

The TRUST

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

March 6, 2015

Senator Johnny Ellis
State Capitol Bldg., Room 7
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Senate Bill 23 – An act relating to immunity for prescribing, providing, or administering opioid overdose drugs

Dear Senator Ellis,

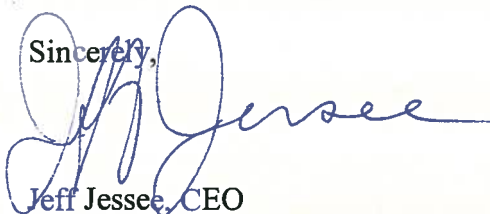
The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority is pleased to submit this letter in support of SB23, “An act relating to immunity for prescribing, providing, or administering opioid overdose drugs.”

The Trust supports programs, services and policy that positively impacts the lives of Trust beneficiaries, those Alaskans who experience a mental illness, substance abuse related disorders, traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer’s and Related Dementia (ARD) or developmental disabilities.

The Trust is an advocate of community-based services, treatment and supports for Alaskan’s struggling with alcoholism, drug dependence and abuse. Alaskan communities across the state are seeing a rise in the abuse of opioid based prescription medications and access to and abuse of heroin. Alaska has more than twice the rate of prescription overdose deaths in Alaska than compared to the broader U.S. While accidental overdose is an unfortunate risk of dependence and abuse, opioid overdose is reversible when naloxone is administered in a timely manner. We view SB23 as a rational approach to provide immunity for those that are adequately trained to prescribe or administer naloxone which may subsequently reduce the incidence of overdose by increasing availability and administration of this life and death intervention.

We appreciate your effort to reduce barriers to timely and effective interventions for Alaskans struggling with addictions. Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of Trust beneficiaries and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this very important issue.

Sincerely,



Jeff Jessee, CEO

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority