

January 13, 2022

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Representative Zack Fields, Co-Chair
Representative Ivy Spohnholz, Co-Chair
House Labor and Commerce Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Co-Chairs Fields and Spohnholz:

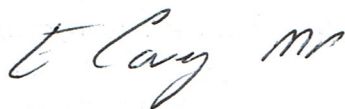
I am a board certified emergency medicine physician with more than 30 years of practice at Providence Alaska Medical Center, Anchorage, Alaska. I am writing in support of HB 91 exempting veterinarians from the PDMP requirements. Thirty four states have determined that a PDMP is unworkable for animals and have exempted veterinary practice. Alaska should do the same.

PDMP requires consulting a database, but there is no such animal database to consult. In practice, veterinarians access the personal prescription history of the owners. This raises major privacy concerns. I would certainly not wish for my patients' medical records to be accessed for this purpose.

One letter opposing this bill suggested that people might intentionally injure their pets to obtain prescriptions. This is impractical for several reasons. Unlike humans, animals cannot "doctor shop" by complaining about pain. An injury or illness severe enough to require opioids, would require a complete diagnostic work-up, a stay in the veterinary hospital, and likely surgery. This would be very expensive since pets do not have insurance. Since opioid dose is based upon body weight, this would only result in a prescription for a much smaller dose than for a human.

Of course, everyone is concerned about opioid abuse. The state of Alaska should put its resources to work on the major causes of this problem and its most effective solutions. In my more than 30 years of emergency medical practice in Alaska, I have never encountered a single case of diversion from a veterinary prescription.

Sincerely, Eva Carey, MD

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eva Carey MD".