



**MAT-SU HEALTH  
FOUNDATION**

950 East Bogard Road, Suite 218 • Wasilla, AK 99654  
Phone: (907) 352-2863 • Fax (907) 352-2865  
[www.matsuhealthfoundation.org](http://www.matsuhealthfoundation.org)

February 10, 2016

Senator Peter Micciche  
145 Main St. Loop, Suite 226  
Kenai, AK. 99611  
Sent via email: [Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov)

Dear Senator Micciche,

On behalf of the Mat-Su Health Foundation, thank you for introducing Senate Bill 165 to revise portions of Title 4, the Alaska Statutes regulating alcoholic beverages. The changes the bill will make to Alaska Law can positively impact what is undeniably one of the largest health problems facing our state – alcohol abuse.

We support SB 165 because it ensures that the Alcohol Beverage Control Board fairly represents the interests of all Alaskans by designating seats for public safety and public health, and retaining seats for industry representatives and rural Alaskans. SB165 also revises laws related to underage drinking, which serves to promote consistent enforcement while also giving young people who do make the mistake of underage drinking an incentive to complete an alcohol education program.

A number of health care issues, and their corresponding costs, are associated with alcohol abuse. There were 41,000 days of hospital care attributed to alcohol-related incidents in Alaska in 2010, with an estimated cost of \$2,545 per day for care. Alcohol is the third leading root cause of preventable death in the United States, and Alaska's mortality rates for alcohol are among the highest in the nation (Pezzolessi, 2009; Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, n.d.). From 2007 to 2009, the Mat-Su chronic liver death rate was 7.4 per 100,000 persons, and the poisoning death rate was 20 per 100,000. In total, according to a State of Alaska analysis, between the years 2005 and 2009, the alcohol-induced death rate for the borough was 11.8 deaths per 100,000, or roughly 11 alcohol-induced deaths per year.

The Mat-Su Health Foundation is a partner in Recover Alaska, which has been involved in a four-year process initiated by the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board to engage a diverse group of more than 70 stakeholders to determine how to improve the structure, organization, specific policies and associated implementation issues in Title 4. SB165 is a strong first step in allowing this to happen. Thank you for supporting this multi-year effort of the statewide stakeholder group, and specifically the priority items brought forward for consideration this year.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ripley  
Executive Director

Cc: Senator Mia Costello ([Mia.Costello@akleg.gov](mailto:Mia.Costello@akleg.gov))  
Cynthia Franklin, Director, Alcoholic & Marijuana Control Office ([cynthia.franklin@alaska.gov](mailto:cynthia.franklin@alaska.gov))  
Bob Klein, Chair, ABC Board ([bobkleinak@gmail.com](mailto:bobkleinak@gmail.com))