

Alaska State Senate
Senator Forrest Dunbar

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CSSB 166(L&C): MENTAL HEALTH/PSYCHEDELIC MED. TASK FORCE

Senate Bill 166 establishes the Alaska Mental Health and Psychedelic Medicine Task Force. The goal of this legislation is to be ready should the federal government approve psychedelics for medicinal use; it is not the intent of this bill to legalize these substances.

Conditions such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, substance-use disorders, and TBI are highly prevalent in Alaska, particularly among veterans and survivors of domestic violence. Advanced trials show that psychedelic-assisted therapies can be effective in treating these conditions.

The Task Force will explore how psychedelic-assisted therapies would fit into Alaska's healthcare system. It will meet at least four times, submit a report of recommendations to the legislature and the governor by December 31st, 2024, and terminate at the convening of the Thirty-Fourth Legislature. Proposed members include healthcare professionals, Alaska Native communities, veterans, and mental health advocates.

The Task Force will address questions such as what barriers exist to the implementation and access of these therapies, what licensing and regulatory requirements should exist, and other guidelines that may be appropriate for the safe integration of psychedelic medicine into Alaska's healthcare framework.

On February 9th, 2024, the FDA accepted a new drug application for MDMA for treatment of PTSD, with a decision expected this August. I urge timely passage of SB 166 to ensure that Alaska is prepared to consider these treatments in addressing mental health challenges.