

Dentists will float to Aleuts

The State House of Representatives recently passed H.B. 728, making a special appropriation to the Department of Health and Social Services of \$200,000 for a mobile dental clinic to serve residents of rural Alaska. A great deal of debate was generated by this bill.

The bill was introduced by Rep. Alvin Osterback of Sand Point, and the mobile unit would primarily serve the Aleutian chain, where dental care is poor to nonexistent. Amendments were offered to replace the mobile unit with 15 dental chairs and equipment placed in several rural areas, the argument being that a mobile unit would not serve as many areas as would be desired. A large group of University of California dental students have volunteered to assist in the operation of this unit, as they had done in the original experiment of this type with migrant farmworkers in rural California. The bill finally did pass as originally submitted, since it would provide a pilot project with services, instead of just placing equipment in rural areas with no commitment for the provision of dental services.