

Pioneer Homes Advisory Board

Banarsi Lal, Chair

P.O. Box 110690
Juneau, AK 99811-0690



November 20, 2008

The Honorable Sarah Palin
Governor
State of Alaska
PO Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Palin:

The Pioneer Home Advisory Board completed their 2008 tour of the Alaska Pioneer Homes in Ketchikan, Sitka, and Juneau. The board met with the administrators, inspected each home, and conducted a public hearing where family, staff and community members had an opportunity to share their opinions and offer suggestions. Most comments were very positive.

Executive Summary Recommendations:

1. The Board requests the Governor support the requests for additional personnel that are in the Department of Health & Social Services FY10 operating budget.
2. The Board requests the Governor support inclusion of capital request that is in the Department of Health & Social Services FY10 budget concerning remodel of the Fireweed dining area and Tongass tub room in the Ketchikan Pioneer Home.
3. The Board requests the Governor support inclusion of capital requests that are in the Department of Health & Social Services FY10 budget for a storage facility in the Alaska Veterans and Pioneer Home in Palmer.

Most of the residents who testified during the public hearing appreciate the Pioneer Homes and report excellent care, mentioning the wide range of activities and outings that they enjoy. As visitors to the Homes, the Board observed the attentive care and personal compassion the staff provides to our Alaskan pioneers. The interior and exterior of the Homes were tidy and clean and the meals we enjoyed during our visit were tasty and well-balanced.

The board would also like to recognize the value of the volunteers that work with the Pioneer Homes. The Foundations associated with each Home provide an immeasurable degree of support for Home operations and in meeting individual resident needs. They deserve recognition and thanks.

Robert A. Hall Sr.
Winters

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Martha H. Penrose

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While the Homes were extremely thankful to the legislature for funding the Sitka Pioneer Home roof repair, supporting the zero lift program, and incorporating the ongoing deferred maintenance projects into the base budget there are still additional needs.

OPERATING

- The Pioneer Homes are seeking two additional Registered Nurse and seven Certified Nurse Aide positions to alleviate the shortage of staff in the Ketchikan Home and to assist with acuity of residents throughout all the homes. These additional staff will help ensure that the residents are kept safe and their needs are met.

Recommendation/request: Provide funding for these additional positions.

CAPITAL

- The Fireweed dining area in the Ketchikan Pioneer Home was not designed to accommodate people in wheelchairs and needs to be expanded. The Tongass tub room in the Ketchikan Pioneer Home is too small and needs to be renovated to accommodate lift equipment.

Recommendation/request: Provide funding for these Ketchikan Pioneer Home renovation projects.

- The Alaska Veterans and Pioneer Home needs onsite storage space to store equipment, supplies, and disaster preparedness items. Currently the Home is renting offsite storage units and using two vacant resident rooms for storage.

Recommendation/request: Provide funding for an onsite storage building.

The Pioneer Homes Advisory Board appreciates the support you, the members of your administration, and the legislature give to our recommendations. We hope you will continue to support the Homes and the services they provide for our senior citizens. Thank you in advance for your attention to the requests and recommendations set forth in this letter.

Sincerely,

Banarsi Lal
Chair

cc: William H. Hogan, Commissioner, Department of Health & Social Services
Dave Cote, Acting Director, Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes

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