

The Honorable Tiffany Zulkosky, Co-Chair
The Honorable Liz Snyder, Co-Chair
House Health and Social Services Committee

Dear Co-Chair Zulkosky and Co-Chair Snyder:

The Alaska Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians is in strong support of SB 70 “An act relating to opioid overdose drugs and providing for an effective date.”

As emergency medicine providers, we care for vulnerable Alaskans experiencing opioid use disorder. We have not been spared from the tragedy of the opioid crisis as 623 Alaskans have lost their lives to opioid overdose between 2010 and 2017¹. Using naloxone in a timely manner is a safe and rapidly effective treatment for opioid overdose; its role in the fight against the opioid crisis cannot be understated. Recognizing the importance of naloxone, the state passed a standing order allowing for the distribution of naloxone to first responders, the department of public safety and corrections, the general public, as well as local and regional overdose response programs. Through this program, thousands of naloxone kits have been distributed in our state. The kits are not wasted. Studies have shown a lower rate of opioid deaths and estimate one life saved per 227 kits distributed². Moreover, the widespread use of naloxone also saves money. The opioid crisis disproportionately affects young Alaskans; the premature death or disability of whom harms our state’s economy and growth. No doubt, this past year has been fraught with challenges. Nonetheless, we cannot let the COVID-19 pandemic let us lose focus from the preexisting opioid crisis, which continues to smolder in our communities.


For these reasons, we do not want the standing order to expire. We strongly support SB 70, removing the sunset provision on the standing order for naloxone. Similar standing orders for naloxone have been implemented in 42 states, and there is no reason for Alaska to stop this practice.

¹ “Opioid Epidemic in Alaska.” *Opioids Home*, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, 2021, dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Director/Pages/opioids/home.aspx.

² McDonald, Rebecca, and John Strang. “Are take-home naloxone programmes effective? Systematic review utilizing application of the Bradford Hill criteria.” *Addiction (Abingdon, England)* vol. 111,7 (2016): 1177-87. doi:10.1111/add.13326

Let's continue to keep Alaskans safe by passing SB 70.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Adams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Helen" and last name "Adams" clearly legible.

Helen Adams, MD
Anchorage, Alaska / AK ACEP Board Member
helen.call.adams@gmail.com / (907) 570-6633

cc: Senator David Wilson, Chair Senate Health and Social Services