

Alaska State Legislature

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Representative Hugh Fate

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Physician Assistants Win Recognition in Bill **Fate's HB 411 Passes House; Reflects PA's Role in Modern Medicine**

(JUNEAU) – The House today unanimously passed legislation acknowledging the increasing role that physician assistants play in the practice of medicine, by including them under state laws covering malpractice, discrimination, and disability determination.

Rep. Hugh Fate (R-Fairbanks) sponsored House Bill 411 at the request of the Alaska Academy of Physician Assistants, to modernize state laws that did not reflect the expanded use of physician assistants (PAs) in Alaska, by not listing physician assistants as recognized health care providers

“When these laws were drafted and passed, physician assistants were not prevalent as health care providers in the state of Alaska,” Fate said. “However, over the ensuing years physician assistants have become integral to providing health care to rural and urban areas around the state.”

HB 411 would make several changes suggested by the physicians assistants organization, including: extending malpractice laws to cover PAs; barring discrimination against PAs in the malpractice insurance industry; and allowing PAs the authority to qualify patients as disabled or handicapped for purposes of obtaining handicapped parking permits or license plates.

Fate said these changes would make it easier to provide appropriate medical follow up for patients of physician assistants, and would also prevent any discriminatory action against physician assistants without the opportunity to be assessed by their peers.

[HB 411](#) moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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