

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
919 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD, ROOM 113  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543  
January 23, 2008

The Honorable Maile Shimabukuo, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
and  
The Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Chair  
House Committee on Health  
Twenty-Fourth Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representatives Shimabukuro and Green and Members of the Committees:

**SUBJECT: HB 1999 - RELATING TO HEALTH**

The position and views expressed in this testimony do not represent nor reflect the position and views of the Department of Health.

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB 1999**. The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds for hearing and vision screening for newborns, children, and teenagers, and to expand the provision of vision and hearing screening into the teenage years.

The Council believes that childhood screening, and identification and intervention for developmental delays during the early stages of development are crucial to ensuring that children are able to function in school to the best of their ability and to succeed. The Council further believes that expanding this to teenagers in grades 8 and 11 can lead to the identification and treatment that can alleviate problems that had previously gone undetected and to prevent future problems as a result of impaired vision or hearing.

While the Council believes that expansion of vision and hearing screenings for children from birth to age 18 would be beneficial, the Council believes that early childhood screening, and identification and intervention for developmental delays during the early stages of development from birth to age eight are crucial.

A similar measure, HB 2022 Relating to Children's Health before the House Health Committee, provides a means and require childhood screening from birth to eight years of age prior to entry into a school (i.e., the start of the child's education and at the child's first entry into preschool or elementary school); to provide for diagnosis, referral, correction or treatment; and to integrate the efforts of the community and state organizations related to screening under the

The Honorable Josh Green, M.D.

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Hawaii Childhood Screening initiative. The bill appropriates \$500,000 for FY 2008-2009 for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of early childhood screenings. The bill further establishes the Hawaii Childhood Screening Initiative Advisory Committee.

In addition, the Council was a member of and participated on the Screening Task Force, established pursuant to SCR 70 HD1, SLH 2006. The purpose of the task force was to determine a means for a child to be screened prior to the start of the child's education, at the child's first entry into preschool and elementary school; to provide for diagnosis, referral, correction or treatment; and to integrate efforts of community and State organizations related to screening under this Hawaii childhood screening initiative. The task force completed and submitted a report to the Legislature prior to the start of the 2008 legislative session that summarized the efforts of the members and State and community partners to improve screening efforts.

The Council believes that the establishment of the Hawaii Childhood Screening Initiative Advisory Committee will allow the work initiated by the task force to continue and respectfully recommends HB 2022 could be amended to include as a task of the advisory committee to address and develop a plan for the vision and screening needs of teenage children.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1999.

Sincerely,



Waynette K.Y. Cabral  
Executive Administrator



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES & HOUSING

RE: HB 1999 -- RELATING TO HEALTH.

January 23, 2008

ROGER TAKABAYASHI, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chairs Green, Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees:

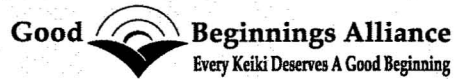
The Hawaii State Teachers Association supports HB 1999 which is in close agreement with a measure passed by the 2006 HSTA State Convention. This measure urged the Department of Education to work with the Department of Health to provide vision and hearing screening as mandated by Hawaii Revised Statutes 321-101.

We believe this bill is needed to ensure students in any public school in the state are properly screened upon school entry and continue to be screened for vision and hearing problems throughout their school years. Currently there is no program through the Department of Education and the Department of Health that conducts vision or hearing screenings for our public school students. Hawaii is one of only 10 states that does not require vision screening for students entering school.

We believe good vision and hearing is imperative for a child's learning. If a child is unable to clearly see a book, poster, blackboard/whiteboard, or computer screen or clearly hear the teacher or other speakers, it will impede his or her learning ability. These impairments can also lead to frustration and behavior problems which can affect the teacher and the entire class. If vision and hearing problems can be detected early, teachers informed and the problems corrected, accommodations can be made to assure the child has a better opportunity for a quality education.

We urge the committee to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



To: Representative Josh Green, Chair  
Representative Maile Shimabukuro, Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOUSING

From: David Tom, Director, Public Policy

Date: Wednesday, January 23, 2008, 9:00 a.m., Room 329

Subject: HB1999: Relating to Health

The Good Beginnings Alliance is a statewide public-private initiative for Hawaii's youngest children and their families. We strive to ensure the healthy development and support for the school readiness of all children in Hawaii. We believe all children deserve an early learning opportunity that meets their needs as they grow and develop. We also understand that the settings for these early learning experiences will vary as the child grows and are often dictated by the needs of the child's family.

**Good Beginnings Alliance wishes to express its support for HB1999.**

A hearing and vision screening and assessment will help Hawai'i's keiki get the right start in school and life, and we strongly believe this bill will provide much-needed support for Hawai'i's families with young children.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Contact information:

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