A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

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

1   SECTION 1. The legislature finds that about ten per cent

2   of the population of the State of Hawaii has no public or

3   private health insurance. According to the Kaiser Commission on

4   Medicaid and the Uninsured:

5   (1)   Four out of five uninsured people are in working

6   families;

7   (2)   Uninsured people are more likely than those with

8   insurance to be hospitalized for conditions that could

9   have been avoided;

10   (3)   Because the uninsured are less likely to seek

11   preventive care, those with various forms of cancer

12   are more likely to be diagnosed in later stages of the

13   disease resulting in higher rates of death and

14   disability; and

15   (4)   Nearly forty per cent of uninsured adults skipped a

16   recommended medical test or treatment, and twenty per

17   cent say they needed but did not get care for a

18   serious problem in the past year.

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1   The significant numbers of uninsured residents have a

2   considerable economic impact on the State's hospitals, community

3   health centers, and other health care providers, threatening

4   their ability to effectively serve the whole community.

5   The legislature finds that it is in the best interest of

6   the State to ensure access to primary and preventive health care

7   for its residents. In addition to facilitating a healthier

8   population, improving access to care reduces state expenditures

9   attributable to hospital and emergency room services for

10   preventable injuries or illnesses.

11   The legislature finds that the most effective means to

12   encourage access to primary health care for residents without

13   health insurance is through Hawaii's system of federally

14   qualified health centers. These centers:

15   (1)   Are nonprofit, community-based organizations whose

16   purpose and expertise lie in serving people who

17   otherwise have limited or no access to health care;

18   (2)   Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate

19   health care and a broad range of primary care and

20   preventive services, and are located in medically-

21   underserved areas where people have limited access to

1   other health care providers because of geographic and

2   socio-economic barriers;

3   (3)   Contribute greatly to the economies and livability of

4   the communities they serve; and

5   (4)   Are cost-effective providers whose care results in

6   healthier patients and decreased use of emergency,

7   specialty, and in-patient services.

8   Unfortunately, while federally qualified health centers

9   represent one of the most effective and responsive systems of

10   community-based primary care for uninsured people, financial

11   support for these providers is inadequate to meet the needs for

12   medical, behavioral health, and dental services.

13   The purpose of this Act is to provide cost-effective care

14   for Hawaii residents who are uninsured while at the same time

15   ensuring that the community health center system remains

16   financially viable and stable in the face of a growing

17   population of uninsured persons.

18   SECTION 2. The department of health shall provide

19   resources to nonprofit, community-based health-care providers

20   for the provision of health care for uninsured persons.

21   SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general

22   revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $2,000,000 or so much

1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 to pay for

2 the provision of direct health care to the uninsured, which may

3 include primary medical, dental, and behavioral health care;

4 provided that distribution of funds may be on a "per visit"

5 basis, taking into consideration need on all islands.

6   The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of

7 health for the purposes of this Act.

8   SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

Report Title:
Uninsured Health Care; Appropriation

Description:
Appropriates funds to provide care for uninsured Hawaii
residents. (SD1)