THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Health and Social Services

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Anchorage
3601 C Street, Suite 902
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5923
Main: 907.269.7800
Fax: 907.269.0060

Juneau
350 Main Street, Suite 404
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1149
Main: 907.465.3030
Fax: 907.465.3068

January 19, 2016

Senator Kevin Meyer
State Capitol Room 103
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Meyer,

As Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Health and Social Services and a member of the Department of Law's Controlled Substances Advisory Committee, I would like to offer strong support for adding the drug U-47700 (sometimes known as "pink" or "pinkie") to schedule IA of Alaska Controlled Substances list. Under AS 11.71.140, schedule IA substances are deemed "to have the highest degree of danger or probable danger to a person or the public."

U-47700 is a synthetic opioid nearly eight times more potent than morphine and has been linked to numerous deaths nationwide. It has also been linked to the deaths of at least three Alaskans since November 2015. U-47700 has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for any medical use. U-47700 is sometimes mixed with other powerful drugs such as heroin and fentanyl. It can be easy to obtain, and is often purchased directly over the internet. Because this substance is both unregulated and very potent, a user is at serious risk of overdosing or suffering other adverse effects.

In response to this emerging public health threat, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) recently designated U-47700 as a schedule I controlled substance on the Federal Controlled Substances schedule, through emergency regulations. The Alaska Division of Public Health has notified the medical community and the public of the use and risks of U-47700 in Alaska in an *Epidemiology Bulletin* issued on November 7, 2016 (enclosed). However, the lack of state law on U-47700 leaves law enforcement with few tools to combat its continued distribution in Alaska. U-47700 poses a serious danger to Alaskans. By making this drug a schedule IA controlled substance, Alaska would be better positioned to address and mitigate the growing problem of opioid misuse.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jay C. Butler, MD, FAAP, FACP, FIDSA
Chief Medical Officer and Director, Division of Public Health