

February 28, 2017

The Honorable David Wilson
Chair, Senate Health & Social Services Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

SB 63 (Micciche) – Support

Dear Senator Wilson:

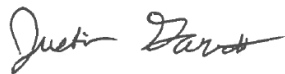
On behalf of the March of Dimes in Alaska, I am writing to share our support for SB 63 and respectfully ask for your “aye” vote when this bill comes before the Senate Health & Social Services Committee. This bill will help protect individuals from the dangers of tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke.

In Alaska, March of Dimes has prioritized tobacco cessation efforts. Women who smoke during pregnancy are more likely than nonsmokers to have a preterm or low birthweight baby. About 50% of pregnant women in three large rural regions of Alaska report smoking cigarettes during the last three months of pregnancy. The AK Tobacco Cessation CoIN team March of Dimes leads is a group comprised of State of Alaska Division of Public Health perinatal and tobacco program experts and epidemiologists, and tribal health tobacco program experts, among others. With support from March of Dimes and the National Institute for Children’s Health Quality (NICHQ), this team has conducted three Smoking Cessation and Reduction in Pregnancy Treatment (SCRIPT) trainings in rural hub villages, training about 60 health care providers including community health aides, tobacco treatment counselors, public health nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners.

SB 63 will benefit the health of Alaska residents by prohibiting smoking in enclosed public places, enclosed places of employment and certain outdoor areas. This will ensure that individuals who utilize these public places and places of employment can do so without being exposed to harmful secondhand smoke. Exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke has been shown to cause a variety of adverse health effects in both children and adults. Secondhand smoke exposure increases the risk of adverse birth outcomes like preterm birth and low birthweight as well as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and asthma. In addition, smoke free laws also have been shown to help more people try to quit smoking and increase successful quit attempts.

We respectfully request that you vote in favor of SB 63. If you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me at jgarrett@marchofdimes.org or 916-576-2836. Thank you for your commitment to improving the health of women and children.

Sincerely,



Justin Garrett
Regional Director of Advocacy & Government Affairs
March of Dimes

Cc: Members of the Senate Health & Social Services Committee
Senator Peter Micciche