



## SENATOR JESSE KIEHL

October 3, 2023

Alaska State Medical Board  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing  
Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development  
P.O. Box 110806  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Chair Wein and Board Members,

I write after hearing from many constituents about proposed changes to physician assistant regulations. Several provisions would negatively impact Alaskans' access to health care in already underserved communities. Like the oral testimony to your board, I have heard only opposition from constituents and representatives of local government in Southeast Alaska.

The new regulations would require significantly more time working in Anchorage (the only non-“remote” location in your proposed definition) before a PA is allowed to work in a rural community. How much would these new requirements reduce the availability of health care in Alaska over the next decade? Has the board considered ways to increase remote supervision, or to account for other relevant provider experience (e.g.: prior work as a community health aide?)

The new regulations require a PA to work only within the scope of practice of their two collaborating physicians. Has the board considered how this might limit a PA who serves as a community's only health care provider, providing both family and emergency care? Has the board considered how this might limit specialized PA care in regions with one specialist to supervise, but not two (e.g.: oncology or neurology in Southeast Alaska?)

The regulation more than doubles the number of hours a collaborating physician must work. How does this jibe with the board's rules placing no lower bound for work hours on licensed physicians? Why would, for instance, a senior physician be safe and competent to personally practice medicine part-time but not be safe and competent to collaborate with a PA?

I appreciate the board's work to ensure Alaska health care professionals are competent to care for Alaskans. I respectfully request you not adopt these proposed regulations. Instead please hold listening sessions in communities around the state before re-examining the issue to ensure any new rules are neither more nor less than necessary to protect Alaskans while maximizing access to health care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jesse Kiehl".

Senator Jesse Kiehl