

**Alaska Mental Health Board
Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
431 N. Franklin St. Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska, 99801**



January 25, 2017

Senator Kevin Meyer
Alaska State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, Alaska 99801

BY HAND-DELIVERY

Re: Letter of Support for SB 20

Senator Meyer,

The Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the Alaska Mental Health Board support the addition of the synthetic opioid U-47700 to the controlled substances schedule IA.

Deaths due to synthetic opioids and designer drugs have grown since 2015. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency noted the increase in deaths due to illicitly manufactured fentanyl and synthetic opioids in 2015, and then acted to regulate U-47700 by adding it to the federal controlled substances schedule I in November, 2016.

Of the opioid-related overdose deaths in Alaska since January 1, 2014, 29% involved fentanyl or synthetic opioids. The Division of Public Health reports that three of these deaths involved U-47700. Designer drugs like U-47700, like other opioids, pose a significant threat to the public health and safety of Alaskans. Acting to regulate U-47700 now, before greater impact occurs, is wise policymaking. The Boards appreciate your leadership in sponsoring SB 20.

Sincerely,

J. Kate Burkhart
Executive Director

cc: Philip Licht, Chairperson, ABADA
Charlene Tautfest, Chairperson, AMHB
Dr. Jay Butler, Chief Medical Office, DHSS