

March 14, 2024

Senate Health and Social Services Committee  
re HB 57

Through the Chair and to the Committee,

I am writing this testimony in support of HB57. It is a critical piece of legislation that ensures progressive improvement and maintenance of excellent care provided to the Alaska population by prehospital Emergency Medical Services.

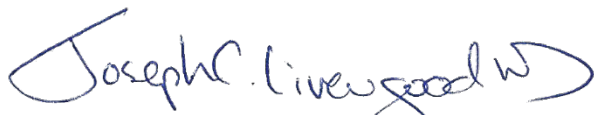
I serve as Medical Director for multiple EMS agencies including the Division of Forestry and Fire Protection, Division of Mining Land and Water, BLM / Alaska Fire Service, US Forest Service, City of Ketchikan, City of Craig, Ketchikan Gateway Borough and Whitestone. The critical review of patient contacts and emergency response identifies opportunity for improvement for individual responders, the agency and EMS as a whole. This requires open discussion in a protected environment without the concern of discovery by lawyers looking to assign fault. The fear of discovery stifles these conversations and limits my ability as a medical director to identify and improve our processes.

This also affects access to healthcare throughout rural Alaska where the majority of EMS agencies are staffed by volunteers including volunteer medical directors. If not protected by legislation, participation as volunteers may be limited and the highest level that any EMS agency may function without a medical director is EMT1.

This protection is already provided in the state within the hospital medical environment. It is designed to protect patients and improve their care. The legal access to identify and prosecute actions that are appropriate and required shall remain in place.

Thank you all for your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph C. Livengood MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Joseph C. Livengood, MD, NRP, FACS  
joe.livengood@kagoonagroup.com  
907.370.2533  
Fairbanks & Ketchikan