



April 21, 2017

Dr. Jay Butler
Division of Health and Social Services
Chief Medical Officer

Re: HB 159/SB 79 Opioids; Prescriptions; Database; Licenses

Dear Dr. Butler,

On behalf of the members of the Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association (ASHNHA), I am writing this letter in support of HB 159, a bill working to change the way opioids are prescribed and monitored in Alaska.

ASHNHA represents Alaska's hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. Our members provide a variety of critical health care services in their communities, from inpatient acute care and emergency services to primary care and behavioral health. For over 60 years, ASHNHA members have worked to improve health care in Alaska, in close partnership with many other stakeholders.

We are concerned about the opioid epidemic in Alaska and support taking steps to reduce unnecessary exposure to these addictive drugs. We support the overall concepts in this legislation of limiting the prescription of opioids, increasing the use of the prescription drug monitoring database and the other provisions in the bill.

After this bill was introduced, we spent time carefully reviewing and consulting with hospital-based pharmacists to assess the impact and identify any potential problems. We identified a number of concerns and have worked with the administration to address these concerns through a number of amendments.

We are now happy to provide our full support for HB 159/SB79. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Becky Hultberg
President/CEO