

Alaska State Legislature

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Representative Hugh Fate

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Dental Examiners Board Bill Passes Senate **Fate's HB 81 Extends Board Four Years, Strengthens Powers**

(JUNEAU) – The Alaska Board of Dental Examiners will continue working to oversee and improve dental practice in Alaska for an additional four years, under legislation the Senate passed unanimously today.

Rep. Hugh “Bud” Fate (R-Fairbanks) sponsored House Bill 81 to ensure the work of the board would extend past its sunset date of June 30, 2001 to June 30, 2005. Under state law, the Legislature must periodically reauthorize the operations of professional boards.

“The regulation and licensing of qualified dentists and hygienists benefits public safety and welfare,” said Fate, a retired dentist serving his first term in the Legislature. “The board contributes to safeguarding the public’s interest by ensuring the competence and integrity of dentists and dental hygienists.”

Originally established in 1955, the Board of Dental Examiners comprises six dentists, two hygienists and one public member, and is responsible for licensing dental practice in Alaska. It is also responsible for investigating allegations of professional malpractice and, where appropriate, imposing fines or other sanctions.

In addition to extending the board’s life, HB 81 would also expand the definition of the practice of dentistry, increase the size of the fines the board could impose, and make several technical adjustments in the enabling statute to reduce paperwork and avoid duplication, Fate said.

“As a retired dentist, I believe the board provides an invaluable service to Alaskans, and should continue to do so,” Fate said.

Notice of reconsideration was given on the vote. Following a final vote, the bill would then return to the House for consideration of changes made in the Senate.

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