

Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse  
Alaska Mental Health Board  
Statewide Suicide Prevention Council  
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## **Statewide Suicide Prevention Council and mental health, substance misuse prevention boards hire new executive director**

The Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, The Alaska Mental Health Board and the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council have selected Alison Kulas as their new executive director, effective Jan. 9. The boards advise the governor, legislature, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority on behavioral health policy and programs that promote overall wellness for Alaskans, as per federal and/or state statutes. Kulas replaces Kate Burkhart who left the position after nearly 10 years to become the state’s ombudsman.

Kulas has more than 10 years’ experience in health education, prevention, and treatment fields. Most recently she was a fellow in Washington D.C with the National Academy of Medicine, at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Previously she worked in Alaska Department of Health and Social Services’ Division of Public Health as the tobacco program manager, helping set statewide policy in Alaska around prevention and treatment. She also worked for RurAL CAP where she partnered with rural and frontier communities around the state gaining an understanding of the health issues impacting villages with populations under 1,000 people.

Sharon Fishel, the chairperson of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council and a member of the Alaska Mental Health Board, said, “We found Alison’s skill set to be a great fit for the challenges facing Alaska. She brings a rich background in prevention with experience from the national to the village level.”

Kulas holds a master’s degree in Public Health from Tulane University and a bachelor’s degree in human biology from Michigan State University.

“I’m happy to be returning to Alaska and I’m excited about the opportunity to work for all Alaskans because the issues of mental health, substance misuse, and suicide touch all of us,” Kulas said. “I will be reaching out in the next few months to connect and reconnect with those people doing the important work related to the boards and council.”