

**STATE OF ALASKA  
DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, high rates of heroin use and prescription opioid misuse remain the driving factor behind the unintentional drug overdose epidemic and related deaths in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Alaska's prescription opioid pain reliever overdose death rate was more than double the rate in the United States, and Alaska's heroin-associated overdose death rate was 50 percent higher than the national rate; and

WHEREAS, from 2009 to 2015 the number of heroin-associated deaths more than quadrupled; and

WHEREAS, since 2015 deaths from fentanyl and new synthetic opioids have been documented in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, this declaration comes in response to the growing number of overdoses attributed to opioid use, and evidence that highly dangerous synthetic opioids have made their way into Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the severity and magnitude of this epidemic make it a condition of public health importance that is beyond the timely and effective response and recovery capability of local resources, and emergency assistance is needed; and

WHEREAS, a statewide response under AS 18.15.390, coordinated by the Department of Health and Social Services, is needed to fully address this condition of public health importance.

NOW THEREFORE, on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2017, under the authority granted by Alaska Statute 26.23.020(c) and 26.23.900(2)(E), I hereby declare that an outbreak and a condition of public health disaster emergency exists statewide, and this condition is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a public health disaster emergency declaration in order to provide assistance.

FURTHER, the Commissioner and the State Medical Officer of the Department of Health and Social Services are hereby authorized under Alaska Statute 26.23.020(g)(1)-(3), (10) to coordinate a response, including establishing a statewide Overdose Response Program (ORP) and statewide medical standing order allowing local and regional overdose response programs, healthcare officials, first responders, and the general public to have the ability to directly dispense and administer the lifesaving drug naloxone.

By:   
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Bill Walker  
Governor