

# Alaska State Medical Association

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February 13, 2026

Re: Support of Senate Bill 89 as amended

The Alaska State Medical Association's (ASMA) membership includes both physicians and physician assistants (PA). ASMA has engaged with its own members as well as members of the Physician Assistant Association over the past year to better understand the challenges to PA practice and to develop a consensus bill for PA Practice Modernization, ensuring alignment with the highest standards of physician-led care. Through extensive meetings, analysis and deliberation, ASMA worked diligently with PAs to craft amended SB89, which reflects a balanced approach to meeting Alaska's healthcare needs.

The amendment to SB89 prioritizes patient access while preserving the integrity of physician-led medical care. While the bill does not grant full practice authority for PAs, it introduces meaningful improvements by reducing administrative burdens and streamlining the hiring process - critical steps in addressing Alaska's provider shortage and optimizing the use of existing healthcare resources.

These changes have undergone thorough review and approval by the ASMA Board of Directors, underscoring ASMA's commitment to advancing policies that safeguard quality care and improve access. The signature on this letter represents countless hours of thoughtful discussion to ensure that any modernization efforts remain consistent with patient safety and physician oversight while recognizing the importance of PAs in health care delivery and reducing burdens to their practice.

ASMA strongly urges the legislature to pass this amended bill to improve Alaskan's access.

Thank you for your time and consideration of SB89.

Sincerely,



Rhene Merkouris, M.D. President  
Alaska State Medical Association