



# UAA Center for Human Development

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

To: Members of the Health and Social Services Committee,  
State of Alaska House of Representatives  
Date: March 17, 2014  
RE: Support of HB 361, An Act Related to Licensing of Behavior Analysts.

Honorable House members:

My name is Dr. Richard A Kiefer-O'Donnell. I serve as the Associate Director of the Center for Human Development. The Center is the federally-mandated, *University Center of Excellence for Disabilities*, charged with serving the entire state of Alaska. We are housed through UAA, but have a statewide mission to support all individuals with disabilities and their families. I would like to add my name in support of HB 361 which would establish a state license for those eligible professionals who wish to meet the needs of individuals with intense behavioral needs, be they with or without disabilities. This bill, should it become law, is a pivot step in a series of workforce development and capacity building activities that actually started in 2007, when The Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education, in its report, ***Autism Issues and Needs: Findings and Recommendations***, suggested two related Action Items :

1. Enlist Alaska's universities' support and collaboration in developing certification and degree programs for students interested in specializing in autism interventions;
2. Build capacity for all early intervention and childcare programs, and school districts, to adopt evidence-based, non-aversive behavioral interventions, such as positive behavioral support and best practice interventions with proven outcomes; and
3. Remove licensing barriers that prevent out-of-state autism specialists from practicing in Alaska. ([http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Documents/Publications/pdf/2006\\_autism.pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Documents/Publications/pdf/2006_autism.pdf) )

Starting in late 2008, the State of Alaska, through a partnership made up of variety of state agency, school district, families and the Center for Human Development, implemented an Action Plan into motion, associated with advanced graduate-level training that developed practitioners who were sufficiently skilled and experienced to respond to the needs of individuals with highly challenging behaviors, including children, teens and adults with Autism. Since its inception in the winter of 2009, more than 21 highly skilled professional have completed this 2 ½ year intensive program of study, with another 17 post-Master's level professionals in the pipeline to finish in 18 months.

This bill, a product of the work of the Autism Insurance Task Force, is the last needed step for these skilled practitioners to fully assume their roles. Like the action already taken by 19 states over the last 3 years, you are being asked to consider the passage of this measure. It will establish a cost-efficient and effective system to license these professionals, based in part of sustaining in good status, their national credentials and meeting ongoing CEU-based training requirements. As such, I strongly encourage to vote in support of this bill. Doing so demonstrates continued support of children and youth with intense behavioral needs, and their families.

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