



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Law

Office of the Attorney General

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September 3, 2013

Beverly Smith
Christian Science Committee on Publication in Alaska
P.O. Box 240976
Douglas, AK 99829

Re: Christian Science Nurses

Dear Ms. Smith:

I appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and Mr. Bemis in April, along with the Lieutenant Governor. I apologize for the delay in getting back to you on this subject, but the press of other business prevented an earlier response.

Following our meeting, I did assign an Assistant Attorney General to research the position taken by the Board. I understand that you have approached the Board more than once about adopting a policy that would allow your spiritual caregivers to refer to themselves as "Christian Science Nurses," as you do in some other jurisdictions.

I am sorry to have to inform you that, based on our independent review, we believe the Board's position is supported by, and consistent with, the Alaska statutes regulating the practice of nursing. Just as it is a class B misdemeanor for a person to employ "as a nurse" a person who is not licensed to practice nursing (AS 08.68.340(a)(3)), it is similarly illegal for a person to use in connection with the person's name a designation that implies the person is a licensed nurse unless the person actually is licensed (AS 08.68.340(a)(4)).

Accordingly, I cannot quarrel with the Board's previously stated position. Likewise, I certainly have no quarrel with the spiritual services offered by your church, or the sincerity with which those services are offered. Spiritual caregiving should always be an option in the panoply of medical treatment available in the health care field. However, the use of the word "nurse" in that context – however well-intentioned – can be

Ms. Beverly Smith
Re: Christian Science Nurses

September 3, 2013
Page 2 of 2

misleading, and the fact is it is not permitted under Alaska law. Accordingly, a legislative solution may be the best course for your organization to pursue at this juncture.

Thank you for your patience in this matter and let me know if you have any additional comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael C. Geraghty", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael C. Geraghty
Attorney General

cc: Lt. Governor Mead Treadwell
Ken Bemis, bemisk@csps.com, Christian Science Committee on Publication