

Hospital, day care bills signed

The Associated Press

JUNEAU - Wrapping up most of the work remaining from the 1981 Legislature, Gov. Jay Hammond approved measures that will increase state aid to local hospitals and day care centers, and tighten Alaska's child support laws.

Hammond made a law a bill sponsored by Rep. Ernie Haugen, R-Petersburg, that will more than double the state aid now offered to nearly every hospital and clinic in the state.

Hospitals with at least 10 beds will receive \$75,000 a year in additional money, for a total of \$250,000. Hospitals with less than 10 beds will get \$50,000 this year - double the former level of aid.

The minimum payment for health facilities is doubled to the greater of \$8,000 total or \$2,000 per bed. Under changes to existing law, facilities in Juneau,

Akiachak and Napaskiak will be eligible for state aid.

An additional \$3.7 million will be spent in state aid to hospitals and health care facilities this year.

Six boroughs and 25 cities will gain from the measure, Hammond said.

The governor also signed legislation that will increase to nearly \$1.8 million the state funding for child care facilities.

The bill introduced by Rep. Terry Gardiner, D-Ketchikan, provides grants to child care centers to help pay the cost of caring for children.

Under a measure sponsored by Sen. Bill Ray, D-Juneau, and approved by Hammond, a parent can automatically obtain a court order forcing a parent who is 45 days behind in child support payments to pay up.

The law also narrows the grounds people can use to ask to be excused from child support payments.