

SB2515

Measure Title:

RELATING TO MOLOKAI GENERAL HOSPITAL.

Report Title:

Molokai General Hospital; X-ray Unit; Appropriation (\$)

Description:

Appropriates moneys for fiscal year 2008-2009 to purpose an x-ray unit for Molokai general hospital.

Introducer(s):

ENGLISH, CHUN OAKLAND, HOOSER, Espero, Hee, Ige, Kim, Sakamoto

Current Referral:

HTH, WAM



**TESTIMONY OF THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE, 2008**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 2515, RELATING TO MOLOKAI GENERAL HOSPITAL.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH.

DATE: Friday, February 8, 2008 **TIME:** 1:15 PM

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 016
Deliver to: Committee Clerk, Room 215, 1 copy

TESTIFIER(S): Mark J. Bennett, Attorney General
or Blair Goto, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Ige and Members of the Committee:

The Attorney General provides the following comments and recommendations concerning this measure.

The bill would appropriate \$400,000 from general revenues for fiscal year 2008-2009 "to purchase an x-ray unit for Molokai General Hospital." The Department of Health is identified as the expending agency.

If the intent of this bill is for Molokai General Hospital to receive the \$400,000 from the Department of Health to purchase an x-ray unit (and assuming that Molokai General Hospital meets the requirements for grant recipients in section 42F-103, Hawaii Revised Statutes), the most straightforward method of carrying out this intent is by way of a grant made pursuant to chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes. To amend this bill to make a chapter 42F grant, the bill would need to have: (1) findings added to section 1 of the bill as to Molokai General Hospital and the public purpose served by making the grant and (2) grant language added to section 2 of the bill.

For example, on page 3 of the bill at the start of line 4, the following sentences could be added to section 1: "Molokai General Hospital is a Hawaii nonprofit corporation. This appropriation would help Molokai General Hospital to meet the on-going needs of the population of the island of Molokai and would help assure the health,

safety, and welfare of residents of and visitors to the island of Molokai." Although the public purpose may be inferred from the description of Molokai General Hospital's functions and the population it serves, it would be best to make the public purpose explicit so that there are no questions in that regard. The phrase "as a grant pursuant to chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes," could be added on page 3 of the bill near the end of line 9 to section 2 of the bill. The first sentence of section 2 would then read: "There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$400,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 as a grant pursuant to chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to purchase an x-ray unit for Molokai General Hospital." New material is shown in italics.

Absent these amendments, it is unclear how the Department of Health could contract with Molokai General Hospital for the purchase of an x-ray unit by any means without a competitive procurement including issuing a chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, request for proposals and awarding a contract to the agency submitting the most responsive proposal.

We respectfully request that if this measure is to be passed, the recommended amendments be made by this Committee.



MOLOKA'I GENERAL HOSPITAL

P.O. Box 408 • Kaunakakai, Hawaii 96748 • Phone (808) 553-5331 • FAX: (808) 553-3133

TESTIMONY SENATE BILL 2515

February 06. 2008

TO:

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

FROM:

Janice Kalanihuia, President Molokai General Hospital
Sandra Brazzel, M.D., Assistant Chief of Staff, Molokai General Hospital
N. Emmett Aluli, M.D., Medical Director External Affairs, Molokai General Hospital

SUBJECT:

Testimony in Support of S.B.2515 Molokai General Hospital; X-ray unit

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S.B.2515. This bill seeks an appropriation of \$500,000 to Molokai General Hospital (MGH) for the purpose of purchasing a new x-ray unit.

Molokai General Hospital's 14 year-old x-ray unit is in need of replacement. The unit presently in use is an analog system, using film rather than standard-of-care digital images. An analog unit is like taking a picture using 110 film (remember that?) while a digital x-ray unit has all the features and clarity of a digital camera photo.

MGH is the sole 24/7 provider of healthcare on Molokai. We must be able to quickly diagnose and treat or transfer patients with healthcare issues ranging from pneumonia, to severe trauma. A digital x-ray unit allows for faster viewing of images, images that are clear and easily manipulated to magnify areas in question, and does away with costly/time consuming retakes. Molokai has no radiologist, so physicians "wet read" x-rays, but must send them off for final reading. With a digital unit images can be quickly transmitted to a radiologist.

In addition, there are fiscal and environmental advantages of a digital unit:

- Eliminates need to purchase expensive x-ray film.
- Eliminates need to buy expensive and difficult to dispose of film processing chemicals.
- Eliminates need to spend staff time purging old films and the complex process needed to dispose of the mercury laden films.

Thank you for considering this request. Your support of Molokai General Hospital in the past has been greatly appreciated by staff and community.



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TESTIMONY SENATE BILL 2515

February 06. 2008

TO:

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

FROM:

William L. Thomas, Jr., M.D.
Internal Medicine
Chief of Medical Staff
Medical Director, Clinical and Internal Affairs

SUBJECT:

Testimony in Support of S.B.2515 Molokai General Hospital; X-ray unit

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S.B.2515. This bill seeks an appropriation of \$500,000 to Molokai General Hospital (MGH) for the purpose of purchasing a new x-ray unit.

Moloka'i General Hospital is a part of the Queens Health Systems and is the only hospital on Moloka'i. It is a critical access hospital and is accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. We provide access to care 24 hours a day through our emergency room, and our outpatient clinic provides primary care and space for off-island specialist to hold clinic hours. Inpatient acute care is provided for such illnesses as infections and electrolyte disturbances, but we transfer more seriously ill cases to Honolulu or Maui. We also provide skilled nursing services for patients requiring rehabilitation after a stroke or surgery.

The physicians and staff at Moloka'i General Hospital must be able to stabilize, triage, and diagnose any patient that presents at the facility. An important part of the care we provide is the ability to obtain diagnostic imaging studies quickly. There is a state of the art CT unit that replaced the old CT scanner 2 years ago when the new wing was built. The current x-ray unit is 14 years old and uses films and developing solutions. Whereas the images from the CT are sent digitally and instantly to Queen's Medical Center (QMC) for reading, the x-ray films, once read

by a physician here, are sent by a scanner to QMC for final reading.

The unit we would like to purchase is a digital x-ray unit that would provide quick and high quality imaging. It would offer the ability to enhance the images including magnification and digital manipulation for improved diagnostic potential. It would allow digital storage instead of the room full of films that the current unit requires, and eliminates the use of expensive and toxic chemicals used for developing the films.

Moloka'i General Hospital is committed to providing the best possible emergency care, acute care and primary care services possible to the 7,500 residents of this island and our visitors. The health and safety of our patients will be enhanced by bringing our imaging capabilities up to the standard of care.

testimony

From: Scotty Schaefer [scotty.schaefer@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2008 12:44 PM
To: testimony
Subject: Testimony in Favor SB 2515- Senate Health Committee

Testimony in Favor of Senate Bill 2515

Senate Committee on Health

Senator David Ige, Chair

Friday- 2-8-08

1:15 P.M.

Aloha Senator Ige and Honored Members of the Senate Health Committee:

My name is Scotty Schaefer and I have been a 911 paramedic on Molokai for over 25 years. My job includes transporting sick and injured patients to Molokai General Hospital. Since I live on Molokai, I have also been a patient at MGH. I have also served in many capacities in health care planning and currently am the facilitator of the Maui County EMS Advisory Committee.

I am well acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of the health care system on Molokai, in Maui County, and throughout the State of Hawaii. I know there is an increasing call for health care monies for many worthwhile and helpful projects. I also know that the shortage of specialists in the neighbor islands has left our communities in crisis. One of the severe shortages is in radiology. Most facilities now rely on "night hawks", radiologists who interpret diagnostic imaging (like x-ray) from places distant from where the patient is located. It can be a dream come true for small places like Molokai General who never had the patient volume to warrant a full time radiologist if the right equipment is available to transmit those images for interpretation.

This has led to the correct diagnosis and treatment of many critical patients with head injuries, thoracic and abdominal trauma, as well as orthopedic injuries. This new trend in imaging also has hidden benefits that are cost saving: sending home patients who otherwise would have been transported to hospitals on Oahu where the appropriate imaging and interpretation are located. These facilities are often bursting at the seams. The last thing they need is to have patients clog their system who don't need to be there. Digital x-rays and imaging have saved countless lives and have saved untold thousands of dollars.

2/7/2008

But the current MGH x-ray machine is not up to current standards. It still uses the old x-ray film technology which is much less clear, uses toxic chemical to develop the film, and takes more time to get the correct images. Often, when time is critical, images are not clear enough for a radiologist to see the finer details to make a clear diagnosis. This leads to guessing, re-takes, and delays in treatment. I have witnessed this in critical patients many, many times.

And it is not just critical patients. I have my own story as a health care consumer.

In 2001 I fell down some steps and injured my leg. Being a 911 paramedic, of course I delayed in going to the hospital. When the pain was finally unbearable, I went in to have my leg x-rayed. The image quality was good enough to show that I had been walking around and working on a fractured left fibula (the smaller bone in the lower leg). There was no urgency for a simple fracture. I was placed in a boot and made arrangements to see the orthopedist in 5 days.

When I arrived on Oahu, they took a digital x-ray. It was then that the radiologist and orthopedist got excited. They saw something abnormal on the digital x-ray. The Molokai x-ray of the leg wasn't clear enough to reveal that the ligaments in the ankle had torn off, taking 7 pieces of bone with it. I had an MRI that confirmed this and later revealed that I had also blown out the left knee. The MGH x-ray had incorrectly shown that surgery was not urgently needed to fix my injuries. Their delay caused me to miss the window that was needed for surgery. Instead of a surgical correction, the ankle was left to heal on its own. For 2 months, I was in physical therapy, rehabbing the leg, ankle, and the knee, unsure whether the ankle would be strong enough for me to work. To this day I have been advised that diving with fins could cause the ankle to snap. Thankfully, I was able to return to work, but had to re-engineer how I lift and carry patients.

It would have been tragic if my career was stopped because of a fuzzy image that could not be correctly interpreted. The costs for my permanent disability alone would save more than the \$400,000 price tag of a new x-ray unit.

I urge you to allow Molokai residents and visitors access to 21st century imaging. This project will more than pay for itself by reducing death and morbidity over the lifetime of this equipment.

Mahalo for your time

Scotty Schaefer M.I.C.T.

Kaunakakai, Molokai

February 7, 2008