



March 7, 2014

The Honorable Kurt Olson  
House of Representatives  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: House Bill 250

Dear Rep. Olson,

On behalf of ASHNHA members, I am writing this letter in support of HB 250, your legislation regarding medical malpractice. As we understand it, this bill renders expressions of sympathy, responsibility or apology inadmissible as evidence in a medical malpractice case.

As health care providers, our members care for patients and their loved ones at the most difficult and vulnerable times in their lives. Our patients are sometimes facing life-limiting injuries, illnesses or death. Despite the best efforts of caregivers, unanticipated outcomes can occur. At these crucial times, we need to empower our caregivers to provide emotional as well as physical support. A statement of sympathy or condolence should not be viewed as an admission of fault, but as a compassionate human response to emotional pain.

Our current system prevents providers from fully communicating with patients out of concern about the possible legal consequences. HB 250 helps providers to serve with humanity without the fear that their statements of compassion might be used against them in a medical malpractice case. We believe that this legislation will help provide a climate for open and transparent communication, which is essential to excellent patient care.

We understand that other states have passed similar legislation and we support your efforts to secure passage of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your sponsorship of this bill. We would be happy to answer any questions about our support for this legislation.

Sincerely,

Karen Perdue  
President/CEO