

Alaska State Legislature

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Senate Bill 147 Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to the prescription and administration of drugs and devices by pharmacists; relating to reciprocity for pharmacists; and providing for an effective date."

Senate Bill 147 seeks to expand access to timely, high-quality health care by authorizing pharmacists in Alaska to provide direct patient care services in alignment with their education, training, and clinical expertise.

Across the state, many Alaskans face significant barriers to accessing health care. Primary care providers are in short supply, wait times for appointments are often lengthy, and in some areas, access is virtually nonexistent. Pharmacists—who are among the most accessible and trusted healthcare professionals—are uniquely positioned to bridge these care gaps, particularly in managing chronic conditions and treating common, uncomplicated ailments.

Pharmacists can provide evidence-based care for conditions such as COVID-19, influenza, strep throat, urinary tract infections (UTIs), and more. Enabling pharmacists to provide these services would reduce unnecessary emergency room visits, increase patient access to preventive care, and improve overall health outcomes.

The public is ready for this model of care. According to 2022 data from the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS), Alaskans place a high degree of trust in community pharmacists. Pharmacists consistently rank among the most trusted healthcare providers nationwide.

Importantly, services authorized under SB 147 would follow nationally recognized standards of care, as already practiced in many other states. For nearly a century, federal healthcare systems have demonstrated the effectiveness of pharmacist-provided care. Under federal authority, pharmacists already deliver expanded services through the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act and hold independent prescriptive authority within the Veterans Affairs system. Additionally, the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act permits pharmacist-led care for opioid use disorder when state law allows—something not currently permitted in Alaska.

SB 147 embraces a collaborative, team-based model of care. Pharmacists would refer patients to higher levels of care as needed, working in close coordination with physicians, nurse practitioners, and other providers.

Alaska has an opportunity to modernize its healthcare delivery system by recognizing the vital role of pharmacists. Senate Bill 147 is a critical step toward that future.

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