

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Mike Prax
Chair, House Health and Social Services Committee
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Rep.Mike.Prax@akleg.gov
House.Health.And.Social.Services@akleg.gov

Re: AHHA Supports HB 371

Dear Representative Prax,

For 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 are writing to express our support for HB 371. Effective medical review organizations (also known as review committees) focus on improving the health and well-being of Alaskans by informing policies and practices that aid in the reduction of preventable deaths, injuries, and illnesses. Medical Review Committees are an important tool used by hospitals to discuss information relating to the care and treatment of patients to support improvements in care. Having a formal process allows confidential and protected conversations to discuss patient safety events and work to improve care.

AHHA supports the work of the Department of Health Maternal and Child Death Review Committee. This legislation will support a more efficient process that ensures appropriate representation of DOH staff, partners, and external experts. We support removing the composition requirement of 75% health care providers to allow in-depth multidisciplinary reviews with increased representation from non-clinical experts to identify recommendations for better outcomes. This will ensure experts in all factors that might have contributed to the deaths are part of the review process. We support the clarifications on the sharing and publication of reports and recommendations based on medical review organization findings while maintaining federal and state confidentiality laws.

AHHA is currently in the process of forming an Association Review Organization to bring together hospitals and nursing homes to work together to improve patient safety. These changes will support our efforts to have a multidisciplinary statewide patient safety review committee.

We appreciate your time and respectfully request your support in advancing this legislation and expediting its movement through the committee process.

Sincerely,

Jared C. Kosin, JD, MBA
President & CEO