

## **Subject: Oppose HB 70 – Emergency Medical Services to Operational Canines**

Dear Representative Calvin Schrage ,

My name is Gabriella Keller, and I am the hospital manager of Hillside Pet Clinic in Anchorage, Alaska. I am writing to express my and my medical teams STRONG opposition to **HB 70**, particularly **Section 18.08.093**, which would allow emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and mobile intensive care paramedics (MICPs) to provide emergency medical services to operational canines without the necessary veterinary training, licensing, or oversight.

While I understand the intention behind this bill is to provide timely emergency care to operational canines, I have serious concerns about the risks it poses. As someone who works closely with animal care, it is crucial that only trained veterinary professionals be responsible for diagnosing and treating animals, particularly in emergency situations. The bill as written could present serious risks to both the animals and emergency responders.

### **Key Concerns:**

- **Lack of Veterinary Expertise:** EMTs and MICPs are not trained to provide veterinary care, which could jeopardize animal health.
- **Insufficient Training:** The bill allows individuals to practice veterinary care without American Veterinarian Accredited Association accredited formal education, potentially compromising competent care standards. Training for EMTs and MICPs involves a 3-day TECC (Tactical Emergency Casualty Care) training for operational canines, or K9-TECC, and aims to equip first responders with the skills to provide pre-hospital trauma care to injured operational canines.
  - Success in emergency care is very dependent on making critical decisions rapidly with an expansive knowledge base and clinical experience. This simply cannot be taught in a three-day course. While there is an overlap in all medical fields, there are critical differences between animals and humans.
- **The bill specifically references no direct or indirect supervision by a veterinarian.** This bill allows the practicing of veterinary medicine independently without a license. Indirect veterinary supervision is readily available via telemedicine.
- **No Veterinary Regulatory Oversight:** The Alaska Board of Veterinary Examiners has not had input into this legislation. Without a regulatory body to monitor these practices, there is no accountability for potential errors. Medical protocols should be developed through collaboration among professionals, not by a single veterinarian, to ensure they meet appropriate standards and avoid conflicts of interest.

Evidence-based practices highlight the critical need for veterinary expertise in emergency care, the potential risks of allowing non-veterinary professionals to perform procedures without adequate training or oversight, and the value of collaborative models that include veterinary professionals.

As a [veterinarian/veterinary professional/concerned member of the community], I strongly believe that the best way forward is to create an **Emergency Veterinary Advisory Group** consisting of veterinarians, EMS professionals, and other stakeholders rather than pass this bill. This group would collaboratively develop clear, balanced guidelines for emergency animal care that address public safety while maintaining the integrity of veterinary practice.

I respectfully urge you to **oppose HB 70** and support **a more thoughtful, collaborative approach to addressing the emergency care needs of operational canines in Alaska.**

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your support in protecting the welfare of operational canines and the integrity of veterinary care in our state.

Sincerely,

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