

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

March 20, 2025

3:19 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Genevieve Mina, Chair
Representative Andrew Gray
Representative Zack Fields
Representative Donna Mears
Representative Mike Prax
Representative Justin Ruffridge
Representative Rebecca Schwanke

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 60

"An Act establishing May 12 as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Day of Recognition."

- MOVED SB 60 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

Urging the United States Congress to extend enhanced tax credits for health insurance premiums under the Affordable Care Act.

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 70

"An Act relating to emergency medical services for operational canines; relating to the powers, duties, and liability of emergency medical technicians and mobile intensive care paramedics; relating to the practice of veterinary medicine; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 70(HSS) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 60

SHORT TITLE: ESTABLISH ME/CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME DAY

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) TOBIN

01/24/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 01/24/25 (S) HSS
 02/11/25 (S) HSS AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 02/11/25 (S) Heard & Held
 02/11/25 (S) MINUTE(HSS)
 02/13/25 (S) HSS AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 02/13/25 (S) Moved SB 60 Out of Committee
 02/13/25 (S) MINUTE(HSS)
 02/14/25 (S) HSS RPT 5DP
 02/14/25 (S) DP: DUNBAR, HUGHES, CLAMAN, GIESSEL,
 TOBIN
 02/24/25 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 02/24/25 (S) VERSION: SB 60
 02/26/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/26/25 (H) HSS
 03/11/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
 03/11/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 03/18/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
 03/18/25 (H) Heard & Held
 03/18/25 (H) MINUTE(HSS)
 03/20/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106

BILL: HJR 9

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT TAX CREDITS
 SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) MINA

02/12/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/12/25 (H) HSS
 03/11/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
 03/11/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 03/18/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
 03/18/25 (H) Heard & Held
 03/18/25 (H) MINUTE(HSS)
 03/20/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 70

SHORT TITLE: EMERGENCY MED SVCS; OPERATIONAL CANINES
 SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) SCHRAGE

01/27/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 01/27/25 (H) HSS, L&C
 02/18/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
 02/18/25 (H) Heard & Held
 02/18/25 (H) MINUTE(HSS)
 03/13/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
 03/13/25 (H) Heard & Held

03/13/25 (H) MINUTE (HSS)
03/20/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

LORI WING-HEIER, Director
Division of Insurance
Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding HJR 9.

REPRESENTATIVE CALVIN SCHRAGE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, answered questions regarding HB 70.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:19:56 PM](#)

CHAIR GENEVIEVE MINA called the House Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:19 p.m. Representatives Prax, Ruffridge, Schwanke, Mears, Gray, and Mina were present at the call to order. Representative Fields arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SB 60-ESTABLISH ME/CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME DAY

[3:20:33 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA announced that the first order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 60, "An Act establishing May 12 as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Day of Recognition."

[3:21:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MEARS moved to report SB 60 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, SB 60 was reported out of the House Health and Social Services Standing Committee.

[3:21:41 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:21 p.m. to 3:24 p.m.

HJR 9-EXTEND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT TAX CREDITS

[3:24:58 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9, Urging the United States Congress to extend enhanced tax credits for health insurance premiums under the Affordable Care Act.

[3:25:10 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA moved to adopt Amendment 1 to HJR 9, labeled 34-LS0490\N.1, Nauman, 3/19/25, which read:

Page 1, line 11, following the second occurrence of "the":

Insert "enhanced"

REPRESENTATIVE MEARS objected for the purpose of discussion.

CHAIR MINA explained Amendment 1. She stated that the proposed amendment would provide clarity in the language regarding enhanced tax credits under HJR 9.

REPRESENTATIVE MEARS removed her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

[3:26:11 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE said that he is waiting on information he previously requested in a committee meeting to ensure that numbers regarding individuals receiving enhanced tax credits in HJR 9 are accurate. He said he would like to wait on moving HJR 9 until those numbers are confirmed.

CHAIR MINA responded that she is open to having an accurate number as well.

[3:27:42 PM](#)

LORI WING-HEIER, Director, Division of Insurance, Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, responded that her department has the answers to Representative Ruffridge's questions, but cannot yet release that information.

[3:28:24 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:28 p.m. to 3:29 p.m.

[3:29:25 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA announced that HJR, [as amended], would be held over.

HB 70-EMERGENCY MED SVCS; OPERATIONAL CANINES

[3:29:53 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 70, "An Act relating to emergency medical services for operational canines; relating to the powers, duties, and liability of emergency medical technicians and mobile intensive care paramedics; relating to the practice of veterinary medicine; and providing for an effective date."

[3:30:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt Amendment 1 to HB 70, labeled 34-LS0245\N.7, Gunther, 3/18/25, which read:

Page 3, following line 6:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* Sec. 3. AS 18.08.082(a) is amended to read:

(a) The department shall prescribe by regulation a course of training or other requirements prerequisite to the issuance of certificates or licenses that provide for the following:

(1) certification of a person who meets the training and other requirements as an emergency medical technician, emergency medical technician instructor, or emergency medical dispatcher;

(2) authorization for an emergency medical technician certified under this chapter to provide under the written or oral direction of a physician the advanced life support services enumerated on the certificate or enumerated on a written document filed with the department by the technician's medical director and approved by the department under its regulations;

(3) certification that a person, organization, or government agency that provides an emergency medical service, conducts a training course for a mobile intensive care paramedic, or represents itself as a trauma center meets the minimum standards prescribed by the department for that service, course, or designation;

(4) authorization for an emergency medical service certified under this chapter to provide under the written or oral direction of a physician the advanced life support services enumerated on the certificate or enumerated on a written document filed with the department by the medical director for the emergency medical service and approved by the department under its regulations; [AND]

(5) licensure of a mobile intensive care paramedic and the medical services that a mobile intensive care paramedic may perform, including the

(A) educational and other qualifications, which may include education in pain management and opioid use and addiction;

(B) application and licensing procedures;

(C) scope of activities authorized; and

(D) responsibilities of a supervising or training physician; and

(6) authorization for an emergency medical technician certified under this chapter or mobile intensive care paramedic licensed under this chapter to provide to operational canines the emergency medical services enumerated on a written document filed with the department by the medical director and approved by the department in regulation."

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 5, lines 7 - 8:

Delete all material and insert:

"(1) is authorized to provide the emergency medical services to an operational canine under AS 18.08.082(a)(6);"

CHAIR MINA objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE explained Amendment 1. He stated that the proposed amendment would remove the "exemption language" for medical service providers from HB 70. He said that language caused concern for individuals in the veterinary field.

[3:32:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CALVIN SCHRAGE, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, said he considers Amendment 1 a "friendly amendment."

[3:33:29 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA removed her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

[3:33:44 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:33 p.m. to 3:35 p.m.

[3:35:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt Amendment 6 to HB 70, labeled 34-LS0245\N.8, Gunther, 3/19/25, which read:

Page 1, line 6, through page 2, line 13:

Delete all material and insert:

"* Section 1. AS 08.98.120(a) is amended to read:

(a) A person may not practice veterinary medicine, surgery, or dentistry unless the person is licensed as a veterinarian under this chapter or has a temporary permit issued under AS 08.98.186, except that a person may perform functions authorized by

(1) regulation of the board if the person is licensed as a veterinary technician; [OR]

(2) a permit issued under AS 08.02.050 if the person is employed by an agency that has a permit issued under AS 08.02.050; or

(3) AS 18.08.093 if the person is certified as an emergency medical technician or licensed as a mobile intensive care paramedic."

CHAIR MINA objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE explained Amendment 6. He stated that the proposed amendment would delete the exemption section from Section 1 of HB 70. The amendment would insert a new Section 1 which moves the authorization for the provision of veterinary services to very specific functions.

[3:37:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE responded that he considers Amendment 6 a friendly amendment.

[3:37:53 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA removed her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 6 was adopted.

[3:37:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt Amendment 2 to HB 70, labeled 34-LS0245\N.2, Gunther, 3/18/25, which read:

Page 5, lines 1 - 7:

Delete "If a veterinarian is unavailable to provide emergency medical services to an operational canine in a reasonable amount of time, an emergency medical technician or mobile intensive care paramedic may provide emergency medical services to the operational canine as long as the emergency medical technician or mobile intensive care paramedic

(1)"

Insert "An emergency medical technician or mobile intensive care paramedic may provide emergency medical services to an operational canine if the emergency medical technician or mobile intensive care paramedic

(1) reasonably determines that there is an immediate danger of serious harm to or death of the operational canine and that a veterinarian is unavailable to provide emergency medical services to the operational canine soon enough to address the danger;

(2)"

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

CHAIR MINA objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE explained Amendment 2. He stated that the proposed amendment would reword a section regarding a "reasonable amount of time," to provide more clarity.

[3:38:55 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE responded that he considers Amendment 2 a friendly amendment. He also said he consider Amendments 3 and 4 [in the committee packet but as yet not offered] to be friendly.

[3:39:06 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA removed her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 2 was adopted.

[3:39:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt Amendment 3 to HB 70, labeled 34-LS0245\N.4, Gunther, 3/18/25, which read:

Page 5, line 9:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Page 5, line 10:
Delete "the"
Insert "a"

CHAIR MINA objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE explained Amendment 3. He stated that the proposed amendment would delete language pertaining to training people to "provide comparable medical services" to humans.

[3:40:23 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA removed her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 3 was adopted.

[3:40:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt Amendment 4 to HB 70, labeled 34-LS0245\N.5, Gunther, 3/18/25, which read:

Page 5, line 9, following "human;":
Insert "and"

Page 5, lines 10 - 12:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following paragraph accordingly.

CHAIR MINA objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE explained Amendment 4. He stated that the proposed amendment addresses language in Section 5, line 10 of HJR 9.

CHAIR MINA removed her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 4 was adopted.

[3:41:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt Amendment 5 to HB 70, labeled 34-LS0245\N.6, Gunther, 3/18/25, which read:

Page 5, line 27:
Delete "(1)"

Page 5, lines 28 - 30:
Delete "; and
(2) comply with all laws governing the administration of drugs or biologics to a human when administering a drug or biologic to an operational canine"

CHAIR MINA objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE explained Amendment 5. He stated that the proposed amendment would address language comparing the administration of drugs to dogs, to humans.

[3:41:32 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE responded that he considers Amendment 5 a friendly amendment.

[3:41:39 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA removed her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 5 was adopted.

[3:41:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX said he does not think HB 70, [as amended], is personally necessary. He expressed concern regarding the need for additional training and paperwork under HJR 9.

[3:43:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS said he thinks there is a benefit of civic engagement from HB 70. He explained that HB 70 has excited his daughter's interest in state government and said that she called HB 70 a "paw patrol bill."

[3:43:29 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SCHWANKE said that many benefits from the proposed legislation would occur in rural areas, where they lack veterinarians. Because many emergency medical services operate on a volunteer basis, she said she does not think HB 70, as amended, would be taken advantage of in those rural areas; however, she raised concern that the proposed legislation would create more confusion.

[3:45:44 PM](#)

CHAIR MINA emphasized the lack of clear authorization that emergency medical technicians experience in emergency situations regarding operational canines.

[3:46:22 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MEARS moved to report HB 70, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 70(HSS) was reported out of the House Health and Social Services Standing Committee.

[3:46:56 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:46 p.m.