

Honolulu, Hawaii

Feb 8, 2008

RE: H.B. No. 2727
H.D. 1

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2008
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health, to which was referred H.B. No. 2727
entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH INSURANCE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that children diagnosed
with autism spectrum disorders have access to appropriate care and
treatment through the provision of quality health care procedures
such as applied behavioral analysis by requiring health insurers
to provide coverage of and treatment for autism spectrum
disorders.

The Autism Society of Hawaii, Hawaii Disability Rights
Center, Cure Autism Now, Autism Speaks, and several concerned
individuals supported this bill. The Hawaii Medical Association
supported the intent of this measure. Hawaii Association of
Health Plans opposed this bill. The Department of Commerce and
Consumer Affairs, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and
Hawaii Medical Services Association submitted comments.

Your Committee finds that most insurance companies do not
cover autism because it is classified as an emotional disorder
rather than a neurological medical condition. As a result, many
people now wait more than a year for state services that treat
delayed speech and other social and motor skill problems
characteristic of autism. The 2001 United States Surgeon
General's Report on Mental Health, states, "Among the many methods

HB2727 HD1 HSCR HLT HMS 2008-1898



available for treatment and education of people with autism, applied behavior analysis has become widely accepted as an effective treatment. Thirty years of research demonstrated the efficacy of applied behavioral methods in reducing inappropriate behavior and in increasing communication, learning, and appropriate social behavior."

Your Committee notes that the statutory requirements set in section 23-51, Hawaii Revised Statutes, requiring that prior to any legislation mandating coverage for specific health services as a part of individual or group health insurance policies, being considered, a concurrent resolution must be passed calling for a report from the Auditor that assesses both the social and financial effects of the proposed mandated coverage. However, due to the extreme financial hardships placed upon families trying to ensure their children receive the care they need, the Auditor is requested to expedite this report upon passage of House Concurrent Resolution No. 62 or a similar concurrent resolution so the report may be available to the Legislature within 60 days of the concurrent resolution's passage.

Your Committee has amended this bill by:

- (1) Establishing a temporary Autism Disorders Spectrum Benefits And Coverage Task Force to discuss and seek input on the problems faced by parents of children with autism; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive changes for clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2727, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2727, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health,

Josh Green M.D.
JOSHUA B. GREEN, M.D., Chair



