



Alaska State Legislature

Representative Matt Claman

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House Bill 99

Sponsor Statement — Version A

“An Act relating to the State Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board; relating to the practice of physical therapy; and relating to the practice of occupational therapy.”

House Bill 99 amends the governing statutes for physical therapists, physical therapy assistants, occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants practicing in Alaska. The changes are designed to bring Alaska statutes in line with national standards and terminology, and overall make the administrative experience of these professionals up to date. This bill is supported by the State Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board, which believes HB99 will help the Board in its work to protect the public.

In an effort to place public interest first and foremost, the Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Associations support a more balanced representation on its Board and proposes to replace the seat for a physician with an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant.

When the membership of the board’s guiding statute was first enacted, physicians supervised physical and occupational therapists. Physician supervision is no longer required since PT/OT are independent professions with the entry level degree for Physical and Occupational Therapy being at the doctoral level. This change would bring improved representation from both professions to the board.

House Bill 99 also removes from statute specific names of organizations who historically exercised certification oversight of the PT/OT profession educational programs. The new language affords latitude for the board to conform to changes in national accrediting bodies should they become obsolete or irrelevant to Alaska’s PT/OT professions.

The Board further recognized there were some statutes requiring clarification related to foreign-educated (FE) applicants. House Bill 99 makes necessary changes to clarify licensing requirements for FE applicants. Included in the bill are several housekeeping amendments to clean up outdated terminology to achieve alignment with national trends and standards. Please join me in support of House Bill 99.