

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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EDUCATION

ETHICS

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

JUDICIARY

TRANSPORTATION

SENATOR Löki Gale Tobin

## Senate Bill 115: Sponsor Statement

We have all heard about long wait times and difficulty accessing care across Alaska which frustrates patients and creates impediments to quick diagnosis and treatment. Senate Bill 115 would allow experienced physician assistants to practice medical care independently to the fullest extent of their licensing, thus increasing the capacity of our medical system and reducing unnecessarily strict regulations on physician assistants.

Senate Bill 115 grants experienced physician assistants the flexibility to increase their ability to see and treat patients, which will benefit the capacity of Alaska's medical system. This also maintains the collaborative agreement structure currently in place for less experienced physician assistants.

Alaska has a demonstrated need for increasing accessible medical care, reducing high medical costs, and decreasing barriers to experienced medical practitioners across Alaska. Over 90% of the physician assistants in Alaska practice in rural areas. Increasing the medical care available locally in rural Alaska produces better outcomes and less expensive care. This also allows patients to stay in their home communities, thereby reducing strain on hub communities. Additionally, Alaskans will be able to receive care in their place of home, maintaining their support networks and reducing the need for costly inpatient services.

Senate Bill 115 does not sacrifice medical rigor or oversight, but simply allows experienced and licensed physician assistants to continue to offer high quality medical care within their scope of practice. Thank you for considering this prudent legislation.