

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Interim:
716 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2133
Phone: 907-269-0100
Fax: 907-269-0105
Rep.Lance.Pruitt@akleg.gov



Session:
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone: 907-465-3438
Fax: 907-465-4565
Toll Free: 888-478-3438

REPRESENTATIVE LANCE PRUITT HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

Sponsor Statement

HB 369

An Act relating to restrictions on the criminal prosecution for certain offenses for a person who seeks medical assistance for a person experiencing a drug overdose.

Alaska suffers from some of the highest rates of drug overdose in the nation, and these figures are rising at an alarming rate. The window to save an individual experiencing a life-threatening drug overdose is narrow, and response time is critical. Many individuals, as well as their friends and family, will hesitate or choose not to contact emergency medical services for fear of criminal repercussions relating to the controlled substance. HB 369 restricts prosecution of individuals who contact emergency medical services and stay with the person experiencing a life-threatening overdose until emergency personnel arrive and make contact. The proposed legislation also requires that the caller comply with responding emergency medical personnel or public safety officers to provide any necessary information.

The individual experiencing the overdose is already granted protection from criminal charges when they are submitted for medical attention. For many in this condition, this also serves as an important point of contact for a referral to an agency that can help with their substance abuse. Unfortunately, most individuals experiencing a life-threatening overdose are unable to contact emergency services for themselves, and are at the mercy of the discretion of other persons present.

Alaskans are working hard to fight the epidemic of abuse of controlled substances, including illegal and prescription drugs. The purpose of providing assistance, regulation and legal ramifications for misuse of pharmaceuticals or use of illegal drugs is to protect our society and those who currently suffer from substance abuse addictions. The passage of this bill can reduce the number of overdose deaths by restricting prosecution of a person who seeks in good faith emergency medical services for another individual experiencing a life-threatening drug overdose.