



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Löki Gale Tobin
Education Committee Chair

EDUCATION
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
JUDICIARY
TRANSPORTATION

Senate Bill 89: Physician Assistant Scope of Practice Sponsor Statement

We have all heard about long wait times and difficulty accessing care across Alaska. This frustrates patients and creates impediments to quick diagnosis and treatment. Senate Bill 89 provides a pathway to independent licensure for experienced physician assistants. This allows physician assistants to provide medical care to the fullest extent of their licensure, increasing the capacity of our medical system and reducing unnecessarily strict regulations on physician assistants.

Senate Bill 89 maintains the collaborative agreement structure currently in place for less experienced physician assistants, while also establishing a pathway to independent licensure within an established scope of practice. Physician assistants will continue to receive oversight from the State Medical Board. Under Senate Bill 89 the State Medical Board may establish additional licensure requirements for physician assistants who want to pursue a new specialty.

Alaska has a demonstrated need for increasing accessible medical care, reducing high medical costs, and decreasing barriers to experienced medical practitioners across Alaska. The majority of the physician assistants in Alaska practice in rural areas. Increasing the medical care available locally in rural Alaska produces better outcomes and less expensive care. This also allows patients to stay in their home communities, thereby reducing strain on hub communities.

Senate Bill 89 does not sacrifice medical rigor or oversight. It simply allows experienced and licensed physician assistants to continue to offer high quality medical care within their scope of practice. Thank you for considering this legislation.