



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed to Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

March 25, 2019

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz, Co-Chair
The Honorable Tiffany Zulkosky, Co-Chair
House Health & Social Services Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representatives Spohnholz and Zulkosky and Committee Members:

The Alaska Public Health Association (ALPHA) is a non-profit membership organization with over 150 health members dedicated to improving the health and well-being for all Alaskans. ALPHA is also the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association.

ALPHA strongly supports HB 22, to extend Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Council to June 30, 2027. As outlined in Alaska Statute 44.29.350, the functions of the Council are necessary to improve health and wellness throughout the state by reducing suicide and its effects on individuals, families and communities.

The Statewide Suicide Council has done a remarkable job of raising awareness; coordinating and improving statewide prevention programs and resources; collaborating with national, state and local stakeholders and resources; and developing, updating, and implementing statewide prevention plans.

Reducing suicide rates in Alaska has been one of the goals of the [State's Healthy Alaskans 2020](#) and is also a priority of ALPHA. Unfortunately, despite best efforts, suicide rates in Alaska remain high and still much higher than the national average.

It is crucial that the Statewide Suicide Council continue its work and remain the primary entity in Alaska for Alaska's collective approach to preventing suicide.

Sincerely,

Patty Owen
Policy Committee Co-Chair

Jayne Andreen
Policy Committee Co-chair

cc: Representative Tarr
Statewide Suicide Prevention Council