

Joint Statement of Agreement

between **Providence Alaska Medical Center**
and the **Alaska Department of Health and Social Services**

As of March 23, 2001, we are pleased to announce an agreement between Providence Alaska Medical Center and the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) for the operation of a Single Point of Entry (SPE) for emergency mental health care in Anchorage. This agreement is the culmination of nearly 18 months of discussions and negotiations about this critical component of the Community Mental Health/API Replacement Project.

The SPE is the cornerstone of a new emergency mental health care delivery system in Anchorage. It will function as a psychiatric emergency room for Anchorage residents experiencing a crisis due to either mental illness or to co-occurring mental illness and substance use.

Open around the clock with a “no-refusal” policy, the SPE will provide an open door to new and enhanced community-based services. The SPE will improve access to the most appropriate care and treatment for those with mental illness. It will provide an unobstructed, clearly identified route for these persons (and for family, friends, police, emergency personnel and others assisting them) to access the most expedient, least restrictive and most clinically appropriate crisis treatment.

Providence Alaska Medical Center will provide the SPE. Providence had dedicated space and personnel for the SPE prior to and during the discussions leading to this agreement. Providence is in the midst of thoroughly remodeling and expanding its emergency department. This project includes dedicated space for the operation of the SPE. Once construction is complete, the fully functional SPE will be implemented.

While work remains on many implementation issues, this agreement recognizes that both Providence Alaska Medical Center and DHSS are committed to the SPE. Project phase-in is anticipated to begin in July 2001, with full implementation anticipated by about March, 2002.

With this agreement, DHSS continues its commitment to improving community mental health services as part of the three-pronged Community Mental Health/API Replacement Project. Major partners in this effort include the Alaska Mental Health Board, the Alaska Mental Health Trust, the DHSS / Division of Mental Health and Developmental

Disabilities, and the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API). The three central components of this effort are:

- Improving community mental health by supporting the provision of private treatment alternatives to API hospitalization
- Replacing the API building
- Enhancing the quality of care at API

Providence Alaska Medical Center and the Department of Health and Social Services are pleased to have reached this agreement, which builds a strong partnership for improving emergency mental health services for Anchorage residents.

SIGNED: _____

Karen Perdue, Commissioner
Department of Health and Social Services

SIGNED: _____

Susan Humphrey-Barnett, Assistant Administrator
Providence Alaska Medical Center