
A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR HOSPITAL-BASED DENTISTRY SERVICES IN
THE COUNTY OF HAWAII.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that residents of the
2 county of Hawaii who have medicaid or QUEST insurance or are
3 low-income and uninsured have inadequate access to dental care.
4 These include some twenty-two thousand children, the medically
5 fragile, the developmentally disabled, the mentally ill, and the
6 frail elderly. Lack of oral health care is a prevalent unmet
7 health need among children with special health care needs. Lack
8 of access to dental care results in untreated dental disease,
9 pain, the loss of teeth, poor nutrition, and death.
10 Furthermore, periodontal disease causes diabetes, cardiovascular
11 disease, and auto-immune disorders. Pregnant women with gum
12 disease are at risk of delivering pre-term or low-birth weight
13 babies.

14 The legislature further finds that the county of Hawaii is
15 federally designated as a dental health professional shortage
16 area based upon the number of available and accessible
17 professionals that service the low-income population in that



1 county. Furthermore, there are no state dental clinics to
2 support acute dental services in the county of Hawaii.

3 The legislature further finds that residents of the county
4 of Hawaii who require acute dental care in a hospital setting
5 face great challenges in accessing care in an appropriate and
6 timely manner. This fact has been identified as a major health
7 priority by the Hawaii county oral health task force.

8 Currently, a two-month waiting list exists at the only access
9 point for acute care in this State for people who require
10 hospital dentistry services, and that point of access is the
11 Queen's Hospital on Oahu. County residents referred to Queen's
12 Hospital for emergency purposes have included many who were in
13 terrible pain.

14 The legislature further finds that the tragic and costly
15 consequences of oral neglect in this State are enormous. As
16 many as twenty-four thousand children traveled inter-island for
17 dental care and over twenty per cent of these children required
18 more than one round trip. Needless to say, these inter-island
19 trips often required attendants to assist the children.

20 The purpose of this Act is to provide hospital dentistry
21 services for acute care in the county of Hawaii through a pilot
22 program to be operated by Hamakua Health Center, thereby



1 providing a cost-effective measure to ensure that hospital
2 dentistry services for acute care are available to the county of
3 Hawaii's most vulnerable citizens.

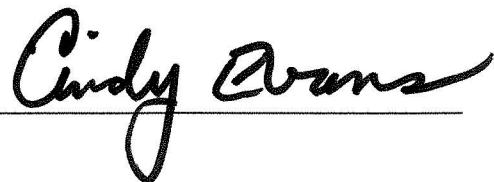
4 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$200,000 or so much
6 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for a
7 pilot program in hospital-based dentistry services in the county
8 of Hawaii to be operated by the Hamakua Health Center; provided
9 that the Hamakua Health Center shall submit findings and
10 recommendations to the legislature not later than twenty days
11 prior to the convening of the regular session of 2009 on the
12 number of people served under the program and feasibility of
13 applying the program on a statewide basis.

14 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
15 human services for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

17

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 18 2008



Report Title:

Dentistry; Appropriations

Description:

Appropriates funds for hospital dentistry in the county of Hawaii.

