

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SESSION

State Capitol, Rm. 30
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-3873 Phone
(907) 465-3922 Fax
(877) 463-3873 Toll Free
Senator.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov



INTERIM

1900 1st Ave.
Suite 310
Ketchikan, AK 99901-6442
Phone (907) 225-8088
Fax (907) 225-0713
www.BertStedman.com

SENATOR BERT K. STEDMAN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (February 5, 2014)

Senator Stedman Introduces Bill to Keep AirCare Medevac Service Program Available to Residents of Southeast Alaska

(Juneau) – Senator Bert Stedman, R-Sitka, today introduced Senate Bill 159, a bill that will exempt private air ambulance services from licensing under the Alaska Insurance Code.

Since January 2009, Airlift Northwest, the provider of lifesaving air medical transport services, has offered the popular AirCare membership program to residents of Southeast Alaska. Over 1,600 Southeast households are enrolled in the program which covers the cost of any out-of-pocket expenses related to Airlift Northwest's medevac services. Air medical transportation is expensive and insurance may not cover all the costs. The AirCare program directly helps fund Airlift Northwest so they can transport critically ill or injured patients to hospitals with levels of care not locally available.

Since its inception, the AirCare program was offered to Alaskans under a regulatory exemption it received from the Alaska Division of Insurance. However, after an organizational restructuring, the Division of Insurance deemed the program no longer exempt and ordered Airlift Northwest to cease enrolling new members. Airlift Northwest is allowed to honor their existing memberships but is not allowed to renew expired memberships.

Senate Bill 159 will exempt air ambulance services from the state's insurance code, thereby allowing Airlift Northwest to continue offering the AirCare program to Alaskans.

For more information, contact Senator Stedman's office at 907-465-3873.

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