

SB 2406

**PRESENTATION OF THE
BOARD OF PHARMACY**

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2008

Monday, February 4, 2008
1:15 p.m.

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 2406, RELATING TO TELEPHARMACY.

TO THE HONORABLE DAVID Y. IGE, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Dr. Elwin Goo, Chairperson of the Board of Pharmacy ("Board") and I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Board. Subject to amendments to Senate Bill No. 2406, which the Board believes would benefit more residents of the State of Hawaii, the Board would support this bill.

The purpose of this bill authorizes the use of telepharmacy technology by those pharmacies that service certain federally qualified health centers participating in the federal 340B Pharmaceutical Purchasing Program of the federal government. It also appears the bill is crafted to apply to one particular federally qualified health center. This bill further limits prescription drugs dispensed using this technology to those prescription medications for acute medical conditions. Lastly, to implement the practice of telepharmacy, the Board is to promulgate administrative rules.

First, the Board is not in support of a law that has a limited scope of application. The Board supports the practice of telepharmacy and believes it is a technology that should be afforded to all pharmacies. In turn, a broader segment of Hawaii residents can be afforded easier access to meet their healthcare needs.

The Board further wishes to iterate that requirements to practice telepharmacy should not reflect the practice of only one pharmacy. While the Board does not dispute the credibility of

Hoola Lahui Hawaii, crafting a law applicable only to its operation is inappropriate and, more so, would not conform to standards the Board has established in supporting telepharmacy.

For the Committee's information, S.B. No. 232, Relating to Remote Dispensing Pharmacies, was introduced during the 2007 legislative session but was not heard. S.B. No. 232 was a product of numerous meetings with the Board and the Hawaii Pharmacists Association to develop requirements and criteria for the use of such technology to ensure the safe handling and dispensing of prescription medications for patient safety. It is the standards and requirements set forth in S.B. No. 232, Sections 2 through 6, that the Board supports. It is a proposal that applies to all pharmacies and is geared towards optimum access for and protecting consumers. Except for controlled substances, there is no limitation on the medications that can be dispensed from a remote dispensing pharmacy. Further, as requirements and standards are set forth in S.B. No. 232, the necessity for rules is mitigated, allowing for immediate implementation effective upon approval of the bill.

The Board presumes that the requirements and standards set forth in S.B. No. 232 may not be attainable by Hoola Lahui Hawaii. However, despite its good practices now, the Board cannot compromise what it believes are minimum standards for the safe operation of a remote dispensing pharmacy and overall patient safety.

The Board strongly requests that sections 2 through 6 of S.B. No. 232 replace sections 2 and 3 of S.B. No. 2406. Further, as referred to in S.B. No. 232, the Board finds the use of the generic term "remote dispensing pharmacy", instead of the term "telepharmacy", to be a more accurate description of the activity. Also as "Telepharmacy" is part of the name of a company that developed this technology, referring to "Telepharmacy" may inadvertently limit the use of this remote dispensing technology to only one manufacturer.

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We ask your favorable consideration of our amendments to this bill and thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2406.



Hawai'i Primary Care Association

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To: **Senate Committee on Health**
The Hon. David Ige, Chair
The Hon. Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2406

Relating to Telepharmacy

Submitted by Beth Giesting, CEO

1:15 p.m. February 4, 2008

Room 016

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association strongly supports this bill which would promote the availability of telepharmacy services used by federally-qualified health centers. In overwhelming proportions, patients served by community health centers are impoverished; uninsured; and have cultural, language, and transportation barriers. Due to a variety of socio-economic challenges, it is a struggle for many health center patients to comply with physician orders, including getting a prescription filled. We believe telepharmacy is one way to improve the odds that a patient will get the recommended prescription drug and use it as directed.

We ask that the Committee amend the bill to delete the provision allowing telepharmacy for only patients with acute conditions. We believe that the increased compliance that can be achieved by using telepharmacy is equally applicable for patients with chronic conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this bill.

February 4, 2008

To: **The Senate Committee on Health**
The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 2406
Relating to Telepharmacy

Submitted by Grace Kamai, Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i, Board Director
February 4, 2008 1:15 p.m. Agenda, Room 016

I strongly **support** this bill which will restore telepharmacy services at Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i (HLH), a Federally Qualified Health Center and a Native Hawaiian Health Care System. This critical service provides acute medication to patients directly at each of the two clinic sties operated by HLH. This is especially important for uninsured patients who would not otherwise obtain the drugs they need to improve their immediate health. HLH provides these medications at a reduced cost to those who otherwise would not be able to afford these medications. The technology allows HLH to reduce costs further by having a central pharmacy location dispense using the machines to dispense acute medications at each clinic.

The telepharmacy service was stopped in April of 2007 due to a change in clarification made by the Hawaii Board of Pharmacy which stated that a pharmacist must be onsite to dispense medications from the machines negating the need for the technology, increasing the costs to dispense the necessary medications, and decreasing the patients' access to the medications.

This bill is necessary for Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i to resume this needed service in our health centers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this bill.

Date: February 1,, 2008

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

From: David Peters
Chief Executive Officer
Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i

Testimony in Support
SB 2406, Relating to Telepharmacy
Monday, February 4, 2008
1:15 PM Conference Room 016

I strongly SUPPORT this bill which will restore telepharmacy services at Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i, a federally qualified health center and a Native Hawaiian Health Care System. This critical service provides acute medications to patients directly at each of the two clinic sites operated by HLH. This is especially important for uninsured patients who would not otherwise obtain the drugs they need to improve their immediate health. HLH provides these medications at a reduced cost to those who otherwise would not be able to afford these medications. The technology allows HLH to reduce costs further by having a central pharmacy location dispense using the machines to dispense acute medications at each clinic.

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This bill is necessary for Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i to resume this needed service in our health centers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this bill.

Testimony of
Phyllis Dendle
Director of Government Affairs

L A T E

Senate Committee on Health
The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Monday, February 4, 2008
1:15 PM
Conference Room 016

SB 2406 RELATING TO TELEPHARMACY

Chair Ige and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2406 permitting the remote dispensing of pharmaceuticals.

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports the intent of this bill but requests the committees to instead consider SB 2459 Relating to Remote Dispensing.

We support legislating remote dispensing for the same reasons described in this bill. We think we will see improved compliance with drug therapy if patients have immediate access to their prescriptions and we think this will offer access to medication in places where a pharmacist is unavailable onsite.

However, we think that the benefits of remote dispensing should be available throughout the state and not just in federally qualified health centers participating in the Federal 340B Pharmaceutical Purchasing Program. SB2459 permits a wider range of participants. This bill provides very little details on the use of remote dispensing while SB2459 is more specific. In addition we think clinics where remote dispensing is available should be able to determine the kinds of products available via remote dispensing. It is conceivable, for example, that first prescriptions of drugs for chronic medical conditions such as heart disease and high cholesterol could appropriately be dispensed remotely.

We request that you hold this bill and consider passing SB 2459. Thank you for your consideration.