



## SENATOR JESSE KIEHL

### **SB 229** **Sponsor Statement**

When making highly complicated medical decisions, more information is a good thing. Alaska doctors frequently call on specialists or other highly experienced physicians from outside their own practice for insight on difficult cases. When physicians give advice for free, it's often called a 'curbside consult.'

Advice from experts helps doctors across town evaluate which treatment to try first, or whether a patient needs expensive diagnostics. A phone call to a seasoned professional helps evaluate whether costly—sometimes risky—medical evacuation is called for. These 'curbside' consultations are especially crucial in smaller Alaska communities.

Until a recent Minnesota court case, ultimate responsibility for medical decisions has always lain with the treating physician. This bill keeps that vital protection: the doctor who 'lays hands on' the patient remains the one liable, as long as the consulting doctor provides her help for free. It also protects Alaskans injured through a medical error by making sure the treating physician cannot use the consultant to decrease his own liability.