



January 31, 2018

Members of the House Labor & Commerce Committee:

The Alaska Dental Society (ADS) would like to discuss potential legislation by the House L&C committee to institute a temporary dental license.

A temporary license, which is issued by all of the other licensed health professions, would allow the dental board to issue a temporary license. The temporary license would provide a means of licensing an emergency replacement for a dental specialist or a dentist serving a community without additional dentists.

Dental specialists make up 21% of the dentists in Alaska and are spread across 8 different specialties. Given those small numbers filling an unexpected gap in coverage has proved problematic and in recent years has left holes in coverage. Many small communities have specialists who visit once a month and if that specialist is incapacitated it can take several months to restore coverage.

Small communities have struggled to recruit health practitioners and dentistry is no exception. Several communities, including Wrangell and Haines were unable to replace full time dentists and experienced gaps in coverage.

The ADS and the Alaska Dental Board believe a temporary dental license would help reduce gaps in coverage for Alaskan patients and would gladly discuss this issue in more detail with the House L&C.

Sincerely,

David Logan, DDS  
Executive Director, Alaska Dental Society