

Alaska State Medical Association

4107 Laurel Street • Anchorage, Alaska 99508 • (907) 562-0304 • (907) 561-2063 (fax)

February 24, 2014

Honorable Kurt Olson
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capital Room 24
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: House Bill 250

Dear Representative Olson:

The Alaska State Medical Association (ASMA) represents physicians statewide and is primarily concerned with the health of all Alaskans.

Thank you for introducing House Bill 250. A criticism of our current litigation system is that it places a financial disincentive through increased potential liability for providers expressing any sort of apology for an unanticipated outcome because of the fear of being sued and the possibility that having such a conversation may compromise their defense in a lawsuit. Because of this unsatisfactory outcome over thirty states have introduced an "I'm Sorry" law. The American Medical Association has described the purpose of an "I'm Sorry" law as encouraging open communication between patients and physicians without fear of reprisal.

With most medical procedures comes some risk of unanticipated outcomes. ASMA strongly supports efforts, such as HB 250, that aim to reduce barriers erected by lawyers, and increase the openness of communications between patients and their physicians.

ASMA supports passage of HB 250.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to further support passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jana Cole", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jana Cole, MD
President For: The Alaska State Medical Association