



**Yukon-Kuskokwim
HEALTH CORPORATION**

Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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The Alaska Legislature Must Fully Override Governor Dunleavy's Vetoes

On Friday, June 28, Governor Dunleavy announced over \$440 million in cuts to the State of Alaska FY20 operating budget, including over \$83 million in cuts to Medicaid services. The Medicaid reductions fully eliminated adult dental coverage (\$27 million), reduced over \$6 million in behavioral health programs, and cut \$50 million in health coverage. This was in addition to the Legislature's already implemented cut of \$70 million. The Alaska Legislature must fully override Governor Dunleavy's vetoes.

YKHC's compact with the Indian Health Service will likely ensure many of these services remain available to customers in our service area as funding allows. However, these deep cuts will mean the cost of travel for adult dental and certain behavioral health services for customers in our service area will no longer be covered by Medicaid. This will effectively deny access to healthcare for many YK Delta residents who live in our 50 villages, that are tens to hundreds of miles away from the Bethel hospital. Over the next year, as the Department of Health & Social Services begins the process of implementing these cuts, YKHC customers will likely find that there are numerous other services no longer covered by Medicaid. Sadly, at this time, there is no way to determine what rate or service has been cut.

"Many people have asked me, 'What in Medicaid was cut?' We are aware that adult dental was eliminated and behavioral health services were reduced," said YKHC President & CEO Dan Winkelman. "Unfortunately, this administration has not worked with providers or developed a process so providers can determine what rates and services were reduced. Besides the two services mentioned, it is largely unknown how these cuts to vital Medicaid services will be implemented and therefore, organizations like YKHC (with 1,400 employees, serving 30,000 YK Delta residents) are unable to prepare our customers for the negative impacts. If you care about healthcare, education, public assistance, public safety and many of the other areas that sustained large budget reductions, I again encourage you to voice your opinion to the governor and your legislators before July 12."

"Effective July 1, as a result of the Governor's budget reductions, new requests for coverage of adult dental services will have to be denied," said YKHC Vice President of Finance Lisa Wimmer. "However, coverage of adult dental that have already been pre-authorized will be unaffected. We are awaiting guidance from the State on impacts to Behavioral Health programs and will communicate to our customers as soon as we know more."

YKHC is committed to maintaining access to the highest levels of care needed by our customers. We appreciate the patience and understanding of those we serve as we evaluate the impacts of these budget reductions on our services. YKHC will actively monitor the upcoming second special session and communicate the most comprehensive information about impacts to services as we know them.

Please stay tuned for additional information from YKHC on this issue.

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