



“We help people live their own best lives”

An NCADD Affiliate

February 28, 2022

The Honorable Adam Wool
State Capitol Room 501
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Alaska HB 203: Secure Firearm Storage

Dear Representative Wool,

JAMHI Health & Wellness is a non-profit, integrated delivery system providing behavioral health, primary care, housing and wellness services in the greater Juneau area. Through a staff of 88, we serve almost 1500 people a year. Those served include adults with mental illness, youth with emotional disturbance, persons with substance use disorders, and anyone in our community who needs affordable, high-quality primary care. The board of directors, composed of 11 people who volunteer their time, experience and expertise to guide the organization, are writing to express our collective support for addressing the secure storage of firearms through HB 203.

The board supports this legislation because we are concerned about the availability of unsecured firearms in our community and throughout Alaska, which has the potential for weapon misuse and tragic impacts. We are especially concerned about suicide risks for children and adults, and the negative, lifelong impact that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) have on people’s quality of life, social success and their physical health. Having multiple ACES is very common in the population that we serve.

Making sure that firearms are securely stored is a critical responsibility that comes with gun ownership. Statistics gathered on Alaska highlight that despite the important efforts of a number of groups and organizations to educate the public on secure storage, unauthorized access to firearms remains readily available for a high percentage of children, teens and others. We support the adoption of HB 203 as a prudent element to work in concert with on-going educational efforts toward eliminating the tragedies and traumas that can result from access to improperly secured firearms.

Sincerely,

Joan Cahill

Joan Cahill
President

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