

March 12, 2021

Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson
State Capitol Room 417
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 80

Dear Senator Gray-Jackson:

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) – Alaska Chapter enthusiastically endorses the passage of SB 80, “Public Schools: Mental Health Education.”

The burden of mental illness in Alaska continues to grow and the stigma associated with mental illness presents barriers to care and to services. Mental illness not only impacts individuals but is a public health issue that also affects families and communities. Despite the movement towards mental health awareness, many gaps still exist for those suffering with mental illness. The inclusion of mental health in the K-12 school curriculum will go a long way toward closing this gap. Education is an effective way of reducing the stigma and barriers that surround mental health. Educating our students on mental health will empower them to reach out for services earlier, which has been shown to improve outcomes.

Social workers are one of the largest providers of mental health services in the United States and both the NASW and NASW-AK are committed to spreading awareness and understanding of mental health needs. Therefore, the board of the National Association of Social Workers – Alaska Chapter strongly supports this bill.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this very important legislation.

Most Respectfully,



Nina Corbett, MSW, LCSW-NC
National Association of Social Workers
Alaska Chapter President