

April 15, 2025

Senator Cathy Giessel
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 147 – PHARMACISTS PRESCRIPTION AUTHORITY

Dear Senator Giessel,

I am writing today on behalf of the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) in support **SB 147**, a bill that authorizes licensed pharmacist to provide patient care services including the prescribing and administration of medications within their education and scope of practice. We **support** this bill as it empowers pharmacists to practice at the top of their training, enhance patient outcomes and reduce administrative burdens among providers and patients.

The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) represents the interest of America's community pharmacists, including owners of more than 19,400 independent community pharmacies across the United States and 83 independent community pharmacies in Alaska. These Alaska pharmacies filled over 900,000 prescriptions last year, impacting thousands of patients in your state. Our members are small business owners who are among the America's most accessible healthcare providers, and they provide an expanding set of health care services to millions of patients every day.

Within the next 10 years, the U.S. could see a shortage of over 55,000 primary care physicians. In Alaska there are 341 areas that are designated as health professional shortage areas. There are hundreds of pharmacists in Alaska who are ready to provide valuable healthcare services to these communities that have limited access to care.

With over 500 pharmacists practicing within Alaska, approval of this legislation will allow pharmacists, pharmacy personnel, and pharmacies to meet the demand for health care services and continue to be a gateway for patients to access quality care. This bill modernizes Alaska's statutes to reflect current clinical trends and realities as well as removing unnecessary barriers to care. Updating these laws not only allow pharmacies to expand immunization and testing capacity but will allow pharmacists to dispense opioid antagonists, epinephrine auto injectors, post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for exposure to HIV infection and hormonal contraception.

More than 90% of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy,¹ and more than any other segment of the pharmacy industry, independent community pharmacies are often located in underserved rural and urban areas. These pharmacies are frequently the most accessible healthcare providers in many Alaska communities and are vital in the provision of immunizations, testing, and other services.

¹ NCPDP Pharmacy File, ArcGIS Census Tract File, NACDS Economics Department.

Over the years, the pharmacy profession has evolved from a dispensing and product reimbursement industry to a profession with training and patient relationships to provide outcomes-based services and participate in care coordination efforts. Pharmacists' care has increasingly involved patient counseling, and we have learned how their presence in underserved communities has seen improved health outcomes and reduced healthcare costs.

NCPA supports the Alaska Board of Pharmacy and the Alaska Pharmacy Association in their advocacy to align pharmacists' standard of care and improve efficiencies in healthcare delivery. We appreciate the time taken to address the important issue and urge the committee's approval so SB 147 can be passed and signed into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Belawoe Akwakoku". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Belawoe" and last name "Akwakoku" clearly distinguishable.

Belawoe Akwakoku
Associate Director, State Government Affairs
National Community Pharmacists Association