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February 11, 2008

## LATE TESTIMONY

To: Rep. Robert Herkes, Chair  
Rep. Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair  
House Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Committee

From: Cynthia J. Goto, M.D., President  
Linda Rasmussen, M.D., Legislative Co-Chair  
Philip Hellreich, M.D., Legislative Co-Chair  
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Dick Botti, Government Affairs Liaison

**PLEASE DELIVER to:**

CPC Committee

Monday

2-11-08

2:05pm

Room 325

Re: HB2291, HD1 Relating to Health Insurance (establishes the state health authority to propose a plan to provide medical assistance for all citizens of Hawaii.)

The Hawaii Medical Association opposes HB2291, HD1.

The HMA strongly believes that every member of our society needs and deserves a core group of medical and surgical benefits, including Psychiatry and addiction medicine. Over and above these benefits, the HMA generally favors free market solutions and opposes mandated benefits.

Demand for health care is infinite and placing health care decisions in the hands of our government and insurers will not increase the effectiveness of healthcare. Instead, it will result in the rationing of health care services, long delays for needed surgery, denial of necessary but expensive high tech therapies and diagnostic procedures, and inhibit the development of new therapies and diagnostic procedures.

In Canada, thousands of wealthier Canadians head south to the U.S. for many needed services unavailable in Canada. In England and Canada, patient over the age of 65 are denied open heart surgery, kidney transplants and other critical medical treatment. Those who cannot afford to travel to buy their medical treatment elsewhere, simply go without. In England, 40% of the population now purchases private health insurance, over and above the high taxes they pay for government health care, because necessary therapies are denied or delayed.

If we adopt a government run system, we will have constant battles in the legislature about what benefits should be available, what reimbursements should be made, etc. and the whole health care delivery system will be politicized.

Rather than create a government controlled healthcare system, we suggest the legislature direct its focus to medical liability reform, a major cause of our patient access to care crisis. Medical liability reform has been proven to reduce costs and increase access to healthcare.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

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