

January 18, 2024

Senator Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski,

For over 70 years, the Alaska Hospital & Healthcare Association (AHHA) has served as a non-profit trade association representing Alaska's hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare partners across the continuum of care. AHHA members play an invaluable role, both as community providers and essential employers, in cities, towns, and villages across Alaska.

We write you today to voice our support for S. 2418 and H.R. 2713, which are known as the Improving Care and Access to Nurses (ICAN) Act. As you know, providing healthcare in our unique geography is challenging, and this is often exacerbated by significant workforce shortages that confront our members daily.

AHHA recently released its third annual Healthcare Workforce Analysis, and statistics show we need to find and hire 8,000 new healthcare workers each year to keep up with growth and churn. These pressures force us to use ingenuity and resilience to make sure all Alaskans have access to quality healthcare, especially in our rural communities. One such way we meet the demands of our patients is embracing the critical role of Alaska's Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN).

In 2022, there were an estimated 680 people employed as Nurse Practitioners in Alaska, which exceeds the number of Family Medicine Physicians (460) and Physician Assistants (430). Nurse Practitioners are more likely to work in rural areas and play an invaluable role in our healthcare system.

The ICAN Act will promote patient access to healthcare by removing outdated federal barriers to practice for APRNs, consistent with state law. This bill will authorize Nurse Practitioners to order cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, refer patients for medical nutrition therapy, certify a patient's terminal illness for hospice eligibility, perform mandatory examinations in skilled nursing facilities, certify when their patients with diabetes need therapeutic shoes and more. Removing these barriers will allow rural and vulnerable populations to get needed care from qualified health professionals.

We respectfully request you support the ICAN Act to increase access to high-quality healthcare from our nurse practitioners and advanced practice registered nurses.

Sincerely,



Jared C. Kosin, J.D., M.B.A.
President & CEO

CC Alaska APRN Alliance

Advancing Healthcare for Alaska

www.alaskahha.org

1007 W 3rd Ave, Suite 301 | Anchorage, AK 99501
426 Main St. | Juneau, AK 99801