



# LAWS OF ALASKA

**2004**

**Source**

SCS CSHB 260(JUD)

**Chapter No.**

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**AN ACT**

Relating to immunity for free health care services provided by certain health care providers;  
and providing for an effective date.

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**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

THE ACT FOLLOWS ON PAGE 1



## AN ACT

1 Relating to immunity for free health care services provided by certain health care providers;  
2 and providing for an effective date.

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4 \* **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section  
5 to read:

6 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the Volunteer Health Care Provider  
7 Immunity Act of 2004.

8 \* **Sec. 2.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
9 read:

10 FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

11 (1) many of the state's most senior and experienced physicians will be retiring  
12 in the next five to 10 years; retiring physicians deciding to reside in Alaska could continue to  
13 benefit our local communities by volunteering their medical services;

14 (2) historically, Alaska has had difficulty in attracting and maintaining

adequate numbers of qualified physicians; currently, Alaska ranks 49th in the number of physicians per capita, while Alaska's physicians continue to grow older, reaching an average age of 51 years;

(3) without civil liability protection, retired physicians would be unwilling to provide free services to the indigent and elderly;

(4) 43 states have enacted legislation limiting liability for retired physicians, thus encouraging retired physicians to continue in providing voluntary medical services; and

(5) removing liability requirements for retired physicians would be in the best interests of the state; retired physicians unhindered by expensive malpractice insurance would be more inclined to volunteer necessary and important medical services to all Alaskans.

\* **Sec. 3.** AS 09.65 is amended by adding a new section to read:

**Sec. 09.65.300. Immunity for providing free health care services. (a)**

Except as otherwise provided in this section, a health care provider who provides health care services to another person is not liable for civil damages resulting from an act or omission in providing the health care services if the health care

(1) provider is licensed in this state to provide health care services;

(2) services provided were within the scope of the health care provider's license;

(3) services were provided at a medical clinic, medical facility, nonprofit facility, temporary emergency site, or other facility owned or operated by a governmental entity or nonprofit organization and the health care provider was acting within the scope of the provider's responsibilities in the medical clinic, governmental entity, or nonprofit organization;

(4) services were provided voluntarily and without pay to the health care provider for the services, except as provided in (b)(2) and (3) of this section; and

(5) provider

(A) obtains informed consent from the person receiving the health care services as described under AS 09.55.556, except in the case of an emergency; and

(B) provides the person receiving the health care services advance written notice of the immunity provided under this section to a health

1 care provider when providing voluntary health care services as described under  
2 this section.

3 (b) This section does not preclude

4 (1) liability for civil damages that are the result of gross negligence or  
5 reckless or intentional misconduct;

6 (2) a health care provider from receiving payment or being reimbursed  
7 for expenses, including travel and room and board while providing voluntary services;

8 (3) a medical clinic or facility from charging for its services.

9 (c) In this section,

10 (1) "health care provider" means a state licensed physician, physician  
11 assistant, dentist, dental hygienist, osteopath, optometrist, chiropractor, registered  
12 nurse, practical nurse, nurse midwife, advanced nurse practitioner, naturopath,  
13 physical therapist, occupational therapist, marital and family therapist, psychologist,  
14 psychological associate, licensed clinical social worker, or certified direct-entry  
15 midwife;

16 (2) "health care services" means services received by an individual in  
17 order to treat or to prevent illness or injury;

18 (3) "nonprofit organization" means an organization that qualifies for  
19 exemption from taxation under 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3) or (4) (Internal Revenue Code).

20 \* **Sec. 4.** The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
21 read:

22 **APPLICABILITY.** This Act applies to a cause of action that accrues on or after the  
23 effective date of this Act.

24 \* **Sec. 5.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).