

LINDA LINGLE  
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In reply, please refer to:  
File.

**House Committee on Health**

**SB 3076, Relating to Epidemiologists**

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

**March 19, 2008, 8:30 a.m.**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department strongly supports this Administration bill.

2 **Fiscal Implications:** None

3 **Purpose and Justification:** This measure would allow the Department to establish and fill  
4 epidemiologist positions, without regard to chapters 76 and 89, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The current  
5 civil service epidemiological specialist position series is not sufficient for recruiting and retaining staff  
6 with the technical expertise and multidisciplinary skills necessary to build and maintain the  
7 Department's capacity for public health surveillance and response. Epidemiologists function at a higher  
8 level than epidemiological specialists, designing studies to address recurring public health problems  
9 unique to our environment, collaborating with University colleagues to conduct applied research,  
10 designing and evaluating health surveillance systems, and synthesizing the results of surveillance,  
11 investigations, and new scientific developments for use by public health decision-makers.

12 Our citizens need highly qualified, experienced epidemiologists to protect the State from new  
13 and re-emerging diseases and to interrupt outbreaks rapidly, to minimize their impact on our people and  
14 economic environment.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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