

July 2018-June 2019

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April 2, 2019

Senator David Wilson
State Capital Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SB 93 - An Act relating to a workforce enhancement program for health care professionals employed in the state; and providing for an effective date.

Dear Senator Wilson:

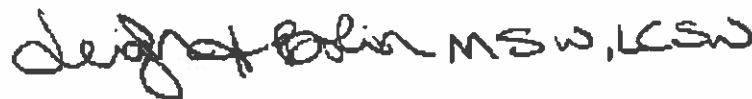
My name is Leigh Bolin and I am the President of the National Association of Social Workers Alaska Chapter.

Alaska has multiple barriers in retaining and maintaining healthcare practitioners, especially in rural areas. This impacts the quality of healthcare Alaskans can access. Alaska continues to utilize itinerant workers to fulfil the needs of doctors, dentists, physical therapists, mental health clinicians and a plethora of other specialized healthcare workers.

Social workers often work with clients to maneuver barriers and make up a large portion of the mental health clinicians in this state. SHARP-3 is an option for licensed mental health clinicians and other healthcare professionals to gain assistance in their student loan repayment and also make a commitment to working in Alaska.

We support SHARP-3. We know it is best for Alaskans to have healthcare providers who live in Alaska and have the opportunity to build relationships with those they serve. SHARP-3 can make this possible.

Thank you for sponsoring this bill. Please let us know if you need any additional support in making SB 93 a success.
Respectfully,



Leigh A. Bolin, LCSW
NASW-AK Chapter President
PO Box 93
Dillingham, AK 99576



UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Center for Human Development

April 8, 2019

Dear Senator Wilson,

Please accept this letter of support from the University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Human Development for SB 93, SHARP-3. The Center for Human Development is a University Center for Excellence in Disabilities, authorized in federal law to provide training, community service, research, and information dissemination on issues important to individuals with disabilities, their families, and care givers.

Alaska continues to struggle with healthcare workforce shortages and significant turnover, especially in services for individuals with disabilities. The Center for Human Development has a robust training and continuing education program for healthcare providers working with individuals with a wide range of disabilities (e.g., autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, substance use disorder, and traumatic brain injury).

SHARP has always focused on enhancing healthcare access for our state's underserved populations. SHARP 3 provides a valuable infrastructure without additional state general funds. We are especially supportive of the expansion of SHARP to areas across locations and practice-types, for instance, to include Anchorage, to include direct patient care paraprofessionals, and include certain practice types that have heretofore not been included such as speech therapists, certified behavior analysts, and occupational therapists. The inclusion of behavior analysts is especially important to the Center for Human Development's work. There is a critical shortage of behavior analysts to work with individuals with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities who are at risk of being institutionalized due to their behaviors.

The Center for Human Development fully supports SB 93 and the SHARP 3 program. We ask you to move this vital piece of legislation forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Karen Ward'.

Karen Ward, Ed.D.
Director



AADD
ALASKA ASSOCIATION ON
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
P.O. Box 241742
Anchorage, Alaska 99524

To facilitate a united provider voice for best practices, advocacy, partnerships and networking.

April 8, 2019

Senator David Wilson
Alaska State Capitol, Room 115
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Subject: AADD Letter of Support, SB 93

Dear Senator Wilson:

AADD, the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities strongly supports SB 93, authored by you and cosponsored by Senators Kiehl, Micciche, and Begich. This legislation will help to build Alaska's workforce enhancement program using the SHARP III model to expand the number of qualified professionals in our state using financial contributions from employers and other private contributors with no State General Funds.

AADD formed as a trade association in 1978 to support organizations statewide that serve Alaskans who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities of all ages. Today the association has almost 50 members ranging from large statewide service organizations to a small assisted living home organizations and single Care Coordinators. One of the large issues that AADD providers face is recruiting and retaining a quality workforce. The current workforce crisis for direct health care workers is both a national issue and one that will increase in urgency as the aging population requires increased services.

SHARP III will replace SHARP I and includes expansion of the positional of funding from the private section and the expansion of eligible services settings. This is exciting for the field serving those who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities to consider. The ability to use SHARP III to help recruit and retain quality staff is a sought after goal of providers.

Thank you for your leadership in sponsoring SB92. Best of luck with its passage and may it strengthen our services system.

Sincerely,

Lizette Stiehr
Executive Director
AADD



UAA/ISU Doctor of
Pharmacy Program
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Idaho State
UNIVERSITY
College of Pharmacy

3211 Providence Drive, PSB 113
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

April 2, 2019

Senator David Wilson
State Capitol Room 115
Juneau AK, 99801

Representative Ivy Spohnholz
State Capitol Room 421
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Senator Wilson and Representative Spohnholz,

Please accept this letter of support from the UAA/ISU Doctor of Pharmacy Program for SB93 and HB114. The Doctor of Pharmacy program here in Anchorage is a cooperative program with Idaho State University and University of Alaska Anchorage that delivers the ISU PharmD program here in Alaska without students ever leaving the state. The program is fully funded by student tuition with NO contribution from the Alaska State General Fund.

Established in 2016, we welcomed the inaugural Doctor of Pharmacy Class of 2020. This was a monumental event signaling the last state in the Union to establish pharmacy education at a State University. After enduring many years of extreme shortages in Alaska and difficult-to-fill positions, Alaska can now grow our own pharmacists —“Alaska Grown”.

Pre-pharmacy students leaving the state for pharmacy education often do not return, and pharmacists from the lower 48 states often do not stay in Alaska long term. This has been a particular burden in rural Alaska and has limited progressive clinical pharmacy services from fully advancing statewide. Alaskan pharmacies and health systems have long relied on staffing agencies and temporary pharmacists to fill vacancies. This less than ideal model for patient care tends to stifle growth, reduce continuity of care, and increase health care costs.

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects a need for at least 17 additional pharmacists per year in the state, not counting those working for the government or self-employed. A recent national analysis of pharmacist demand (found at pharmacymanpower.com) confirmed Alaska has had consistently moderate to high demand for pharmacists over the past two years despite increases in new graduates. Perhaps an even more compelling indicator for future demand is the aging pharmacist workforce and aging patient population in our state. More than one-third of pharmacists in Alaska are now above the age of 50 and the state's 65+ population is expected to increase 67% by 2022. This is not to mention the nationwide, steady growth in clinical roles and services provided by our profession.

The primary objective of the UAA/ISU partnership is the recruitment and education of pharmacy students who want to practice pharmacy in the state of Alaska after graduation. We support SHARP III because it expands eligibility opportunities for our graduates to new practice settings, new occupations, new employers, new locations, and new roles through-out Alaska. SHARP III is a private-public partnership with no impact to the Alaska General Fund.

SHARP is likely the best recruitment and retention tool in for health care workers in rural Alaska and our Alaskan pharmacy graduates are in the best position to fill those hard-to-fill jobs in rural Alaska. We fully support SB93/HB114 and respectfully ask you to move this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Wadsworth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "T".

Tom Wadsworth, PharmD, BCPS



SHARP Council
Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

Dear Co-Chairs:

Please accept this letter of Support for SHARP 3.

SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool has been vital to Physician Assistants and the patients they serve. The Alaska Academy of PAs firmly believes in the value of the SHARP program and model in providing high quality care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP 3 there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-1 and SHARP-2, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

SHARP 3 provides valuable state infrastructure, without additional state general funds, and will provide us the ability to expand the benefits of SHARP to areas that are not Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a require for SHARP 1.

The SHARP Program

- Increases access to care for underserved populations
- Supports prevention and early treatment which contributes to better patient health outcomes
- Improves health care provider organizations stability and sustainability by reducing turnover
- Supports communities where hiring and retaining health care providers is a challenge
- Enables health care providers to stay in communities and contribute to local economies directly and by servicing as an anchor position for other health care support staff who also contribute to local economy.

The Alaska Academy of PAs (AKAPA) support in expanding the SHARP programs as components of an Alaska Health Care System that provide access to health care for the most vulnerable in our state.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "m. f.", written over a light blue circular stamp.



Sunshine Community Health Center

HC89 Box 8190 • Talkeetna, Alaska 99676 • Mile 4.4 Talkeetna Spur Road • Telephone: (907) 733-2273 • Fax: (907) 733-1735
Willow Clinic: P.O. Box 1049 • Willow, Alaska 99688 • 24091 Long Lake Road • Telephone: (907) 495-4100 • Fax: (907) 495-4106

April 8, 2019

SHARP Council

Co-Chairs Eric Boyer & Rachel Gearhart

RE: Letter of Support for the Alaska SHARP III program

Dear Co-Chairs:

Sunshine Community Health Center is pleased to support the Alaska SHARP III program.

SHARP, as a recruitment and retention tool, has been extremely vital to Sunshine Community Health Center (SCHC). Our organization firmly believes in the value of the Alaska SHARP program/model in providing high quality health care to our state's citizens through an equitable distribution of health professionals throughout Alaska. With SHARP III there is a clear ability to expand (1) loan repayment, (2) partnership funding, and (3) establish a standard program administration fee. The strategy is to expand practitioner and site eligibilities beyond the strictures of SHARP-I and SHARP-II, and thereby increase the number and variety of health professionals and sites, like ours, who participate.

As an example of why the SHARP program and been so vital to SCHC and can be for other organizations, we recently hired a behavioral health provider. After many years of recruitment, we were able to secure this individual partially based on a potential SHARP opportunity. Current statistics state that there is \$1.56 trillion in total U.S. student loan debt. That is 44.7 million Americans with student loan debt in our country. Loan repayment is presumed to become one of the leading benefit offerings by employers. With the limited educational opportunities for professionals in our wonderful state, we must stay cutting edge in how we are able to recruit and retain individuals for the betterment of the wellbeing of all our citizens. Again, we find the Alaska SHARP program/model extremely vital.

We're eager to continue the momentum of SHARP and to support workforce development efforts in Alaska in this way. Please know that we adamantly support the Alaska SHARP III program and know that it will be a benefit to our state, communities and citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Melody West
Executive Director

**HONORING
The Children's Place**

The members of the Thirty-first Alaska State Legislature honor the Children's Place on the occasion of its 20th anniversary.

For the past two decades, the mission of the Children's Place in Wasilla, Alaska, has been "To offer hope and healing to children and families impacted by child abuse and neglect through a coordinated community response." The Children's Place fulfills this mission using a team approach that includes family advocates, medical providers, law enforcement officers, child protection workers, and the legal system.

The Children's Place provides a comfortable and safe location for victims as they are interviewed by law enforcement and child protective services investigators. Victims and their caregivers who come to The Children's Place are welcomed by highly trained and experienced professionals in a child-friendly atmosphere.

When children experience severe abuse, The Children's Place provides a safe place for them to talk about their experience once, as it is being recorded for evidence. The main goal is to make the process as comfortable as possible and to avoid causing any further distress. By doing so, the children can begin healing because they don't have to re-experience and repeat that traumatic event multiple times to multiple agencies.

Children receive medical evaluations, forensic interviews, advocacy, and referrals to mental health services by a coordinated team that provides support through the emotional, physical, and legal processes. In 2018, the leading experts in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) at The Children's Place provided services to 334 children, a record in one calendar year for the agency.

On April 13, 2019, a 1920s-theme gala – "The Promise" -- will mark the 20th anniversary of this amazing organization. It is with sincere appreciation that the members of the Thirty-first Alaska State Legislature commend The Children's Place for 20 years of outstanding service to Alaska's children and families.

Jody Simpson

From: Jenkins, Jerry <JJenkins@acmhs.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 7:50 AM
To: Sen. David Wilson
Cc: Tom Chard <tom.abha@gmail.com>
Subject: Support for SB 93

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Jody

Hello Senator Wilson. A quick note to thank you for your interest in and support of the SHARP Loan Repayment Program and leadership in sponsoring SB 93. As you well know from your work in The Valley, one of the major challenges of providing health care in Alaska is staffing. In my opinion and experience, the SHARP program has assisted immensely in recruiting and retaining professionals.

Prior to retiring as the Chief Executive Officer from Anchorage Community Mental Health Services, I personally saw SHARP benefit by helping to recruit and retain two psychiatrists, one psychiatric nurse practitioner, one psychiatric physician assistant and three licensed clinical social workers. All but the physician assistant continues to practice in Alaska. My experience with SHARP is one of the reasons and I did not hesitate in joining the SHARP Advisory Council when the opportunity arose last year.

In my opinion, your proposed SHARP legislation broadens the funding base by adding novel alternative funding sources as well as expanding eligible disciplines. Let me know if I can assist in helping to promote this legislation. Along this line I am writing my district legislator (Sen. Giessel) asking her to sign on as co-sponsor as well.

Sincerely,

j²

Jerry A. Jenkins, M.Ed., MAC

Chair, National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCC AP)

Commissioner, Alaska Commission for Behavioral Health Certification

President, Board of Directors, healthconnect Alaska

Immediate Past President, Alaska Behavioral Health Association (ABHA)

Consultant

Anchorage Community Mental Health Services

Fairbanks Community Mental Health Services

4020 Folker Street

Anchorage, AK 99508

907-261-5310- Office

jjenkins@acmhs.com

Our Vision is "wellness for everyone."

Our Mission is to promote recovery and wellness by providing consumer-driven behavioral healthcare services.

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