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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

S.B. 2051, Relating to Health

Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D.
Director of Health

January 31, 2008, 1:30 p.m.

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) appreciates the intent of this measure and
2 already has several efforts to address the early identification and intervention/treatment for hearing and
3 vision concerns. The Department acknowledges that resources would be necessary to fully implement
4 and evaluate a mandated screening program for children; however, we are concerned that such an
5 appropriation would adversely impact priorities as set forth in the Executive Supplemental Budget.

6 **Fiscal Implications:** An unspecified amount in general funds is appropriated for FY 2009.

7 **Purpose and Justification:** This bill establishes a hearing and vision screening program for newborns,
8 pre-kindergartners, and children in school grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. Screening, early identification, and
9 intervention/treatment for vision and hearing will help children in their ability to learn in school, through
10 supporting the development of language, cognitive, and social skills. Early childhood screening
11 contributes toward achieving the community goal that "All children will be safe, healthy, and ready to
12 succeed in school." Survey and other data indicate the need to improve screening.

13 The DOH currently supports hearing and vision screening through the Newborn Hearing
14 Screening Program and provision of funding to community health centers statewide for primary care
15 services for the uninsured. A former DOH School Health Hearing and Vision Program (mandated by

1 HRS §321-101) provided hearing and vision screening but was abolished in 1995 due to budgetary
2 restrictions and the program was not deemed a critical public health function as such screenings are part
3 of best pediatric practice.

4 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Hawaii Pacific Health

55 Merchant Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 • hawaiiapacifichealth.org

Thursday, January 31, 2008 – 1:30 pm
Conference Room 016

The Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

To: The Honorable Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
The Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

From: Laura Bonilla
Director of Pediatrics

Re: **Testimony in Strong Support of SB 2051
Relating to Health**

Dear Honorable Committee Chairs and Members:

My name is Laura Bonilla, Director of Pediatrics for Hawaii Pacific Health at Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children.

Since learning is mostly accomplished through the sense of vision and hearing, screening helps to identify any barriers that would impair a child's ability to learn. The screening process can help determine which infants and children may need further diagnostic assessment, or an educational evaluation.

Hearing loss is the most common congenital condition in the United States. Every day, 33 infants are born with some degree of hearing loss. Children continue to need to be screened for hearing loss beyond the New Born period. Newborns can be lost to follow-up screening and not all hearing loss can be identified at birth; progressive and late-onset hearing loss may occur throughout the early childhood years and may be barriers to learning.

35% of preschoolers will have repeated ear infections that nearly always cause a temporary hearing loss that can significantly disrupt language acquisition and other education progress. Hence, continuous hearing screening programs are critical for identifying a wide range of hearing health needs that are not identified through hospital-based new born hearing screening programs.

Vision disorders are the fourth most common disability among children in the United States and the leading cause of impaired conditions in childhood.

We are writing in Strong Support of SB 2051 which appropriates funds for hearing and vision screening for newborns, children, and teenagers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in Strong Support of Senate Bill 2051.

KAPI'OLANI
MEDICAL CENTER
AT PALI MOMI



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MEDICAL CENTER
FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN



Straub
CLINIC & HOSPITAL



Wilcox Health

Date of Hearing: January 31, 2008

Committee: Senate Human Services and
Public Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: ~~S B No 2051~~ Relating to Health

Purpose: Appropriates funds for hearing and vision screening for newborns, children, and teenagers.

Department's Position: ~~The Department of Education supports S B No 2051.~~ As children change and grow, so do their health and education needs. Even mild hearing or vision loss can have a great impact on learning and student achievement. Therefore, the hearing and vision screening would provide vital information to families and schools about the ability of students to receive information. The Department is dedicated to giving students the tools and skills necessary for them to benefit from education to become successful, contributing members of the community. However, we defer to the Department of Health, the identified expending agency, as to their funding priority for this program.