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SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 145: EXPAND PHARMACIST AUTHORITY

Passage of House Bill 145, “The Pharmacist Mobilization Act,” increases access to care and ensures Alaska’s pharmacists are reimbursed when providing services.

I am introducing it at the request of the Alaska Pharmacists Association in partnership with the Alaska Board of Pharmacy and the University of Alaska/Idaho State Doctor of Pharmacy Program.

The coronavirus pandemic has shown that pharmacists can engage at an elevated level to help deliver necessary healthcare to all Alaskans. Pharmacists have provided COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, and telehealth visits, and have helped patients manage chronic health conditions. This bill will update outdated statute so pharmacists can continue providing these services.

HB 145 defines the patient care services that pharmacists and pharmacy support staff can independently provide, allows pharmacist technicians to administer vaccines when under the direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist, and empowers the Board of Pharmacy to regulate pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy support staff who provide these services.

Furthermore, the bill updates the current provider anti-discrimination statute to support insurance coverage of these patient care services when provided by a pharmacist. Currently, pharmacists are one of the only healthcare professionals not listed in this statute.

HB 145 largely updates outdated statutes to align with current practices. Its passage benefits Alaskans by increasing healthcare access during and after the pandemic. Please support this common sense, housekeeping bill that will help your local, patient-oriented pharmacies continue to provide essential services.