

April 26, 2024

Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801



RE: Support for House Bill 202 – Opioid Overdose Drugs in Schools

Dear Representative Johnson,

The Alaska Children's Trust (ACT) offers our support for House Bill 202, which would require that every school district maintain a minimum of two opioid overdose drug kits within each school facility. Furthermore, it ensures that at least one individual, trained by the Alaska Department of Health, is present and available during all operational hours when school buildings are accessible to both students and the public. ACT supports policies that promote the health and wellbeing of Alaska's children. House Bill 202 does this by increasing access and awareness to overdose emergency care tailored to settings used frequently by children, youth, and their families.

House Bill 202 provides acknowledgement of the unpredictable nature of opioid overdoses and the importance of being able to respond quickly. Opioid overdose drugs can prevent death and severe harm in the case of overdose if administered within two to three minutes. The presence of opioid reversal drugs in schools is not just a preventative measure, but a necessary response to the growing risk of opioid-related incidences. Physical school buildings often act as venues for many out-of-school time programs or community events. Giving schools and staff the tools and knowledge needed to respond appropriately is essential to promoting the health and well-being of children and youth throughout Alaska.

According to the Alaska Department of Health, opioid overdoses in Alaska increased by over 150% in 2021, continuing an alarming trend. Most recent data from Kids Count indicates that about 3,000 teens age 12 to 17 have reported abusing alcohol or drugs in Alaska. Anchorage School District's Secondary Education Director has stated that in most cases concerning Anchorage students, opioids were taken without their knowledge, further highlighting the necessity of rapid response in an overdose situation.

House Bill 202 would support Alaska's public education system in addressing the opioid overdose crisis impacting children, youth, and families. This legislation is an important step in equipping educators and other professionals who work with children and youth with the tools and knowledge needed to respond with swiftness. We appreciate you bringing forward this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TJ Storrs'.

Trevor J. Storrs
President & CEO
Alaska Children's Trust

Alaska Children's Trust

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