

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA  
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## SPONSOR STATEMENT

### **HB 220 – Mental Health Patient Privacy**

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HB 220 protects the personal privacy and safety of mental health patients. This legislation was prompted by the concerns of a former female mental health patient. Her specific concerns were the abuse of vulnerable patients and mental health patients' right to privacy.

This bill would allow a hospitalized mental health patient in Alaska to choose the gender of the person who provides them "intimate care" (bathing, toileting, etc.) If the patient is in some way incapacitated and unable to make such a request, intimate care would be provided by a staff member of the same sex. If the institution is unable to comply with a patient's request, they will simply be required to document that in the patient's record.

Every Alaska citizen is entitled to dignity, respect and protection. I urge your support of this legislation.