

AFPC Policy Brief



ANALYSIS OF HB 344 & SB 241

Senate Bill 241 was introduced on February 19, 2024 by the Senate Rules Committee by request of the Governor. A companion bill, House Bill 344, was introduced on February 20, 2024 by the House Rules Committee by request of the Governor.

This legislation would allow the Alaska Department of Health to apply for a federal 1115 Medicaid waiver to address “health-related needs (HRN)”. This waiver would allow the state to use Medicaid funds to engage in demonstration projects that provide for health-related services, locally tailored to individuals. These types of projects can provide opportunities for nutrition and wellness programs such as produce prescriptions and other nutrition services that focus on wellness and preventing negative health outcomes.

AFPC Supports This Legislation

Additionally, we see specific support for this action in the Governor’s Alaska Food Security and Independence Task Force Report (2023, page 114):

*“**Recommended Action:** Support the inclusion and education of local foods in prescription produce programs and the Department of Health and the Department of Family and Community Services in the education and messaging around the benefits of local Alaskan foods”*

In their presentation to the House Health & Human Services Committee, the Department of Health includes Tribal Consultations in the development steps for implementing HRN projects. We strongly encourage the Department to ensure these Tribal consultations happen, and that the development of projects is through continued Tribal and non-tribal partnerships and collaboration.

Learn more about Food is Medicine and nutrition wellness projects:

- [KYUK Excellent Health with YKHC: Prescription produce program](#)
- US Dept. of Health & Human Services [Food is Medicine: A Project to Unify and Advance Collective Action](#)
- [Food sovereignty, health, and produce prescription programs: A case study in two rural tribal communities, 2022, Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development](#)
- KFF: [Medicaid Waiver Tracker: Approved and Pending Section 1115 Waivers by State](#)

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