



March 13, 2017

The Honorable Bill Walker
Governor of Alaska
PO Box 110001
Juneau, AK. 99801

Dear Governor Walker:

The Alaska Dental Society (ADS) is writing in support of HB159 and SB 79.

As the opioid public health crisis in Alaska continues, we have the opportunity to serve a key role in educating our communities and our patients about the devastation of opioids, both by reducing the number of prescriptions written and by offering non-opiate alternatives for acute dental pain.

There is a documented epidemic of opioid and heroin abuse in Alaska. The ADS has recognized the need for the responsible use and prescribing of prescription opiates by Alaskan dentists. The ADS is committed to informing our members of the latest research and to keeping you abreast of the latest findings on the efficacy of analgesics and responsible dosing. We share a special rapport with our patients allowing us to educate them about the addictive potential of prescribed opiates and change their expectations for opiate pain medications.

As ethical providers of healthcare, we have an obligation to educate ourselves about safe prescribing, about how to have a frank discussion with patients and, in the case of minors, their parents or caregivers, as well as how to identify possible abuse and recommend help. The Alaska Dental Society has developed guidelines for its members to aid in the proper prescribing of opioids and alternative pain control methods. We welcome other prescribers to utilize the guide where appropriate.

We support and thank you for proposing HB159 and SB79.

Dr. Jessica Blanco
Governmental Affairs Chair, Alaska Dental Society