

## Konrad Jackson

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**From:** Granholm, Marin C (she/her/hers) <Marin.Granholm@providence.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 03, 2025 10:24 AM  
**To:** Sen. Jesse Bjorkman  
**Cc:** Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Robert Yundt

Dear Chairman Bjorkman and Labor and Commerce Committee members:

I am writing to request your opposition to SB 89. While physician assistants have an important role in expanding care delivery, PA led practice is more expensive, less safe, and not what patients want. Senator Tobin argues independent physician assistant practice will address long wait times and difficulty accessing care, as well as high costs. She specifically calls out improving rural access as important to decreasing costs. In my past role as the medical director of a rural AK health clinic, I spent a great deal of time working with a physician assistant who had experience but did not recognize deficits in their education and experience. These deficits were only recognized by required physician review. With increased supervision and training this PA was able to continue in a rural role, but I worry that without supervision future such events will go undiscovered until a patient is harmed.

Multiple studies have found that physician assistants and other non-physicians order more diagnostic imaging compared to physicians. In states that allow independent prescribing, physician assistants and nurse practitioners are 20 times more likely to overprescribe opioids than those in prescription-restricted states. From 2013 to 2017 almost every other medical specialty decreased opioid prescribing while nurse practitioners and physician assistants increased opioid prescribing. Ambulatory visits involving nurse practitioners and physician assistants more frequently result in an antibiotic prescription compared with physician visits. All of these practices—increased imaging, increased opioids, increased antibiotics—increase cost and decrease safety. Lastly but perhaps most importantly, in a recent survey 95 percent of U.S. voters agree that physicians should be involved in their medical diagnoses and treatment decisions.

I commend the Committee's efforts to improve care for Alaskans. This measure however would not meet the stated goal of decreasing costs. While it may improve access, I would argue that is not worth the price of lower quality care.

Sincerely,

Marin Granholm, MD  
Anchorage, AK

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