

Senator Shelley Hughes
Majority Leader
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I am writing in support of SB 132 and HB 91, and want to particularly offer my perspective from serving rural communities. My practice included 32 years of regular rural clinics in Bethel and 37 years in King Salmon caring for animals. It is important to recognize that serving rural communities requires a significant commitment. Operating remote clinics in rural Alaska meant significant time away from my day practice, my family and sleeping on the floor of whatever community facility that could accommodate me. The ability to return home was often questionable due to weather. I did this because I love huskies and dogs and cats in general and enjoy the people who live in the remote areas of Alaska. In nearly 40 years of practice across both urban and rural Alaska, I was never once asked for opioids directly, or a prescription for them.

If the PDMP is unworkable in the accessible parts of Alaska, it is doubly so in rural areas. Good, secure computer access, and the privacy concerns about looking at owners' personal prescription history are of huge concern in small communities. This will certainly deter veterinarians from wanting to serve rural areas where veterinary service is already very limited.

Veterinarians are aware of the opioid crisis in Alaska. These medications are never our first choice, Veterinary medicine much more commonly uses non steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as Rimadyl. These are not controlled drugs and are non addictive and more comparable to Ibuprofen use for people.

Adhering to the requirements of the PDMP is entirely unworkable because there is no database for animals or a practicable way for the State to create such a database. It is an egregious invasion of my clients' privacy since it requires me to look at their personal human prescription information. In rural areas, it may be unfeasible to even look at a database of owners' prescriptions. It adds to the cost of veterinary care for clients through my time finding access and researching a database which does not even exist for animals. I ask for your support for SB 132 and HB 91.

Sincerely,

Robert Sept, DVM