



Dear Senator Scott Kawasaki,

I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 196 (SB196), which will establish a dedicated funding mechanism for Alaska's behavioral health crisis services, including our Careline Alaska Crisis Call Center—the state's only 988 crisis call center.

Careline Alaska provides life-saving crisis intervention, providing over 43,000 crisis contacts for vulnerable Alaskans last year alone. The crisis call center provides a critical service for individuals experiencing mental health crises, suicidal ideation, and emotional distress, connecting them with compassionate professionals who offer immediate support. Each timely intervention by Careline helps avert expensive hospital stays and transfers to psychiatric facilities, reducing the State's costs while emphasizing early assistance and sustained well-being.

Despite their immense public health impact, services like Careline's often struggle to secure reliable funding through traditional sources such as Medicaid. Implementing sustainable funding solutions for Alaska's crisis care system is essential. SB196 ensures funding for crisis response services to support operations like Careline Alaska. Passage of this groundbreaking legislation maintains and expands critical behavioral health resources, ensuring no Alaskan in crisis is left without help.

I urge you to support SB196 and advocate for its swift passage. Reliable funding for the Careline Alaska Crisis Call Center and other crisis care providers will save lives and strengthen Alaska's behavioral health crisis response system for generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact me if you require further information or personal testimony regarding the importance of Careline Alaska and SB196.

Sincerely,

Susanna Marchuk
Executive Director
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