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## **Modernization of Statutes and Regulations regarding Death Certificates, DNR, and orders for Life Sustaining Treatment**

### **CURRENT CONCERNS:**

Alaska Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) lack signature authority for three elements to care for the seriously ill: Death Certificates, Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders, and the Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST). This causes several significant and exponential problems for Alaskans and their families. These issues that affect care include:

1. **Delays** for families navigating post-mortem matters, such as social security applications and benefits that require death certificates.
2. **Increased costs** to the patient, as currently physicians are required to repeat the work already completed by an APRN in order to write a DNR or sign a death certificate.
3. **Obstruction** of care for the seriously ill who wish to define their healthcare preferences and values through discussions with their APRN.
4. **Patient Harm** occurring due to inadequate documentation of patient healthcare preferences.

### **CURRENT PRACTICE AUTHORITY NATIONWIDE FOR POLST/DNR/Death Certificates:**

1. Alaska was one of the first states in the nation to authorize full practice authority for APRNs starting with Advanced Nurse Practitioners in 1984.
2. APRN Full Practice Scope is in place for 24 states plus Washington D.C.
3. Alaska is the **ONLY** state that *EXCLUDES* APRN Signature Authority for all three items of serious illness, including DNR, POLST, and Death Certificates.
4. When considering the entire U.S., APRN Signature Authority for DNR and/or POLST is granted in 34 states plus Washington D.C., and APRN Signature Authority for death certificates is granted in 37 states plus Washington D.C.

### **SOLUTION/PATHWAY FORWARD:**

1. **HB 392 is the solution/path forward.** HB 392 updates Alaska statutes to ensure safe, timely and cost-effective care for Alaskan patients and accurately reflects the full scope of practice for APRNs by granting APRNs:
  - a. Signature Authority for death certificates (AS 18.50.230)
  - b. Signature authority for DNR orders (AS 13.52.065), (AS 08.68.700)
  - c. Signature authority for the POLST (7AAC.16.010)