCain is calling for
  - Leadership will try to get this off the table soon, no sure thing anymore
  - Nancy Pelosi has said this is going to get done, but others are saying all bets are off
  - Congress does not multitask well so this has been the only focus for a long time
  - In November most of the House will go up for reelection, could change the dynamic and how people vote
  - People like the President, but he is getting below 50% approval ratings on health care
3. **Health Care Reform Preliminary Estimates for Alaska – Mark Foster**
  - A quick cut at the Senate bill prior to the passage of amendments
  - This is meant to track money: How much, where is it going to go, and who is going to pay
  - What will happen under the new plan
    - 60% of the uninsured will get insurance, 40% will not and pay a penalty or get an exception
    - Medicare and individual coverage will see an increase of people
    - Employer coverage and the uninsured should go down
  - Net Effect, 50-65 year old will pay less, everyone else will likely see a net cost increase
    - If you already have insurance, cost goes down, if you do not have insurance the cost will be higher
  - Unseen tax to subsidize people without coverage

- What is health insurance worth?
  - Small firms that currently insure will save money, if not insuring it is a net payout
- As long as federal government will be covering 90% of Medicaid for Alaska, the State will be spending less on health care
  - In 2016 Alaska health spending will be approximately 10.5 Billion, going about 1-4% from today
- Who will cover this extra cost; families and the federal government in general. Employers will not see a lot of change
- Lewin Group says that physicians will see the best net margin benefits because clinics and hospitals cannot turn patients away they will lose out getting the more expensive patients that cannot pay

**4. Alaska Health Care Commission Report Update – Deborah Erickson**

- Transforming Health Care in Alaska, the Alaska Health Care Commissioners Strategic Plan for 2010-2014
- Elephant in the room – National spending on health care is rising at alarming rates
- 800 pound gorilla – 40% of health care cost are determined by your behavior and 75% of all health care expenditures are to cure chronic illnesses
- Recommendations
  - Strengthen the Consumer’s role
  - Foster Statewide Leadership
  - Develop Health Care Workforce
  - Deploy Health Information Technology
  - Improve Medicare Access
- For the full report you can visit the Commissioner website at <http://hss.state.ak.us/healthcommission/>

**5. Adjourned: 9:00am**

**6. Next Meeting: February 18th, 7-9am at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium**