

MAR 15 2006

S.R. NO. 46

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING A STUDY ON THE ISSUES HOSPITALS FACE WITH REGARD TO
WAIT LISTED PATIENTS IN HAWAII IN NEED OF LONG TERM MEDICAL
CARE.

1 WHEREAS, wait listed patients in Hawaii needing long term
2 care will stay and receive treatment at hospitals until a bed is
3 available for them at a skilled nursing facility; and
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5 WHEREAS, according to Hawaii Pacific Health, approximately
6 one fourth of their wait listed long term care patients are from
7 Oahu, another fourth are from the Pacific Islands, and up to one
8 half are neighbor island patients who are transferred to one of
9 Hawaii Pacific Health's hospitals on Oahu or Kauai for care; and
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11 WHEREAS, long term care patients can spend several months
12 occupying an acute care bed at a hospital while waiting for an
13 available bed at a skilled nursing facility; and
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15 WHEREAS, in the meantime, these hospitals bear the
16 additional costs for caring for them, and hospitals are forced
17 to offer their already scarce acute care beds while patients
18 wait for an available space at a skilled nursing facility; and
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20 WHEREAS, most skilled nursing facilities are unable to
21 accommodate patients who are on dialysis, have a tracheotomy, or
22 have mental health issues; thus, these patients are unable to be
23 discharged from the hospital and must stay for an extended
24 period of time; and
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26 WHEREAS, skilled nursing facilities on the neighbor islands
27 are frequently at maximum capacity, which makes it difficult for
28 patients receiving care on Oahu to transfer back to their home
29 island for long term care; and
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31 WHEREAS, the lack of beds available at skilled nursing
32 facilities in Hawaii has caused patients, particularly those
33 with mental health issues, to transfer to mainland facilities,
34 which takes these patients away from their families and a
35 familiar environment; and



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 2 WHEREAS, moreover, hospitals are forced to incur the
 3 expenses for transferring a long term care patient to the
 4 mainland, including travel expenses, nurse care costs, and any
 5 additional fees to assist a patient's family member with making
 6 the necessary guardianship arrangements for the transfer; and

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 8 WHEREAS, skilled nursing facilities will not accept
 9 patients until they have a source of payment; thus, hospitals
 10 must also bear their patients' health care costs while their
 11 applications for Medicaid or QUEST is being considered; and

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 13 WHEREAS, hospitals do not receive a full or sometimes any
 14 reimbursement from commercial payers for the patient's wait
 15 listed days that are spent in the hospital, which creates a
 16 growing unsustainable financial burden on acute care hospitals
 17 throughout the State; now, therefore,

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 19 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-third
 20 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2006,
 21 that the Legislative Reference Bureau conduct a study
 22 investigating the issues hospitals face with regard to wait
 23 listed patients using acute care beds who are there solely
 24 because they are in need of long term medical care; and

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 26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
 27 Bureau is requested to report findings and recommendations to
 28 the Legislature at least twenty days before the convening of the
 29 Regular Session of 2007; and

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 31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 32 Resolution be transmitted to the Acting Director of the
 33 Legislative Research Bureau, the Director of Health, the Chief
 34 Executive Officer of Hawaii Pacific Health, the Chief Executive
 35 Officer of the Queen's Medical Center, and the Chief Executive
 36 Officer of Kaiser Permanente Hawaii.

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