

April 23, 2024

RE: HB 202 Letter of Support

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

The joint mission of the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA) and the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB) is to advocate for programs and services that promote healthy, independent, productive Alaskans. AMHB/ABADA are statutorily charged with advising, planning, and coordinating behavioral health services and programs funded by the State of Alaska.

The Boards enthusiastically support HB 202, Opioid Overdose Drugs in Schools, a vital piece of legislation mandating the availability of opioid overdose reversal drugs in schools. This bill addresses a critical public health concern by proactively safeguarding the well-being of students, staff, and visitors in educational institutions. The opioid crisis poses a significant challenge in our communities, affecting individuals across all demographics. Given the potential for opioid overdoses in various settings, including schools, it is imperative that decisive action is taken to ensure a swift and effective response in emergencies.

The Boards recently partnered with MyHouse in Wasilla to build 400 Opioid Overdose Reversal kits which create a crucial window for people in crisis seeking emergency medical assistance and saves lives. By requiring schools to have opioid overdose reversal medications on hand, educators, staff, and administrators are empowered to respond promptly and effectively to opioid emergencies. This legislation also acknowledges the unpredictable nature of opioid overdoses and the importance of being prepared to respond swiftly. Ensuring opioid overdose reversal medications are readily available in schools equips educational institutions to address emergencies on the premises, during school-sponsored events, or while students are in transit. By incorporating opioid overdose reversal medications into the emergency response toolkit of schools, we send a clear message that the safety and well-being of our students are paramount.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



James Savage, Chair
Alaska Mental Health Board



Renee Schofield, Chair
Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

From: Susan A <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2024 7:58 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 202

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 202, which addresses the availability and administration of opioid overdose drugs in public schools. As a concerned citizen and advocate for public health, I believe that this bill is a critical step toward safeguarding our students and communities.

Background and Importance:

HB 202 recognizes the urgent need to equip schools with life-saving measures to combat opioid-related emergencies. By ensuring the availability of opioid overdose drugs in schools, we can significantly reduce the risk of fatalities and provide timely assistance to those in need.

Benefits of HB 202:

Rapid Response: Having opioid overdose drugs readily accessible in schools allows for immediate intervention during emergencies.

Lifesaving Measures: These drugs can reverse the effects of opioid overdoses, potentially saving lives.

Community Protection: Protecting our students also safeguards families, teachers, and the broader community.

Personal Connection: As an aunt and community member, I strongly believe that our schools should be equipped to handle emergencies effectively.

By supporting HB 202, we prioritize the well-being of our children and create safer learning environments.

I urge you to continue championing this bill and ensure its passage. Thank you for your dedication to public health and safety.

Susan Allmeroth
Two Rivers