



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

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March 21, 2019

Senator Cathy Giessel
Alaska State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, Alaska 99811-1182

Subject: ACoA Support SB 44, "Prescription of Drugs by a Physician Assist without Physical Examination"

Dear Senator Giessel:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to express our support for SB 44, relating to the "prescription of drugs by a physician assistant without physical examination," authored by you. Based on our understanding, SB 44 is basically a "clean-up" bill that would provide physician assistants with the same authority to practice telemedicine, like physicians, who were unintentionally left out of the Medicaid Reform bill passed in 2016. SB 44 remedies this omission by adding physician assistants to the list of approved providers to practice telemedicine in Alaska, while requiring the same statutory oversight and disciplinary sanctions as prescribed for physicians.

The Health Resources Services administration defines Alaska as a "Health Care Professional Shortage Area" and "Medically Underserved Health Care Area." Given the health care needs of Alaska's fast-growing senior population as well as those in rural/remote areas where access to medical care is particularly challenging, the Commission views SB 44 as common sense policy to enhance access to affordable health care options by increasing the number of qualified primary care providers approved to practice telemedicine.

Thank you for your leadership on SB 44. Please contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's Executive Director, at 465-4879 or denise.daniello@alaska.gov for further information.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Gordon Glaser in blue ink.

Gordon Glaser
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Denise Daniello in blue ink.

Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director