

## **Air medevac bill OK'd**

KETCHIKAN (KDN) — Legislation allowing an air medevac provider to continue to provide a membership program in Southeast Alaska has been approved by the Alaska Legislature.

The state House of Representatives on Tuesday unanimously approved its version of Senate Bill 159, which the Senate had approved on Feb. 28.

If signed by Gov. Sean Parnell, SB159 will allow Airlift Northwest to resume offering its AirCare membership program to Alaskans.

The program, which had been offered beginning in 2009 but disallowed in late 2013 by the Alaska Division of Insurance, covers a patient's out-of-pocket costs that are incurred when using Airlift Northwest's medevac services.

SB159 exempts air ambulance services from Alaska's insurance code, which will allow Airlift Northwest to continue offering the membership program, according to the office of Sen. Bert Stedman, R-Sitka.

Stedman sponsored SB159, and said he appreciated the support received from his Senate and House colleagues.

"I'm very pleased that the Legislature saw fit to ensure this important lifesaving program will be allowed to continue serving the residents of Southeast," said Stedman, who acknowledged the work done by Rep. Cathy Muñoz, R-Juneau, who sponsored the House version.

Muñoz said that she, like other Southeast legislators, "heard from a lot of constituents— many of whom are retirees — who worried about losing Airlift Northwest's AirCare membership plan.

"SB159 will allow them to continue being members of this program and give them a sense of peace."