



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Governor Forms Alaska Health Strategies Planning Council**

February 15, 2007, Juneau, Alaska - Governor Sarah Palin announced today the establishment of the Alaska Health Strategies Planning Council in the Office of the Governor. The Council will advise the Governor and the Legislature on ways to effectively provide access to quality health care and to help reduce the costs of health care for Alaskans.

During the announcement, Governor Palin signed Administrative Order 232, which establishes the Health Strategies Planning Council to develop a statewide plan which will identify short-term and long-term strategies to effectively address issues of access to, and cost and quality of health care for Alaskans.

"Today we start working on an action plan to focus efforts on ensuring adequate health care is available for Alaskans that individuals and families can afford," said Governor Palin. "Undertaking this effort will be a tremendous way to educate all Alaskans about the wide array of public policy choices we have when addressing health care issues."

The Council will consist of members appointed by the Governor, including representatives of appropriate federal, state and local governments, the business community, health care providers, philanthropic agencies, faith-based and community organizations, and community leaders. The Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services or her designee will chair the Council.

"Alaska, like the rest of the nation, faces serious challenges in ensuring access to quality, affordable health care," said Health and Social Services Commissioner Karleen Jackson. "Many people in our state are seeking solutions to those challenges, but most of our efforts are not yet connected. By establishing the Health Care Strategies Council, Governor Palin has provided the mechanism for us to work together to create an effective action plan for accessible, quality, affordable health care in Alaska."

The Council will convene once the members are appointed, and will prepare a health care action plan for the Governor and the Legislature by January 1, 2008. The action plan will include a description of the current health care system in Alaska, and will integrate knowledge and experience gathered in a wide variety of reports and recommendations from the work of existing private and public health care initiatives in the state.

To apply for or recommend someone for service on the Council, go to <http://gov.state.ak.us/boards>.

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