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2/20/20

Senator Wilson
Chair: Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Email: shss@akleg.gov

REGARDING: SB 134

To Chair: Senator Wilson

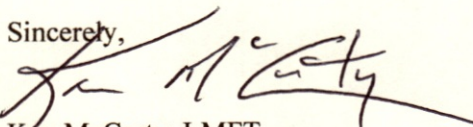
I am writing on behalf of support for SB 134 in that of recognizing Licensed Professional Counselors in language under Title 47.

I am the Executive Director / Owner of Discovery Cove Recovery and Wellness Center; former president of the Alaska Association of Marital and Family Therapists; former board member of the Alaska Professional Licensing Board of Marital Family Therapists; former secretary of the Alaska Collaborative of Telemedicine and Teletherapy; and current Trustee of the Alaska Mental Health Trust.

The State of Alaska is challenged with having enough mental health providers to effectively serve Alaskans. The depletion of providers in Title 47 brings depletion of services, lack of First Response Level Interventions, and an increase in more intrusive intervention (e.g. E.R. visits, A.P.I., etc). The lack of effective service ability also creates unnecessary cognitive stigma with Alaskans, as if they are "beyond help" or "not important to help." In 2018 with the passing of S.B. 105 the State of Alaska recognized the need to include already State Licensed providers (Licensed Marital and Family Therapists) to offer services "In-Lieu-Of". Unfortunately the Licensed Professional Counselors were not included in the SB 105 language. Today the Legislative Body has the opportunity to amend the SB 105 language to recognize another viable professional provider group so that Alaskans can better be served. I implore you to move SB 134 on in your committee to help serve the need that does exist.

Thank you for your time and work.

Sincerely,



Ken McCarty, LMFT
Executive Director of Discovery Cove