

HB 344: Establishing the Opioid Litigation Settlement Fund

History & Overview

Representative Julie Coulombe



Nationwide Settlements

Background

In response to the opioid epidemic, the state of Alaska joined the 2021 and 2022 nationwide lawsuits against various manufacturers and distributors.

The lawsuits alleged that companies:

- Misled doctors and patients about the risks of opioids
- Failed to detect and report suspicious orders and diversion of prescription opioids

Nationwide Settlements

Outcome

- Alaska will receive millions in settlement payments over almost 2 decades
- At least 85% of settlement funds must be used for opioid abatement efforts
 - Treatment and recovery services
 - Prevention programs
 - Community response efforts
- The settlements also require changes in how defendants monitor opioid distribution.

Audit Finding 2024-001

Key Findings

The Legislative Audit identified errors in opioid settlement funds reporting caused by:

- Lack of established procedures
- Absence of a separate fund to track settlement revenues

Recommendation:

Create a separate account to track and manage opioid settlement resources.

HB 344: Opioid Settlement Fund

Legislative Intent and Goals

- Respond to the Legislative Audit recommendation
- Improve transparency and financial tracking
- Ensure settlement funds are used for opioid abatement efforts in Alaska

Effect

- Settlement funds to be deposited into one account
- Clear tracking of settlement payments
- Use of funds for opioid remediation activities is consistent with settlement agreements

Questions

Representative Julie Coulombe

rep.julie.coulombe@akleg.gov