

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER, ESQ.  
DIRECTOR

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STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 4, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Michael Y. Magaoay, Chair  
House Committee on Legislative Management

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: H.C.R. 15, H.D. 1 – REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO ASSESS THE  
SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL EFFECTS OF REQUIRING HEALTH  
INSURERS TO OFFER COVERAGE FOR HEARING AIDS

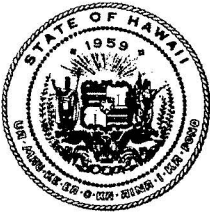
Hearing: Friday, April 4, 2008, 2:55 p.m.  
Conference Room 423, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to request the auditor to conduct a social and financial assessment of requiring health insurers to offer coverage for hearing aids.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) has no objections to the proposed resolution and will fully cooperate and assist the Auditor and provide information, if available, to facilitate an assessment.

The Department wishes to point out that the Hawaii Medicaid Program provides coverage for hearing aids as part of the durable medical equipment. In addition, the Medicaid Program covers cochlear implants for conditions meeting specific medical criteria, for children and adults as prescribe by a licensed physician and fitted by a licensed practitioner.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this resolution.



## DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 101 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814  
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April 4, 2008

### TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT

House Concurrent Resolution 15, HD1 – Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Effects of Requiring Health Insurers to Offer Coverage for Hearing Aids

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is a statewide board with seventeen (17) members appointed by the Governor, thirteen (13) of whom are persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full integration, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society. This testimony represents a position voted upon by the Legislative Committee of the Board.

We support HCR 15, HD1 Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Effects of Requiring Health Insurers to Offer Coverage for Hearing Aids. We are aware that it is a requirement for a study to be conducted related to the social and financial effects of requiring health insurers to offer coverage for hearing aids per Section 21-51, Hawaii Revised Statutes. DCAB supports this study in order to obtain necessary information to amend the statute in an informed and appropriate manner to mandate coverage for hearing aids.

Hearing is essential to most individuals in their daily lives (waking up to an alarm clock, listening for our children or the radio, or to talking on the phone). It allows us to be connected to others in our environment. A hearing aid enhances the person's ability to interact independently in the community, but the cost is prohibitive to the average adult. Being able to have some of the cost covered by a health plan would enable some individuals to be able to obtain a hearing aid without feeling guilty that the money is better spent on some other necessity. An individual should not have to choose between hearing or not hearing when a hearing aid is available as a viable option.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICIA M. NIELSEN  
Chairperson  
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI  
Executive Director

*DAN NAGATA, SR*

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*Friday, April 4, 2008 in Conference Room 423 at 2:55 pm*

*TESTIMONY ON HCR 15, HD 1, Hearing Aids*

*To Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of House Committee on Legislative Management:*

*I am Dan Nagata, Sr. I am deaf and a resident of Honolulu, Hawaii.*

*I support HCR 15, HD 1, because I wear hearing aids. Vocational Rehabilitation help me get new hearing aids. Very important for me to have hearing aids but they are too expensive. Without a full time job, I can't afford to buy hearing aids myself. Hope that health insurance will cover hearing aids in full.*

*Please pass this resolution to get full health insurance coverage for hearing aids AND batteries.*

*Mahalo for let me testify.*

*Sincerely,*

*Dan Nagata, Sr.*