

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE

March 17, 2015

1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Mia Costello, Chair
Senator Cathy Giessel, Vice Chair
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Gary Stevens
Senator Johnny Ellis

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

Alaska Workers' Compensation Board

Pamela Cline - Wasilla
Chuck Collins Jr. - Juneau
Jacob Howdeshell - Soldotna
Linda Hutchings - Soldotna
Rick Traini - Anchorage
Patricia Vollendorf - Anchorage
Lake Williams - Fairbanks
Robert Weel - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED on 3/31/2015

Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission

Andrew Hemenway - Juneau

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED on 3/31/2015

SENATE BILL NO. 29

"An Act relating to the membership of the State Medical Board."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 14

"An Act relating to the appointment of a mobile intensive care paramedic to the State Medical Board; relating to medical review organizations; relating to immunity pertaining to automated external defibrillators; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 71

"An Act relating to the practice of pharmacy; and relating to the administration of vaccines and related emergency medications."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 29

SHORT TITLE: STATE MEDICAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) MEYER

01/23/15	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/23/15	(S)	L&C, FIN
03/17/15	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 14

SHORT TITLE: EMERGENCY MED. SERVICES; DEFIBRILLATORS

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) COGHILL

01/21/15	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/16/15
01/21/15	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/15	(S)	L&C, JUD, FIN
03/17/15	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 71

SHORT TITLE: VACCINE CERTIFICATION FOR PHARMACISTS

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) GIESSEL BY REQUEST

03/11/15	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/11/15	(S)	L&C
03/17/15	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

JORDAN SHILLING, Staff
Senator John Coghill
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented SB 14 on behalf of the sponsor.

SENATOR JOHN COGHILL
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 14.

THOMAS MEYER, President
Paramedic Association of Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 14.

DON HUDSEN, MD.
Anchorage, Alaska,

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 14.

MITCH FLYNN, Fire Chief
Steese Volunteer Fire Department
Fairbanks, Alaska,

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 14.

ROBERT M. VOSTRY, representing himself
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 14.

KATHLEEN MCLERON, representing herself
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 14.

SARA CHAMBERS, Director
Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained that the fiscal notes for SB 14 and SB 71.

JANE CONWAY, Staff
Senator Cathy Giessel
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered a sectional analysis for SB 71

CHAD HOPE, Pharmacy Program Manager
Medicaid Assistance Administration
Division of Health Care Services
Department of Health and Social Services
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Discussed the fiscal note for SB 71.

SCOTT WATTS, representing himself
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as a pharmacist in support of SB 71.

JASON TAPLEY, representing himself
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as a pharmacist in support of SB 71.

BARRY CHRISTENSEN, Co-Chair
Alaska Pharmacist Association
Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 71.

RYAN RUGGLES, District Pharmacy Manager
Carrs Safeway Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 71.

AMBER BRIGGS representing herself
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as a pharmacist in support of SB 71.

LIS HOUCHEN, Northwest Regional Director
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
Olympia, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 71.

ANDREW HEMENWAY, Appointee
Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission.

PAMELA CLINE, Appointee
Workers' Compensation Board
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Board.

CHUCK COLLINS JR., Appointee
Alaska Workers' Compensation Board
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Board.

JACOB HOWDESHELL, Appointee
Workers' Compensation Board
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Board.

LINDA HUTCHINGS, Appointee
Alaska Workers' Compensation Board
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Board.

RICK TRAINI, Appointee
Workers' Compensation Board
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Board.

PATRICIA VOLLENDORF, Appointee
Alaska Workers' Compensation Board
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Board.

LAKE WILLIAMS, Appointee
Alaska Workers' Compensation Board
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Board.

ROBERT WEEL, Appointee
Workers' Compensation Board
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Board.

ACTION NARRATIVE

1:30:53 PM

CHAIR MIA COSTELLO called the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Ellis, Meyer, and Chair Costello. Senators Stevens and Giessel joined the committee soon thereafter.

SB 29-STATE MEDICAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP

[1:32:23 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO announced the consideration of SB 29. "An Act relating to the membership of the State Medical Board."

SENATOR KEVIN MEYER, speaking as sponsor, advised that SB 29 adds a mobile intensive care paramedic (MICP) seat to the State Medical Board. He introduced the bill at the request of a constituent and afterward became aware of Senator Coghill's SB 14 that is broader in scope. He deferred his bill to Senator Coghill's more comprehensive legislation.

[1:33:19 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS joined the committee.

CHAIR COSTELLO held SB 29 in committee.

SB 14-EMERGENCY MED. SERVICES; DEFIBRILLATORS

[1:33:42 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO announced the consideration of SB 14. "An Act relating to the appointment of a mobile intensive care paramedic to the State Medical Board; relating to medical review organizations; relating to immunity pertaining to automated external defibrillators; and providing for an effective date."

SENATOR JOHN COGHILL, sponsor of SB 14, stated that this legislation adds a paramedic to the State Medical Board and gives emergency medical service (EMS) agencies protections for peer review activities. He deferred further introduction to his staff.

[1:35:23 PM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL joined the committee.

JORDAN SHILLING, Staff, Senator John Coghill, stated that SB 14 does three things: 1) it adds a paramedic to the State Medical Board; 2) it add EMS agencies and fire departments to the peer review statutes; and 3) it repeals problematic language in AS 09.65.087, the automated external defibrillator statutes.

He reviewed the bill sections and the rationale for the bill. He explained that the State Medical Board regulates five medical professions in Alaska - physicians, osteopathic doctors, physician assistants (PA), podiatrists, and paramedics. The

board has five physician seats, one PA seat, and two public seats. Paramedics have been regulated by the board for more than 30 years and the sponsor feels that giving this distinctly different profession a seat is long overdue. Despite the lack of representation, the board plays a significant role in the lives of paramedics by disciplining, levying fines, and making final licensing decisions. Adding an EMS seat will broaden the perspective of the board and add the expertise of prehospital medicine. He reported that there are currently 463 active paramedics in Alaska. These professionals, the State Medical Board, and the five physicians that sit on the board support the legislation.

SENATOR COGHILL asked Mr. Shilling to discuss the peer review process.

MR. SHILLING explained that peer review is a rigorous evaluation process that healthcare organizations use to monitor and improve patient care. Hospitals generally have a peer review committee to look at patient documentation, review reports and give feedback, all of which is statutorily protected from discovery in a civil trial. This is an important protection that promotes honest, candid feedback. All 50 states provide this protection and many are adding it for EMS agencies because they go through the same rigorous evaluation process. The sponsor feels EMS agencies should be extended the same protection as hospitals.

MR. SHILLING read a statement from a national EMS assessment.

For EMS systems to be used to their maximum potential with respect to performance improvement, peer review protection is required and should be the goal of every state.

He highlighted that a group of EMS experts last year recommended that the legislature provide statutory protection from discovery for quality improvement activities related to EMS care. The bill provides this protection in Sections 2-4.

[1:41:24 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked if paramedics would be in a position to make a disciplinary licensing decisions about a physician or PA.

MR. SHILLING answered yes.

SENATOR STEVENS asked if paramedics would be comfortable being in that position.

MR. SHILLING answered yes.

SENATOR COGHILL clarified that the paramedic member would have one vote, the physicians would have five votes, the PA one vote and the public member one vote.

SENATOR GIESSEL asked if paramedics have been misrepresented or if disciplinary action has been inappropriate.

[1:43:55 PM](#)

MR. SHILLING replied he has anecdotal evidence that not having a voice has negatively affected the profession and some paramedics personally.

SENATOR COGHILL added that the unique circumstance of paramedics isn't addressed to their satisfaction.

[1:45:17 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if adding a paramedic to the State Medical Board follows a national trend.

MR. SHILLING replied he hasn't reviewed what other states have done, but Alaska is somewhat unique in that EMTs are under the purview of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), whereas paramedics and physicians are under the purview of the State Medical Board.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if the physicians on the board have given verbal or written support for the legislation.

MR. SHILLING advised that on January 13 the board voted unanimously to support this concept and wrote a letter to that effect.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked him to describe the value of making this change, and if he'd heard any arguments for maintaining the status quo.

MR. SHILLING said the value is having someone with prehospital expertise being involved in discussions that regulate their profession. The sponsor's office has heard mild opposition from the Alaska State Medical Association, just as they opposed giving PAs a seat a few years ago. Their suggestion is to designate one of the public seats as public or paramedic.

CHAIR COSTELLO noted the letter from the Alaska State Medical Association that was just distributed. She asked the sponsor to respond to the suggestion Mr. Shilling described.

SENATOR COGHILL said he sees equal value in having people who are not in the industry on a board and those who are regulated by the board.

[1:50:38 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO opened public testimony on SB 14.

[1:51:06 PM](#)

THOMAS MEYER, President, Paramedic Association of Alaska, voiced support for adding a paramedic to the State Medical Board because they currently do not have representation. The board's terms of initial licensure requirements, the terms of renewals, and disciplines are among if not the strictest and most punitive in the country. Mobil Intensive Care Paramedics (MICPs) permeate the system in vital areas for emergency care. They are firefighters responding to medical and fire emergencies; they provide emergency services in industrial and remote sites; EMT teachers are almost all paramedics; they are in law enforcement special operations; SWAT and field officers are often EMTs and paramedics; para rescuers working for the Air National Guard are MICPs; the U.S. Coast Guard has MICPs licensed in Alaska; and air medivac services require an MICP on board.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if he could support the statement that the State Medical Board is the most punitive in the country.

MR. MEYER replied the national registry of state medical board actions and fines on these licensees shows that Alaska has been in the top five most punitive for many years.

[1:55:31 PM](#)

DON HUDSEN, MD., Anchorage, Alaska, said he's an ER doctor who has worked as a medivac in remote areas of Alaska, as a medical director, and with several paramedic schools. When he served on the State Medical Board it was disconcerting to see that the members really didn't know what paramedics did for a living. He was pleased when he saw the bill come up because he and others have supported having a paramedic on the board since 1981.

[1:57:25 PM](#)

MITCH FLYNN, Fire Chief, Steese Volunteer Fire Department, Fairbanks, Alaska, stated support for adding a paramedic to the

State Medical Board, but expressed concern that SB 14 doesn't extend peer review protection to volunteer fire departments.

ROBERT "MEL" VOSTRY, representing himself, Palmer, Alaska, testified in support of SB 14. He has been a state-licensed paramedic since 1984 and has been involved with EMS since 1979. He explained that the first paramedics chose to be under the purview of the State Medical Board in the hopes of eventually attaining a professional status. The field of medicine has evolved in the last 45 years and being a paramedic is no longer simply serving on an ambulance. They now attend a 1-2 year university-level accredited program. The State Medical Board is made up of physicians and most recently a physician assistant, and those professionals may or may not know anything about what a paramedic does in the field or their level of education.

MR. VOSTRY said he values the stringent requirements that paramedics are held to by the Medical Board, but they should have a voice.

[2:04:35 PM](#)

KATHLEEN MCLERON, representing herself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 14. She relayed that she is a licensed physician assistant (PA) and a licensed paramedic. The State Medical Board regulates the practice of PAs and paramedics and she was pleased when PAs got representation on the board. She expressed strong support for giving paramedics similar representation, describing it as a logical next step for the State Medical Board.

[2:05:58 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO found no further testifiers and closed public testimony on SB 14. She invited Sara Chambers to explain the fiscal note.

[2:06:42 PM](#)

At ease from 2:06 p.m. to 2:07 p.m.

[2:07:43 PM](#)

SARA CHAMBERS, Professional Licensing Operations Manager, Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, explained that the fiscal note reflects the estimated addition cost for travel for the State Medical Board. The board is statutorily required to hold quarterly meetings and has found it benefits from face-to-face meetings so it travels throughout the state. Some of the travel is to remote areas to ensure that the

message is clear that the voice in rural Alaska is valued. The estimate, based on past travel expenses, is \$7,000 per person per year.

SENATOR GIESSEL pointed out that this falls under receipt services, which means the board pays for it.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked what the fees are for paramedics and physicians.

MS. CHAMBERS explained that the biannual licensing fee for paramedics is \$50 and physicians pay \$300 biannually. Receipt supported services and any additional costs are borne by licensees of the board.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if the board is operating in the black and if the fees will change.

MS. CHAMBERS reported that at the end of FY2014, the State Medical Board had a surplus of over \$600,000.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if the licensing fees are expected to go down or remain the same.

MS. CHAMBERS replied they will remain the same this year but may go up after the next analysis, depending on whether or not fees from new licensees offset rising costs.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if, in addition to the regularly scheduled meetings, the board meets on an as-needed basis.

MS. CHAMBERS confirmed that all the boards in the division meet at the will of the board, while adhering to the Open Meetings Act. When the board deems it appropriate, a mail balloting system can be employed.

SENATOR GIESSEL asked about the repeal language in Section 5.

[2:11:54 PM](#)

MR. SHILLING explained that it repeals an exception to immunity related to automatic external defibrillators (AED) if the use of the device is not preceded by employer-provided training. The sponsor believes that the use of an AED is straightforward and has heard that the training requirement tends to inhibit an employer from having a device on the premises. This concern was brought forward by the chief of the university fire department

in Fairbanks who had noticed a decrease in the use of AEDs in public spaces.

CHAIR COSTELLO held SB 14 in committee for further consideration.

SB 71-VACCINE CERTIFICATION FOR PHARMACISTS

[2:14:07 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO announced the consideration of SB 71. "An Act relating to the practice of pharmacy; and relating to the administration of vaccines and related emergency medications."

[2:14:18 PM](#)

SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL, Sponsor of SB 71 introduced the legislation paraphrasing the following sponsor statement:

Currently, Alaska pharmacists require oversight by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner to oversee their immunization authority. SB 71 will give already-trained and certified pharmacists authority to immunize Alaska adults and children without having to contract with often hard-to-find doctors/nurse practitioners to oversee their immunization programs.

This bill will particularly help rural pharmacies increase their reach to populations who often see their pharmacist more often than a medical professional. Consumers would enjoy more flexibility with their schedules and cost savings by being able to access their local pharmacist for crucial immunizations.

SB 71 expands authority for Alaska pharmacists to independently administer all vaccines and would reduce burdensome collaborative practice agreements. Studies have shown that states in which pharmacists are granted broad authority to administer vaccines have higher immunization rates.

In 2013 Alaskan pharmacists administered over 13,000 flu vaccines and this legislation would significantly improve access to additional vaccinations and public health as a result. I ask for your support to expand the authority of pharmacists to independently administer vaccinations.

[2:17:32 PM](#)

JANE CONWAY, Staff, Senator Cathy Giessel, provided the following sectional analysis for SB 71:

Section 1 authorizes the Board of Pharmacy (board) to establish standards for the independent administration of vaccines and related emergency medications, including the completion of training.

Section 2 permits a pharmacist to independently administer vaccines and related emergency medications if the pharmacist is in compliance with the board's standards. Defines "related emergency medication."

Section 3 adds the independent administration of vaccines and related emergency medications to the definition of the practice of pharmacy."

SENATOR MEYER asked if other states extend this authority to pharmacists.

MS. CONWAY answered yes, but she didn't know which states grant the authority. A study [copy in packets] that Walgreens conducted concluded that states that offer pharmacists full immunization privileges have higher vaccination uptick rates than states with restricted or no authorization.

SENATOR MEYER asked how many states extend this privilege to pharmacists.

MS. CONWAY said she didn't have that information.

CHAIR COSTELLO suggested she follow up with the information.

[2:20:50 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER asked if Medicaid would pay for a pharmacist to administer the vaccine.

MS. CONWAY replied the bill received a second fiscal note today that addresses Medicaid. She deferred further explanation to the Medicaid representative who was available on line.

SENATOR STEVENS asked what happens to the patient records when a vaccine is administered by a pharmacist.

MS. CONWAY explained that all immunizations must be reported to VacTrAK, the State of Alaska Immunization Information System.

SENATOR GIESSEL confirmed that was correct.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if lost vaccination records could be accessed there.

MS. CONWAY answered yes; each person's individual vaccinations are recorded.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked for an explanation of the DHSS fiscal note.

2:23:03 PM

SARA CHAMBERS, Professional Licensing Operations Manager, Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, explained that the average cost for a typical regulations program is \$2,500 and the fiscal note speaks to that cost.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if it's a request for services application (RSA) for the Department of Law.

MS. CHAMBERS explained that the RSA covers the cost of the legal review as well as postage, mailing, and printing of the regulations that are sent to the licensees for comment.

SENATOR GIESSEL asked for confirmation that there would be no additional cost if these regulations were coupled with other regulations the board was already doing.

MS. CHAMBERS agreed that the fiscal note could be lower and have a lesser impact to licensees if there was an ongoing regulations project.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked Mr. Hope to review the DHSS fiscal note, OMB Component Number: 242.

2:25:27 PM

CHAD HOPE, Pharmacy Program Manager, Medicaid Assistance Administration, Division of Health Care Services, Department of Health and Social Services, explained that rule 42 CFR 455.410(b) of the Affordable Care Act requires Medicaid programs to pay for covered services only when they are ordered, rendered, or referred by enrolled Medicaid providers. Pharmacists currently are not individually enrolled by Alaska Medicaid, just pharmacies. To satisfy the federal requirement for paying claims from an enrolled ordering provider, individual pharmacists would need to be enrolled.

DHSS has not estimated any additional costs for the services, but it has estimated an additional \$50,000 to modify the claims processing system to enroll individual pharmacists.

SENATOR GIESSEL said she wishes there was a way around the cost.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if the effective date of the bill needed to be amended if the claims processing system couldn't enroll pharmacists before 7/1/2016.

MR. HOPE confirmed that it was extremely unlikely that pharmacists could be enrolled prior to 7/1/16.

SENATOR MEYER requested additional explanation of the \$50,000.

MR. HOPE explained that the \$50,000 is the estimated cost to either enroll a new provider type or add a subtype to the claims processing system. It is not intended to be used for any activity outside the enrollment of pharmacists.

MR. MEYER asked if this is a one-time expense.

MR. HOPE answered yes.

[2:31:53 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO opened public testimony on SB 71.

[2:32:25 PM](#)

SCOTT WATTS, representing himself, Juneau, Alaska, said he is a practicing pharmacist testifying in support of SB 71. New pharmacists are coming out of school having been trained to administer these vaccines. This will eventually reduce healthcare costs while retaining the safety and tracking of the vaccines.

JASON TAPLEY, representing himself, Juneau, Alaska, said he is a pharmacist who is new to Juneau testifying in support of SB 71. He described working in a retail pharmacy in South Carolina, and opined that it will be much easier and more cost-effective to allow pharmacists to independently administer vaccines.

[2:36:31 PM](#)

BARRY CHRISTENSEN, Co-Chair Legislative Association, Alaska Pharmacist Association (APA), said he is a second generation community pharmacist in Ketchikan testifying in support of SB 71. He described the bill as a win-win-win. It will help

increase access to immunizations; it will help decrease healthcare costs for employers; and it will help pharmacies reduce paperwork. With regard to the fiscal note, he opined that the \$50,000 would be returned to the state very quickly.

[2:39:43 PM](#)

RYAN RUGGLES, District Pharmacy Manager, Carrs Safeway Alaska, testified in support of SB 71. Prevention of disease is a keystone to a healthy society and this one way to help achieve it. Pharmacy-based immunizations are safe, convenient, economical, and effective. Safeway has been administering vaccinations since 2003 and received the American Pharmacists Association Immunization Champion Award in 2014. Most pharmacists have taken classes to get their degree regarding immunizations and most have taken post-graduation continuing education courses. He discussed the low incidence of flu and tetanus inoculations among Alaskans and opined that easier and more consistent access will increase participation.

MR. RUGGLES explained that the current model to give vaccinations requires a collaborative practice agreement with the provider, the pharmacist in charge, and the location that's specified. When the managing pharmacist changes, the ability to immunize lapses until there is a new collaborative practice agreement. That can take from three to six months.

Responding to an earlier question about tracking immunizations, he confirmed that Safeway participates in VacTrAK and provides notice to whichever physician the patient has specified. He concluded that the ultimate goal is to keep Alaskans healthy and this bill moves in that direction.

[2:44:32 PM](#)

AMBER BRIGGS representing herself, said she is a hospital pharmacist from Soldotna testifying in support of SB 71. She discussed the rigorous training that pharmacists receive in the administration of vaccines, disease epidemiology, vaccine characteristics, and related topics. Responding to Senator Meyer's question, she reported that 16 states currently do not require a physician protocol prescription to administer a vaccination.

SENATOR GIESSEL reviewed Ms. Briggs credentials and asked how many years of schooling it takes to receive a doctor of pharmacy degree.

MS. BRIGGS replied it takes four years of pharmacy school and two to four years of undergraduate work.

SENATOR GIESSEL noted that is similar to a physician.

MS. BRIGGS agreed.

[2:47:30 PM](#)

LIS HOUCHEM, Northwest Regional Director, National Association of Chain Drug Stores, testified in support of SB 71 to allow pharmacists to independently prescribe and administer immunizations. In 2012 only 1.2 percent of Alaskans were immunized for influenza, giving it the rank of 49th in the country. She emphasized that removing the collaborative agreement requirement will streamline the administration of vaccines.

[2:49:07 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO announced she would hold SB 71 for further consideration.

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission

[2:49:23 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO announced the final order of business would be confirmation hearings. She recognized Mr. Hemenway as an appointee to the Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission, and reviewed the commission's jurisdiction.

ANDREW HEMENWAY, Appointee, Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission, stated that he is an administrative law judge with the Office of Administrative Hearings. He has prior experience with workers' compensation as a staff attorney for the Alaska Supreme Court and in private practice. He explained that he is approaching retirement and decided it was a good time to submit his name for this position. He is doing so with the knowledge that the commission is looking at making some structural changes that could include eliminating it altogether and sending the appeals to the superior court. He offered to answer questions.

CHAIR COSTELLO found no questions and thanked Mr. Hemenway.

Alaska Workers' Compensation Board

CHAIR COSTELLO reviewed the composition of the Workers' Compensation Board and asked Ms. Cline to tell the committee about her interest in serving.

[2:53:26 PM](#)

PAMELA CLINE, Appointee, Workers' Compensation Board, said she would like to be reappointed to the board as a representative of labor. This is an important role to ensure that injured workers get treated and return to work as soon as possible. In response to a question from the chair, she stated that she is a business representative at the IBEW Local 1547. Prior to that she worked as a certified pharmacy technician and as a representative for the bargaining unit at MatSu Regional [Medical Center].

CHAIR COSTELLO asked Mr. Collins to tell the committee about himself and his interest in continuing to serving.

[2:54:35 PM](#)

CHUCK COLLINS JR., Appointee, Alaska Workers' Compensation Board, said he was a business owner for 20 years and now works for the State of Alaska. He's been involved in many committees and organizations in Juneau over the years. A previous administration asked him to serve as an industry representative and he's found it to be a very rewarding experience. He and the labor representative in Juneau do the self-insurance overview.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked Mr. Howdeshell to tell the committee about himself and why he is interested in serving.

[2:57:53 PM](#)

JACOB HOWDESHELL, Appointee, Workers' Compensation Board, said he's a union representative of Laborers Local 942 in Fairbanks. He's been in the industry for about 10 years and wants to serve on the board to bring as much parity as possible.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked Ms. Hutchings to tell the committee about herself and why she is interested in serving.

[2:59:09 PM](#)

LINDA HUTCHINGS, Appointee, Alaska Workers' Compensation Board, said she lives in Soldotna and was first appointed to the board in 2005. She's been actively involved in worker's compensation as a business owner for the last 40 years and as an employee that might be injured. She believes that in the last five to six years the board has accomplished a lot and she looks forward to helping continue that trend.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked Mr. Traini to tell the committee about himself and why he is interested in serving.

[3:00:26 PM](#)

RICK TRAINI, Appointee, Workers' Compensation Board, said he has worked for Teamsters Local 959 since 2007. He was first appointed to the board to fill a partial term in 2010 and was appointed to a second term in 2012. He would appreciate the opportunity to serve again. It's an important adjudicative process that allows injured workers to see labor and industry lay members from the community and feel that somebody will listen and they'll get a fair hearing when there's a dispute.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked Ms. Vollendorf to tell the committee about herself and why she is interested in continuing to serve.

[3:01:46 PM](#)

PATRICIA VOLLENDORF, Appointee, Alaska Workers' Compensation Board, said she was a teacher in Anchorage from 1963 until she retired in 1993. She served on the board from 1993 to 1997 and from 2004 until the present. She has seen a lot of changes on the board and most are for the better. She has enjoyed the service and looks forward to continuing.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked Mr. Williams to tell the committee about himself and why he is interested in continuing to serve.

[3:02:32 PM](#)

LAKE WILLIAMS, Appointee, Alaska Workers' Compensation Board, said this will be his second term on the board. He currently works as the District 7 Representative for the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 302 in Fairbanks. He listed his board memberships and relayed that he has a bachelor's degree in business administration. He has enjoyed serving on the board and would like to continue.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked Mr. Weel to tell the committee about himself and why he is interested in continuing to serve.

[3:03:57 PM](#)

ROBERT WEEL, Appointee, Workers' Compensation Board, said he's served as an industry representative since 2006 and feels he has a good understanding of the hearing process. He would enjoy serving another term.

SENATOR GIESSEL commented that she finds it interesting that there is no a limit on the number of terms someone can serve on the Workers' Compensation Board.

CHAIR COSTELLO agreed that this board has a lot of longevity. She thanked the nominees and announced she would set the names aside and report all the nominations from the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee in one group. [The names were advanced on 3/31/2015.]

3:06:31 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Costello adjourned the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting at 3:06 p.m.