

May 6, 2024

Dear House, Labor and Commerce Committee,

As an Emergency Medicine physician who has practiced in Alaska for the last 9 years I wanted to reach out to voice my opposition to SB115 regarding the PA scope of practice. While I believe the goal of this bill is to increase access to primary care in remote and resource poor areas, in its current form, this is a misguided bill that will only weaken the current medical system in the state and open up opportunities for untrained/poorly trained PA's to practice medicine outside of their scope without appropriate supervision.

A PA is not a physician, has far less training as a physician, and while they serve a valuable role in our health system should not be allowed to practice independently of appropriate physician oversight. I feel that if the goal of the legislature is to work to increase access to primary care, this bill should include limitations solely for PA practice in Primary Care and should not include any other specialties such as dermatology or addiction medicine. Even physicians need substantial subspecialty training to practice in these areas, encompassing 4,000 hours yearly over multiple years to gain competency in these specialties, and this is after 4 years of medical school and possibly residency training.

Alaska doesn't need more inexperienced dermatologists or other subspecialists. Alaska needs more primary care providers, a role that is well suited for PA's with appropriate physician oversight. Please reject the bill in its current form and bring back a plan that address the actual problem we are trying to solve: access to basic medical care in resource poor areas of the state.

I am always happy to discuss further at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Jake Miss, MD