



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Department of Commerce, Community,
and Economic Development

BOARD OF PHARMACY

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March 21, 2019

To: Rep. Ivy Sponholz, Health and Social Services Committee Chair
Rep. Harriet Drummond, Education Committee Chair
Rep. Christ Tuck

RE: HB89, An Act relating to the prescription of opioids and relating to the practice of pharmacy

Dear Representative Sponsors,

Thank you for continuing to analyze the opioid situation in Alaska and continuing the efforts to improve patient safety.

Regarding House Bill 89 specifically, Section 6 recommends amending AS 08.80.030(b) to add a power of the board to *“adopt regulations requiring a licensee to advise patients, using oral and written information, before prescribing an opioid, of the potential dangers of opioid addiction, and alternatives to the opioid prescription the provider considers reasonable; the board may determine which classes of patients may be reasonably exempted from the information requirement and may allow an exemption from the requirement for violations the board considers to be unintentional, periodic accidental violations, and for good cause, including when a licensee needs to attend to the perceived immediate health care of another patient.”*

As this relates to the practice of pharmacy, the above statutory change would not have the positive impact that we believe you desire for the following reasons:

1. pharmacists do not prescribe opioids;
2. making an alternative recommendation to the opioid prescription the provider considers reasonable would negatively burden both the patient and provider. Since the pharmacist is not with the provider at the time of prescribing it would force the patient to wait while the pharmacist contacts the provider whereby the prescription may not change;
3. In accordance with AS 08.80.480(22) and 12 AAC 52.585 pharmacists are already counseling patients on the proper use of their medication(s), which may include any precautions; and
4. In accordance with AS 08.80.480(30), pharmacists already have statutory authority under the practice of pharmacy for “participation in drug and device selection” in cooperation with the provider writing the prescription.

Although we commend your effort to continue the opioid dialogue we do not support the recommended amendments as outlined in Section 6 of HB89 for the above reasons. We look forward to continuing our work with the legislature and the other healthcare professional boards as we evaluate opioid usage in Alaska.

Professionally,

Alaska Board of Pharmacy