

February 4, 2008



Committee on Health
The Honorable Josh Green, Chair
The Honorable John Mizuno, Vice Chair

Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Maile Shimabukuro, Chair
The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

10:45 AM, Monday, February 4th
State Capitol, Room 329

RE: HB2426-Relating to Cancer Treatment

Dear Chair Green, Chair Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Leinaala Ley and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB2426.

The American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc. supports the intent of HB 2426 to provide access to cancer treatment. However we defer to the Department of Human Services as to the feasibility to develop a treatment program at this time.

The American Cancer Society has stated that all individuals upon cancer diagnosis should have timely access to quality cancer care and that there is a societal obligation to facilitate access to care for the uninsured and underinsured.

However, the Society recognizes that the current health care system offers multiple mechanisms to achieve this policy goal. These options range from changes to Medicare and/or Medicaid, the creation of funding pools to facilitate immediate coverage for individuals with a cancer diagnosis through federal or state auspices, to establishing financial pools or reinsurance for catastrophic costs that can prevent loss of insurance. Any health care reform proposal must consider the ramifications of the proposed change(s) on other parts of the healthcare system.

From the point of view of the individual cancer patient, a cancer diagnosis can be financially as well as emotionally devastating. Patients need to devote their energy to fighting the disease, but often make decisions based on whether they can afford care or whether services will be covered by insurance. Unfortunately, it is difficult to estimate the insurance status of the approximately 5,000 individuals in Hawaii who will face a cancer diagnosis this year. Further information on the health insurance status of the newly diagnosed will help to develop appropriate policy solutions to the problems facing uninsured cancer patients.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leinaala Ley
(808)432-9142

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