

Gruening Gets PHS Nurses Pay Hike

Efforts by Senator Ernest Gruening to have Public Health Service nurses in Alaska included in two pay raises made earlier this year to all other PHS nurses were crowned with success this week.

John Macy, Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, informed Senator Gruening that Alaska nurses will get the increases previously denied them.

When Public Health Service nurses everywhere else received pay increases Alaska nurses were excluded on the theory that the cost-of-living allowance received in Alaska made it unnecessary to step up the pay of nurses in the 49th state.

The result, as Senator Gruening learned from visits to Public Health Service hospitals in Anchorage, Kotzebue and Bethel, was that nurse positions were not being filled.

At Bethel only one-fourth as many nurses as were required were actually on the job because qualified nurses found employment more attractive under the new pay schedules in other parts of the country.

Senator Gruening protested the decision of the Civil Service Commission excluding Alaska nurses, and Chairman Macy informed him that if the Senator could provide documentation indicating that Alaska PHS hospitals were understaffed because of the decision he would try to have the situation corrected.

Today's order extending the two pay increases to all PHS nurses in Alaska was the result of Senator Gruening's efforts. The Alaska cost-of-living allowance of 25 per cent will be added to the new higher pay scales for nurses.