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## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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### **State Innovation Waiver Seeks to Stabilize Alaska's Individual Health Insurance Market**

November 30, 2016 ANCHORAGE – In an effort to ensure the long-term viability of the individual healthcare insurance market in the state, the Division of Insurance is seeking a Section 1332 State Innovation Waiver, which would allow changes to the administration of the Affordable Care Act in Alaska. The division is seeking federal pass-through funding to subsidize the Alaska Reinsurance Program, the innovative short-term solution passed by the 29<sup>th</sup> Alaska Legislature last spring to make healthcare insurance more affordable for individual Alaskans.

“We are able to seek this waiver because of the leadership of Governor Bill Walker and the near-unanimous support of the Alaska Legislature to pass House Bill 374,” said Lori Wing-Heier, director of the Division of Insurance. “The combined impact of HB 374 and a successful state innovation waiver will hopefully convince additional insurers to serve Alaskans in the individual market.”

The waiver application is available for review at [notice.alaska.gov/183687](http://notice.alaska.gov/183687). You may submit written comments to the Division of Insurance by no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 23, 2016. Oral comments will be accepted at the following public hearings:

Anchorage	December 16, 2016 from 1 to 3 p.m. Atwood Building (550 West 7 <sup>th</sup> Ave.), Room 102
Juneau	December 19, 2016 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon State Office Building (333 Willoughby Ave.), 9 <sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room A South

The Alaska Reinsurance Program mitigates the substantial rate increases in the individual healthcare insurance market. With the reinsurance program, rates in the individual market increased by approximately 7 percent for 2017 as opposed to the initially projected 42 percent; in the two years prior to the establishment of the reinsurance program, insurance premiums in the individual market increased almost 80 percent. In addition to providing relief to Alaskans, the relatively lower rates reduce the amount of Advanced Premium Tax Credits the federal government is responsible for providing to Alaska residents. Alaska is requesting that the federal savings that will be generated as a result of a reduction in tax credits be passed to the state to ensure the long-term stabilization of Alaska's individual health insurance market.

The Division of Insurance, along with the Division of Banking and Securities, the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office, and the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, is an agency housed within the Alaska State Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development tasked with protecting consumers in Alaska. For additional information about the division, please visit [insurance.alaska.gov](http://insurance.alaska.gov). For additional information about the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development and its other agencies, please visit [commerce.alaska.gov](http://commerce.alaska.gov).

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