

Support for HB 347 - MODERNIZING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN ALASKA

From Eladio Vinas [REDACTED]

Date Wed 3/11/2026 9:27 PM

To Rep. Zack Fields <Rep.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov>; Rep. Carolyn Hall <Rep.Carolyn.Hall@akleg.gov>; Rep.Ashley.Carick@akleg.gov <Rep.Ashley.Carick@akleg.gov>; Rep. Robyn Frier <Rep.Robyn.Frier@akleg.gov>; Rep. Dan Saddler <Rep.Dan.Saddler@akleg.gov>; Rep. Julie Coulombe <Rep.Julie.Coulombe@akleg.gov>; Rep. David Nelson <Rep.David.Nelson@akleg.gov>

Subject: Support for HB 347 – Modernizing Occupational Therapy in Alaska

Chair Representative Zack Fields and Members of the Committee,

My name is Eladio Vinas Jr., and I am a certified occupational therapy NBCOT healthcare professional at the Arctic Slope Native Association-Sammuel Simmond Hospital currently not practicing Occupational Therapy bound by the statutes for foreign-trained Occupational Therapy in the city of Barrow, Alaska. I have worked in this field for almost 10 years, and currently working as a dental assistant, if given an opportunity to practice as an Occupational Therapy in Alaska I am willing to continue my advocacy to serve.

I am writing in support of HB 347 because Alaska's current occupational therapy statute is outdated and does not reflect modern healthcare practice.

Under the current law, occupational therapy is described primarily as helping patients cope with limitations, but it does not clearly recognize our role in restoring and rehabilitating function. This creates regulatory confusion and places Alaska out of alignment with national standards used across the country.

In a healthcare system already facing workforce shortages and access challenges, unclear scope language can create unnecessary barriers to timely care. In a rural state like Alaska, delays in rehabilitation can mean prolonged disability, delayed return to work, and increased long-term healthcare costs.

Patients recovering from injury, surgery, or illness need clear access to restorative care, and healthcare providers need clarity in statute to practice safely and confidently within their training.

HB 347 addresses this issue by updating outdated language so Alaska patients are not underserved

simply because our statute has not kept pace with healthcare evolution. This bill helps ensure that Alaskans have access to modern, evidence-based occupational therapy care consistent with national standards.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our state. I respectfully ask for your support of HB 347.

Sincerely,

Eladio Vinas Jr. OTR

National Board of Occupational Therapy

Member AKOTA

Barrow, Alaska

Support for HB 347 – Modernizing Occupational Therapy in Alaska

From Liuslina Sooter [REDACTED]
Date Wed 3/11/2026 2:31 PM
To Rep. Carolyn Hall <Rep.Carolyn.Hall@akleg.gov>

Chair Carolyn Hall and Members of the Committee,
My name is **Liuslina Sooter**, and I am a **licensed occupational therapist/ Certified Hand Therapist** practicing in **Anchorage, Alaska**. I have worked in this field for **25years**, and I have been helping Alaskan people regained their functional independence.

I am writing in support of **HB 347** because Alaska's current occupational therapy statute is outdated and does not reflect modern healthcare practice.

Under the current law, occupational therapy is described primarily as helping patients **cope with limitations**, but it does not clearly recognize our role in **restoring and rehabilitating function**. This creates regulatory confusion and places Alaska out of alignment with national standards used across the country.

In a healthcare system already facing **workforce shortages and access challenges**, unclear scope language can create unnecessary barriers to timely care. In a rural state like Alaska, delays in rehabilitation can mean **prolonged disability, delayed return to work, and increased long-term healthcare costs**.

Patients recovering from injury, surgery, or illness need clear access to **restorative care**, and healthcare providers need clarity in statute to practice safely and confidently within their training.

HB 347 addresses this issue by updating outdated language so Alaska patients are not underserved simply because our statute has not kept pace with healthcare evolution.

This bill helps ensure that Alaskans have access to **modern, evidence-based occupational therapy care consistent with national standards**.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our state. I respectfully ask for your support of **HB 347**.

Sincerely,

Liuslina Sooter, OTR/L, CHT, CLT

Support for HB 347 – Modernizing Occupational Therapy in Alaska

From Merrik Brown [REDACTED]
Date Wed 3/11/2026 5:47 PM
To Rep. Carolyn Hall <Rep.Carolyn.Hall@akleg.gov>

Chair Hall and Members of the Committee,

My name is Merrik, and I am a licensed occupational therapist practicing in Anchorage, Alaska. I have worked in this field for 4 years, and I currently work as a neurorehabilitation occupational therapist at St. Elias Specialty Hospital. I am the OT anchor for our brain injury unit and work alongside physicians and other rehabilitative professionals to direct and provide high-quality therapy services to Alaskans who are facing impossible circumstances.

I am writing in support of HB 347 because Alaska's current occupational therapy statute is outdated and does not reflect modern healthcare practice.

Under the current law, occupational therapy is described primarily as helping patients cope with limitations, but it does not clearly recognize our role in restoring and rehabilitating function. This creates regulatory confusion and places Alaska out of alignment with national standards used across the country.

In a healthcare system already facing workforce shortages and access challenges, unclear scope language can create unnecessary barriers to timely care. In a rural state like Alaska, delays in rehabilitation can mean prolonged disability, delayed return to work, and increased long-term healthcare costs.

Patients recovering from injury, surgery, or illness need clear access to restorative care, and healthcare providers need clarity in statute to practice safely and confidently within their training.

HB 347 addresses this issue by updating outdated language so Alaska patients are not underserved simply because our statute has not kept pace with healthcare evolution. This bill helps ensure that Alaskans have access to modern, evidence-based occupational therapy care consistent with national standards.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our state. I respectfully ask for your support of HB 347.

Sincerely,

Merrik Brown, OTD, OTR/L, CSRS, C/NDT (*she, her, hers*)



Support for HB 347 – Modernizing Occupational Therapy in Alaska

From Baylee Bartgis [REDACTED]
Date Wed 3/11/2026 6:48 PM
To Rep. Carolyn Hall <Rep.Carolyn.Hall@akleg.gov>

Chair Representative Carolyn Hall and Members of the Committee,

My name is Phelps and I am a licensed occupational practicing in Wasilla, Alaska. I have worked in this field for 3 years serving pediatric clients.

I am writing in support of HB 347 as Alaska's current occupational therapy statute is outdated and does not reflect modern healthcare practice.

Under the current law, occupational therapy is described primarily as helping patients cope with limitations, but it does not clearly recognize our role in restoring and rehabilitating function. This creates regulatory confusion and places Alaska out of alignment with national standards used across the country.

In a healthcare system already facing workforce shortages and access challenges, unclear scope language can create unnecessary barriers to timely care. In a rural state like Alaska, delays in rehabilitation can mean prolonged disability, delayed return to work, and increased long-term healthcare costs.

Patients recovering from injury, surgery, or illness need clear access to restorative care, and healthcare providers need clarity in statute to practice safely and confidently within their training.

HB 347 addresses this issue by updating outdated language so Alaska patients are not underserved simply because our statute has not kept pace with healthcare evolution. This bill helps ensure that Alaskans have access to modern, evidence-based occupational therapy care consistent with national standards. Thank you for your time and for your service to our state. I respectfully ask for your support of HB 347.

Sincerely,
Baylee Phelps OTR/L

Subject: Support for HB 347 – Modernizing Occupational Therapy in Alaska

To Carolyn and Members of the Committee,

My name is Allison Horazdovsky, and I am a **licensed occupational therapist/hand therapist** practicing in **Anchorage, Alaska**. I have worked in this field for **8.5 years**, and I currently work at Alaska Hand Rehabilitation in an outpatient setting as a hand therapist

I am writing in support of **HB 347** because Alaska's current occupational therapy statute is outdated and does not reflect modern healthcare practice.

Under the current law, occupational therapy is described primarily as helping patients **cope with limitations**, but it does not clearly recognize our role in **restoring and rehabilitating function**. This creates regulatory confusion and places Alaska out of alignment with national standards used across the country.

In a healthcare system already facing **workforce shortages and access challenges**, unclear scope language can create unnecessary barriers to timely care. In a rural state like Alaska, delays in rehabilitation can mean **prolonged disability, delayed return to work, and increased long-term healthcare costs**.

Patients recovering from injury, surgery, or illness need clear access to **restorative care**, and healthcare providers need clarity in statute to practice safely and confidently within their training.

HB 347 addresses this issue by updating outdated language so Alaska patients are not underserved simply because our statute has not kept pace with healthcare evolution.

This bill helps ensure that Alaskans have access to **modern, evidence-based occupational therapy care consistent with national standards**.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our state. I respectfully ask for your support of **HB 347**.

Sincerely,
Allison Horazdovsky, OTD, OTR/L, CHT
Alaska Hand Rehabilitation
Anchorage, Alaska

