

RESOLUTION #2021-06

Supporting a statewide comprehensive Alaska health initiative.

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is facing a billion-dollar budget deficit and is examining ways to balance the State's budget and reduce state spending; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska faces a public health crisis, which is requiring extensive scaling up of the public health infrastructure in response; and

WHEREAS, there is the potential for leveraging increased public health capacity to meet additional needs of Alaskans, which may contribute as well to addressing State and local government costs; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska currently has some of the highest per capita rates of substance abuse and tobacco use in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has some of the highest rates of domestic violence, sexual assault, suicide, child abuse and neglect, accidental death rates, obesity and sexually transmitted diseases in the nation; and

WHEREAS, data from the 2019 Alaska Kids Count Report ranks Alaska 45th in the nation for children's well-being based on 16 benchmarks related to quality of life, 50th in the nation for health, 49th in the nation for education, and 33rd in the nation for economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, children who experience abuse or neglect are approximately nine times more likely to become involved in criminal activity, thus burdening the legal and prison systems than children who do not experience child abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's public health crisis impacts almost all state department operations and budgets, costs the State of Alaska millions of dollars every year, and damages the state's economy by limiting productive contributions that healthier citizens could have made; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has made attempts to combat some of these public health challenges but success may depend on a more coordinated and intensive approach; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska should identify ways in which a comprehensive state-wide public health initiative could be paid for, with an appropriate return on that investment; and

WHEREAS, substantially reducing the State of Alaska's public health issues will reduce the need for programs and services and result in significant cost savings to the State.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Municipal League supports a comprehensive statewide healthy Alaska initiative that aims to leverage current investments in the public health infrastructure to substantially reduce our public health issues and reduce the state's operating budget as programs and services are no longer needed to address preventable problems.