

# Alaska State Medical Association

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March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

The Honorable Cathy Giessel  
Alaska State Senate  
State Capitol Room 111  
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SB 120 "An Act relating to administration of psychotropic medication to a patient without the patient's informed consent"

Dear Senator Giessel:


The Alaska State Medical Association (ASMA) represents physicians statewide and is primarily concerned with the health of all Alaskans.

ASMA would like to express its support for Senate Bill 120. Alaska's current law regarding crisis medication is a balanced approach to protecting a patient's right to consent to treatment while also protecting the patient when they are in a state of crisis. Since the original law was adopted the use of Physician Assistants and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses has increased and Designated Evaluation and Treatment Centers such as Alaska Psychiatric Institute rely on them to assist in delivering health care.

Current law allows Advanced Practice Registered Nurses to make the determination that that a crisis situation exists but does not authorize them to order the medication. ASMA agrees that the law should be amended to allow Physician Assistants and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses to order psychotropic medication and believes this will benefit patient health and safety.

We ask that you pass SB 120.

Sincerely,

  
Michael Haugen  
Executive Director  
Alaska State Medical Association

# Full Spectrum Health



To Whom it may concern,

As a small business owner, and as a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, I am in support of SB120 as written to include Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners as providers to order crises medications. This intervention is within the scope of practice of this type of professional, and expanding these privileges allows patients to benefit from increased access to qualified, competent care.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracey Wiese' in a cursive, flowing script.

Dr. Tracey Wiese, APRN

Full Spectrum Health, LLC  
307 E Northern Lights, Ste 201  
Anchorage, AK 99502  
Fax 1-888-974-0807  
Phone 907-229-9766

**February 18, 2020**

**The Honorable Cathy Giessel  
President of the Alaska Senate  
Alaska Senate  
State Capitol Room 111  
Juneau AK, 99801**

**Dear Senator Giessel:**

**We are writing in support of SB 120, a bill that will allow advanced practice nurses (APRNs) and physician assistants (PAs) to prescribe crisis period medications for patients during hospitalization.**

**We believe it's vital that the provider who knows the patient best be able to prescribe medications, not only routinely, but in a crisis as well. The Joint Commission requires that the licensed independent practitioner most familiar with the patient be responsible for that patient's care. Currently, the statute requires a physician to give these orders, and this physician may know very little about the patient.**

**APRNs and PAs already utilize the same medications that are typically ordered during crisis periods, so they are very familiar with risks, benefits, and side effects. APRNs and PAs are also able to petition for court-ordered, involuntary medications, without the assistance of a physician. SB 120 would make their scope of practice consistent with current practices. This is not a major change from what they already do, and would improve patient care.**

**Given the current status of the statute, the nurses are having to call a physician who may or may not be familiar with the patient or crisis medications and try to get an order – sometimes while the APRN or PA is standing right there. Oftentimes the psychiatrist is a temporary or locums provider unfamiliar with Alaska practice and mental health laws, giving them pause to utilize crisis medications for a patient they often don't know. This is not the best situation for our most vulnerable patients, as being in a crisis is very unsafe, not just from an injury standpoint, but due to the neurological harm that can result from prolonged psychosis and agitation.**

**As you know, Alaska has a dearth of psychiatric providers. Because of this, API has been forced to frequently utilize contractors and locum tenens providers to assist with the care of our most seriously mentally ill. The psychiatric APRNs and one psychiatric PA at API have remained constant over the past 4 years and have been providing the majority of patient care for the past year. SB 120 would permit continuity of care by those in position to know what's best for their patient at the time of crisis.**



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In closing, we are very much in support of SB 120. It is the best practice for our patients, meets standards, and is not beyond the scope of APRNs and PAs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
ANTHONY BLANFORD MD

  
  
MICHAEL R. ALEXANDER MD .

  
 ANP

Anthony Blanford MD  
Michael Alexander MD  
Maria Rollins PA  
Sean Farley ANP  
Gerry Martone ANP  
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