

April 14, 2021

Representative Liz Snyder
District 27, Anchorage
State Capital,
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: HB 145 - Expand Pharmacist Authority

Dear Representative Snyder,

I write in unqualified support of passage of HB 145.

This public policy is critically needed.

Public health is the basis of economic function and education of our students. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly underscored this fact.

When businesses shut down, schools closed and citizens locked down...healthcare providers were on the job, meeting life needs of Alaskans. Pharmacists were vital members of the public health team. Pharmacists and their businesses stayed open.

Physicians and nurses are rightly recognized as front-line workforce. But behind them stood **pharmacists, without whom medications could not have been provided.**

In 2015, with the passage of SB 71 (Chapter 16 SLA 15), pharmacists began administering (and being reimbursed for) vaccinations in their facilities. That made them a critical vaccine access point for Alaskans during the pandemic. If anyone tells you that pharmacists don't know how to administer vaccinations, remind them that they have been safely doing it for several years.

Pharmacists today are required to be educated at the doctoral level. They are the experts on pharmacokinetics (the action of bioactive chemicals on the human body systems). Pharmacists are consulted countless times a day by physicians and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses regarding pharmacologic treatment, drug interactions, availability and cost.

Its time to remove the "middle man" in the management of chronic diseases. Pharmacists are the experts in the use of prescription and over-the-counter medications in the management of chronic disease. HB 145, as written, will increase access to care and reduce the cost to Alaskans.

I applaud the **provisions related to pharmacy technicians.** The bill places the Board of Pharmacy as the regulatory oversight for this group of assistive personnel. The bill allows the pharmacy technician to administer vaccinations with the safeguard of Board regulation. This piece of public safety oversight is not present for the medical assistants who work in nearly all the clinics in Alaska; I could tell you stories of errors made by medical assistants giving vaccinations. **HB 145 recognizes the professional expertise and oversight of the pharmacy technician.**

I write in unqualified support of HB 145 and urge legislators to expeditiously pass this public policy. It should be viewed as a piece of critical infrastructure for our state.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine A. Giessel". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Catherine A. Giessel, MS, RN, APRN, FAANP
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Anchorage, Alaska 99516