



**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  
February 13, 2008

The Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Chair  
House Committee on Health  
and

The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
Twenty-Fourth Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representatives Green and Shimabukuro and Members of the Committees:

**SUBJECT: HB 2541– MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR HOSPITAL-BASED  
DENTISTRY IN THE COUNTY OF HAWAII**

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

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB 2541**. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for hospital dentistry services for acute care in the County of Hawaii.

Dental care has been identified as one of the major health concerns for people with DD. They have faced great challenges in accessing dental care services in an appropriate and timely manner. Moreover, access to dental care services in rural underserved and unserved areas on the Neighbor Islands is extremely limited. Other factors adding to this dilemma is the limited number of dental professionals on the Neighbor Islands and those who want to serve this population, as well as individuals who are elderly or medically fragile.

The lack of dental care for this population is profound and unacceptable. Consequently, as an underserved population for dental services, people with DD remain at high risk for poor oral health and hygiene. The impact of the reduction of dental care services for Medicaid recipients in 1996 was significant. The remedy to a toothache became relief from a tooth extraction as opposed to restorative dental services. Due to medical conditions related to their disability and the frequent prescription of medication

000031

The Honorable Josh Green, M.D.  
The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro  
Page 2  
February 13, 2008

such as Dilantin and Mellaril, a full range of dental care services becomes essential and cost effective.

HB 2541 would appropriate funds for Hamakua Health Center to operate a pilot program to provide hospital dentistry services. We feel the provision in the bill will be a step forward to address the need for additional dental resources and provide other alternatives for dental care for the Big Island. The Big Island community has for many years expressed the challenges involved for people to access timely dental services without having to travel to Oahu. The cost and time involved to travel to Oahu for dental services are significant. Although this provision is specific to the County of Hawaii, we recognize the need for access to dental services on a statewide basis and hope that other Counties, such as Maui and Kauai, can benefit from future legislative appropriations.

We applaud the Legislature's initiative through HB 2541 in addressing the dental care needs on the Big Island. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in **strong support of HB 2541.**

Sincerely,



Waydette K.Y. Cabral  
Executive Administrator

000032



## **Hawai'i Primary Care Association**

345 Queen Street, Suite 601 Honolulu, HI 96813  
Tel (808) 536-8442 Fax (808) 524-0347

To: **The House Committee on Health**  
The Hon. Josh Green, MD, Chair  
The Hon. John Mizuno, Vice Chair

**The House Committee on Human Services & Housing**  
The Hon. Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair  
The Hon. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

### **Testimony in Support of House Bill 2541** **Making an Appropriation for Hospital-Based Dentistry Services in the** **County Hawai'i**

**Submitted by Beth Giesting, CEO**  
**February 13, 2008, 8:00 a.m. agenda, Room 329**

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association strongly supports this measure, which would appropriate funds to develop a pilot project for hospital-based dentistry services in Hawai'i County. Such a program is needed to ensure that children, people with development disabilities, and certain others get dental care that requires anesthesia and surgical support not available in an outpatient setting.

Hamakua Health Center is an exemplary organization serving the needs of North Hawai'i. They are about to embark on dental services and will be involved in a new community-based pediatric dental residency program. There is a critical need for this program in Hawai'i since we have some of the most abysmal dental statistics in the nation. Our State Dental Health Division provides data on oral health that show that decayed or filled primary teeth among children in Hawai'i, ages 5–9, are more than double and baby bottle tooth decay is nearly triple the national rate for those conditions. At the same time, we under-perform in meeting children's dental treatment needs and in the application of dental sealants. The proposed pediatric residency program will also be able to address woefully unmet needs for children and adults with developmental disabilities who are greatly underserved by our dental care system. There is also a serious shortage of services for children and adults with development disabilities.

This bill is important because the pediatric residency will not be able to start until Hamakua Health Center and other participating health centers arrange with hospitals to use their operating rooms when needed. Developing this capacity on the island of Hawai'i will be very cost-effective since the Medicaid program will no longer have to pay for travel to Honolulu as often for surgical services.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this bill. We believe that it addresses a very important barrier to the oral health of an important group of Hawai'i residents.

000033



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
EAST HAWAII OFFICE  
75 Aupuni Street, Room 105  
Hilo, Hawaii 96720  
PHONE: (808) 933-8843  
February 13, 2008

The Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Chair  
House Committee on Health  
and

The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
Twenty-Fourth Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representatives Green and Shimabukuro and Members of the Committees:

**SUBJECT: HB 2541 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR HOSPITAL-BASED  
DENTISTRY SERVICES IN THE COUNTY OF HAWAII**

My name is Howard Marks.

I am writing to you on behalf of both the East and West Hawaii Developmental Disabilities (DD) Committees, advisory committees to the DD Council, comprised of self-advocates, family members, private and public service providers, and County agencies. I am also a member of the Hawaii Oral Health Task Force, which has prioritized supporting and developing the implementation of hospital dentistry for several years. I respectfully ask for your support of HB 2541 – Making an Appropriation for Hospital-Based Dentistry Services in the County of Hawaii.

Hawaii County residents who have Medicaid/Quest Insurance or are Low-Income Uninsured continue to have inadequate access to dental care. These include children (22,000) and individuals who are medically fragile, developmentally disabled, mentally ill and frail elderly. Hawaii County has the Federal Designation of a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) based on the number of available and accessible professionals in an area that serve our low-income population.

The tragic and costly consequences of oral neglect are enormous. There are no State dental clinics to support acute dental services in the County of Hawaii. Currently, the Big Island has no pedodontists accepting Medicaid

000034

The Honorable Josh Green, M.D.  
The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro  
Page 2  
February 13, 2008

People with DD in the County of Hawaii requiring acute dental services in a hospital face great challenges accessing care in an appropriate and timely manner. Hospital dentistry offers access to anesthesia. There is nowhere in the County of Hawaii that can provide anesthesia and dental care for someone with DD receiving Medicaid. This need has been identified as a major health priority by the Hawaii County Oral Health Task Force. Currently, there is a three-month waiting list at Queens Hospital, our only point of access for acute care for people who require hospital dentistry services. The many who are waiting are suffering in pain due to lack of treatment. .

Hospital dentistry is critical in order to avoid the tragic and costly consequences of oral neglect. This bill will provide a cost effective means to assure that hospital dentistry services for acute care are available to our County's most vulnerable citizens.

Data reported in the 2004 Hawaii Oral Health Profile, authored by the Dental Health Division, includes data reported by Community Case Management Corporation to the MedQuest Division, Hawaii State Department of Human Services, from the years 2002-2004.

As reported in the year 2004, the number of "unique individuals" from Hawaii County receiving Medicaid projected to be transported off island to receive dental services includes 438 children in East and West Hawaii. It was also projected in 2004, due to multiple trips needed for off island dental care, approximately 1,427 off island trips were to be made by children to access dental care. This data does not include the number of inter-island trips requiring an attendant to assist the recipient. For example, in 2003, 86 percent of all trips included an accompanying attendant.

From 2002-2004, the data reports approximately 2,400 children traveled inter-island for dental care. Over 20 percent of these children required more than one round trip.

The current health disparity is a disservice to children and adults with DD, as well as wasteful disservice to the taxpayers in our State.

We appreciate the Legislature's initiative, through HB 2541, in addressing the dental needs of the DD population on the Big Island. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in strong support of HB 2541.

Sincerely,

Howard Marks  
Program Specialist

Reference:

2004 Hawaii Oral Health Profile, Mark H.K. Greer, DMD, M.P.H., Dental Health Division, Hawaii State Department of Health, October 2004, Page 18.

**000035**

*The Arc of Kona*

PO Box 127 Kealahou, HI 96750; 808-323-2626 phone, 808-323-9444 fax

February 11, 2008

Hawaii State Legislature

Representative Joshua Green, Chair, Committees on Health

Representative Maile Shimabukuro, Chair, Committee on Human Services and Housing

Hearing scheduled for Wednesday February 13, 2008 in Room 329

Re: HB 2541-Making an Appropriation for Hospital Based Dentistry in the County of Hawaii.

Copy of Testimony to committee clerk, Room 436

Dear Representatives Green and Shimabukuro, Respective Chairs for Health and Housing/Human Services

I am writing in support of HB 2541. As the President/CEO of the Arc of Kona, an organization dedicated to supporting people with disabilities so that they may learn to live the most independent lives as possible and to join their communities to contribute the talents they do possess, I am familiar with the great need and the corresponding lack of resources to address the dental needs of this population. Poor dental health leads to much greater and more dangerous long term health concerns. If there were resources to treat the dental health needs of this population, more serious illness could be prevented.

It is within your jurisdiction to support this bill and make a huge difference in the lives of the vulnerable populations that depend on services. Please support this bill and pass it out of committee with approval.

Thank You,

Gretchen Lawson, President/CEO

**000036**



**Hamakua Health Center, Inc.**

**45-549 Plumeria Street  
Honokaa, Hawaii 96727**

**To: House Committee on Health**  
The Honorable Josh Green, MD, Chair

**House Committee on Human Services & Housing**  
The Honorable Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2541**  
**Making an Appropriation for Hospital-Based Dentistry Services in the**  
**County of Hawai'i**

**Submitted by Susan B. Hunt, MHA, Executive Director**  
*Wednesday, 02-13-08 at 8:00 am in House conference room 329*

The Hamakua Health Center, Inc. strongly endorses this measure, which would support a pilot program to ensure access to hospital-based dental care.

The island of Hawai'i has over 40,000 Med-QUEST enrollees; about half of them are minors and 20% are elderly or disabled. There is a substantial and long-standing gap between dental needs and dental access for these vulnerable people. Very few dentists on island accept new Medicaid patients. Consequently, nearly 2/3rds of Medicaid-eligible children received no dental services in the last year for which data were available (CY 2003). Neglected care, in turn, leads to more serious needs which may require extensive procedures and sedation in hospital operating rooms. While hospital OR services for Medicaid-covered children are very limited anywhere in the state, they are not currently available at all in Hawai'i County. This means that the child or adult with disabilities needs to be flown to Honolulu with a parent or guardian for a dental procedure.

This bill would provide \$200,000 in funding to pay for a care coordinator and equipment to start providing hospital dentistry services linked to North Hawai'i Community Hospital or some other facility in Hawai'i County. Hamakua Health Center would oversee the project and provide a report to the legislature about the successes, challenges, and costs associated with the pilot. It is expected that this project would result in substantial cost savings for the Medicaid program due to reduced transportation costs. It should be noted that the project is also linked to a new community-based pediatric residency program that will provide expertise and staff resources. This residency requires no state funding but does depend on the availability of a hospital OR when necessary.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to testify in favor of this measure and regret that I can't join you for today's hearing.

**000037**



Sue McConnell  
Chair

Joane Henley  
Vice Chair

Wendy Holden  
Treasurer

Carol Down  
Director

Kathleen McRae  
Director

Marylei Drake  
Director

John Simmerman  
Director

Terry Lewis  
Director

Deann Canuteson  
President

West Hawaii/  
Main Office  
79-7460 Mamalahoa Hwy  
Suite 212  
Kealahou, HI 96750  
Phone: 808-322-9333  
Fax: 808-322-9334

East Hawaii  
P.O. Box 1545  
Pahoa, HI 96778  
Phone: 808-965-7699  
Fax: 808-965-7714

Tax ID#  
99-0350129

To: House Health and Human Services & Housing Committee Clerk

From: Deann Canuteson, President

Date: 2-12-08

Re: HB 2541 - Support

I work daily with persons on Medicaid and/or Quest. Residents of the island of Hawaii, both children and adults have inadequate access to dental care. The HB 2541 clearly identifies the tragedy of poor or total lack of dental care on the Island of Hawaii.

This measure is one step toward reducing the exorbitant costs of only treating "emergency" dental needs by flying them to Oahu for each treatment. Many of those flown to Oahu also require an attendant to accompany them (thus doubling the cost) to the State of Hawaii.

I urge you to support this small measure to address this very apparent need on the Island of Hawaii.

I know you are extremely busy, and I thank you for the time and effort you put into supporting Hawaii residents.

Where people achieve and enjoy a self determined quality of life

000038