



Copper River Basin Child Advocacy Center
PO Box 103
Gakona AK 99586

February 26, 2014

Dear Senator Coghill, Chair and Members of the Senate Judiciary,

The Copper River Basin Child Advocacy Center (CRBCAC) respectfully submits this letter of support for the passage of CSSB 171, regarding Multidisciplinary Child Protection Teams (MDTs) in the State of Alaska.

The CRBCAC fully supports the amended revisions proposed in CSSB 171. The current statute protecting the establishment of MDTs across the State of Alaska, AS 47.14.300 that was enacted in 1998, requires further revisions in order to clarify the formality and function of an MDT and its core purpose.

It is the nature and core purpose of an MDT to maintain neutrality amongst disciplines that are involved in child abuse investigations. The collaborative efforts of an MDT during a child abuse investigation are to minimize further trauma to the child by providing non-duplicative interviews and implementing further supports to the child and non-offending caregiver throughout the investigative process. This may mean carrying out more than one interview since the process of disclosure of abuse may at times require more than one interview, depending on the extent of trauma experienced by the child and child readiness at the time of the interview. CSSB 171 uses the term "duplicative interviews" in order to differentiate and clarify that additional interviews should not be conducted if to repeat or utilize the same information or material shared in a previous interview.

Additionally, it is important and essential that MDT members are routinely involved in and share case information throughout the investigative process. The proposed CSSB 171, would support that an MDT remain active and provide MDT members with the opportunity to discuss, share and implement procedures through regular meetings, at least on a monthly basis.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Please feel free to contact us anytime

Respectfully,

Gina Hoke
Executive Director

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Dedicated to providing support while improving the inter-agency response for children and families affected by child abuse.