

April 10, 2022

The Honorable Liz Snyder
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Snyder,

My name is Christopher Dietrich. I am currently a practicing physician assistant (PA), providing medical care throughout Alaska. This letter supports reducing barriers to care for patients involving advanced health practitioners with HB392. Thank you for sponsoring HB392 as I am advocating professionally for HB392 and offering the support needed in addressing advanced practitioners to coordinate end-of-life care for patients. The current legislation proposed is excellent in that it facilitates care with nurse practitioners in providing care decisions as a team with a patient and their families.

However, the current proposed language has limited advanced practitioners not to include PAs. Frequently this can occur and sometimes not by intent. PAs are advanced practitioners. PAs are often engaged in care teams for patients necessary to provide this level of service that is currently delayed or has barriers. This additional language that specifies Physician Assistants will protect patient care decisions and strengthen healthcare fidelity for all Alaskans.

Thank you again.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Dietrich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christopher" being more prominent than the last name "Dietrich".

Christopher D. Dietrich, PA-C, DSc, PSY-CAQ
christopherdietrich@gmail.com

April 12, 2022

The Honorable Liz Snyder
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Snyder,

Thank you for sponsoring House Bill 392. My name is Betsy Douds-Paczan. I am a practicing physician assistant in the state of Alaska. I am writing this letter in support of HB 392. HB392 mentions Nurse Practitioners as advanced practitioners. I advocate for adding language which includes Physician Assistants in this bill. PAs are frequently involved in end of life care and HB392 would ensure that they too would have the right to practice to the full extent of their ability for the benefit of the patient.

I have stood at the death bed of friends in the hospital, sat with patients when volunteering with No One Dies Alone, and been at my father's bedside as he passed. The moment of death is a delicate one. When my father died, we had to wait for his care team to find a doctor to declare his death. He had Alzheimer's disease and we had donated his brain for research. They were unable to place the bags of ice on his head for preservation until he had been officially signed off as having passed by a doctor. The care team was in and out of the room discussing what they could or could not do. It was, to say the least, awkward. I support HB392 and its inclusion of Physician Assistants as advanced practitioners. HB392 enables the best care for the patient and their family. Providing compassionate and patient-centered care is our duty as medical practitioners and HB392 has the potential to expand our ability to do so.

Thank you again for your good work,

Betsy Douds-Paczan, MPAS, PA-C
betsydouds@gmail.com