



Alaska State Legislature

Representative Matt Claman

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House Bill 312 Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to arrest without a warrant for assault in the fourth degree at a health care facility; and relating to an aggravating factor at sentencing for a felony offense against a medical professional at a health care facility."

Alaska hospitals have reported an increase in workplace violence over the past year, including assaults with physical injury against caregivers, such as being kicked, punched, spit on or verbally threatened. This violence can vary, including patient-on-caregiver violence, and visitor-on-caregiver violence.

Hospitals have reported that if staff contact the police to report an assault, law enforcement is often only able to cite the perpetrator and leave them at the hospital. Police often do not make an arrest because many of these offenses fall into the category of fourth degree assault, in which an officer must have a warrant to arrest an individual.

House Bill 312 addresses this issue by allowing for arrest without a warrant for a fourth degree assault in a health care facility. By removing the barrier of obtaining a warrant, perpetrators can be removed from health care facilities and hard-working medical professionals will be safe to continue their work. Additionally, House Bill 312 adds an aggravator to Alaska's felony assault statute when that assault is knowingly perpetrated against a medical professional in the performance of their duties.

Hospitals, emergency rooms, and other health care facilities are meant to be places where medical professionals can safely administer care. If this issue is left unaddressed, it could impact the well-being and quality of care for all patients. House Bill 312 supports hard-working nurses, doctors, and other medical professionals throughout Alaska.

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