



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Commerce, Community,  
and Economic Development**

STATE MEDICAL BOARD

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May 23, 2017

The Honorable Bill Walker  
Governor of Alaska  
PO Box 110001  
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Governor Walker:

The Alaska State Medical Board has reviewed Senate Bill (SB) 79 and House Bill (HB) 159, which propose to implement a Voluntary Nonopioid Directive, require healthcare licensing boards to require education in pain management and opioid use and addiction, and limit opioid prescriptions to a seven-day supply, as well as additional pharmacy and pharmacist requirements.

The Board expressed their full support for the Governor and Legislature in curbing the opioid epidemic. However, they noted the following:

- Concern that the proposed language limiting prescription to seven days is vague and does not define a maximum dosage.
- Whether it is appropriate to require the Pharmacy Board to define standards for over-prescribing. The Board noted that they are mandated with setting professional standards for physicians, and they do have both regulations and Board-issued guidelines regarding the prescribing of controlled substances.
- The education requirements may not exist as specified and may be difficult to enforce.

The Board determined their position to be supportive of the intent of SB 79 and HB 159 in dealing with the opioid epidemic, but are concerned with the lack of daily dosage limitation, Pharmacy Board defining standards, and vague education mandate (as noted above); the Board plans to work at their August meeting on some suggested language that may be more effective.

Sincerely,

Grant Roderer, M.D.  
Board President  
Alaska State Medical Board

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