

# Alaska State Legislature

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### HB 90- Vitamin D Supplements Sponsor Statement

Recent pediatric studies relating to vitamin D levels and infant development have added to growing evidence of the importance of vitamin D sufficiency in areas such as language, psychomotor, and mental development. These studies demonstrate an association between low vitamin D levels in newborns and higher risks of mental and physical health problems. The studies also connect vitamin D deficiency to several factors relevant to Alaska. Northern latitude, skin pigmentation, and Alaskan's predominantly long sleeve clothing may all lead to low levels in our residents. **HB 90** is a temporary law, establishing a year-long project to test Alaska's newborn vitamin D levels. The samples collected during the HB 90 testing period will be sent to an accredited laboratory to provide testing and analytical services. By testing across the wide spectrum of locations and population groups, we will gain insight into how our population is affected by Alaska's northern latitude and which subgroups are at a greater risk of vitamin D deficiency. Understanding and targeting those at-risk Alaskans revealed by the study at the newborn and neonatal level, when important brain development is occurring, could lead to future savings in medical, educational, and support service costs. Depending on the Alaskan Newborn results, demonstrated links between neural development and vitamin D levels may point to vitamin D deficiency as a limiting factor in reaching our State's educational goals.