



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

**Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
April 3, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.**

by
Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
and
Dr. Gary K. Ostrander
Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SCR 94– URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO BEGIN REBUILDING THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH BY 2012

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Bertram, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR 94. While we continue to focus efforts on the fiscal stability of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) and the emergence of the Cancer Center project, the commitment of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa toward eventual reemerging for the School of Public Health has not wavered.

In late 2005 we submitted and received from the National Institutes of Health – Centers for Disease Control (NIH-CDC) a planning grant for reopening the University of Hawai'i Asia-Pacific School of Public Health. These funds (nearly 100K) have allowed us to make significant strides in developing a vision for reemergence that meets the needs of our stakeholders as well as develop a business plan to insure financial stability.

As such, the projected time line of 2012 to begin rebuilding is most reasonable and we would respectfully suggest that this effort is already underway. To their credit, the Department of Public Health Sciences also continues to make significant strides toward that goal.

Thank you for your interest in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

45-606 Keole Street
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
April 1, 2008

Representative Jerry Chang, Chair
Representative Joe Bertram III, Vice-chair
Committee on Higher Education

RE: Thursday, April 3, 2008 Hearing

Support of SCR 94 - Urging the University of Hawaii to begin rebuilding the School of Public Health by 2012

Chair Chang, Vice-chair Bertram, and Members of the Committee on Higher Education:

I am a 1995 graduate of the University of Hawaii, School of Public Health in Community Health Education. I was fortunate to have been able to return to school to complete my graduate studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in my field. At that time I had just given birth and had another young child and working full time for the Department of Health. I would not have been able to fulfill my academic goals without the availability of an accredited School of Public in Hawaii.

Since the closing of the School of Public Health in 1999, the number of public health trained applicants have dwindled and created shortages in many of the critical fields that were abundant in the past. These were in the fields of public health education, public health nursing, maternal and child health specialists, gerontologists, and public health administrators. At the Health Department, due to the current shortage of these public health specialists, positions have remained unfilled and/or replaced with individuals who do not have public health training.

As Hawaii is dealing with emerging public health problems and areas of concern, e.g., bioterrorism, disaster preparedness, etc. We are in dire need of having the School of Public Health once again regain its accreditation and to provide training to our state's residents and those individuals in our Asia-Pacific regions to respond to these public health problems appropriately and effectively.

Therefore, I urge the committee to pass SCR 94. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Lynn Murakami-Akatsuka, MPH, CHES
Public Health Educator and Planner

April 3, 2008

Testifier: Nancy S. Partika, RN, MPH

Bill: SCR 94, Urging the University of Hawaii to Rebuild the School of Public Health by 2012.

Committee: House Higher Education

Aloha Chairperson Chang, Vice-Chairperson Bertram and HED Committee Members:

I am a faculty member in Public Health testifying as an individual in strong support for SCR 94, Urging the University of Hawaii to Rebuild the School of Public Health by 2012. I am also a former president of both the Hawaii Public Health Association (2000-2002) and SPH Alumni Association.

The UH School of Public Health (SPH) was established in the 1960's to meet the needs for a public health workforce in Hawaii, Asia and the Pacific, as well as nationally. Hawaii, For 30+ years, the SPH prepared over 3,500 professionals for challenging public health work in epidemiology, gerontology, maternal and child health, health administration and planning, nutrition, and international health, as well as other areas..

The mission of the UH Department of Public Health Sciences (DPHS) is to advance the health of the people of Hawaii, the nation, and the Asia-Pacific region through the education and training of public health professionals, innovative research in public health sciences, and public health service to the community. The Program emphasizes the preparation of future public health leaders who are proficient at employing public health knowledge and practical skills in a culturally-diverse environment.

The knowledge and professional expertise of public health professionals is required in order to:

- **Monitor health status and develop health promotion programs;**
- **Investigate health hazards and provide problem-based solutions;**
- **Engage, inform & educate the general public on personal and public health concerns;**
- **Mobilize community partnerships and collaboration;**
- **Develop policies to support and promote health in local communities;**
- **Enforce public health laws and legal regulations;**
- **Ensure a competent and skilled health PH workforce;**
- **Provide health care services and ensure more effective distribution of health care resources;**
- **Conduct research and evaluate public health programs.**

When the school lost its PH accreditation in 1999 and became a department under the School of Medicine in 2000, many alumni and supporters in the community were devastated by the loss of the only school of public health in the US-Pacific, and very concerned about the monumental efforts it would take to rebuild the SPH again.

Since that time, the Dept. of Public Health Sciences has made slow but steady progress towards rebuilding the School of Public Health. There is more PH faculty to support a greater array of PH specializations needed to train PH workers. There has been recent CEPH re-accreditation, which is essential to the good standing and continuation of the program. More collaboration with the community and other UH programs is occurring and more students are entering PH than has occurred in the past 8 years. Community support for rebuilding the SPH is strong and unwavering, as it is clear that Hawaii faces many public health challenges that can only be addressed with a well-trained and supported PH workforce. There is now a business plan in place to help guide rebuilding the SPH in a well-organized and cost-effective manner.

Workforce surveys indicate that the current public health DOH workforce is aging (the average age is 47); with many retiring (over 45% of HI DOH workers will be able to retire in next few years), having workforce replacement and retention issues (20% vacancy, 14% DOH turnover rate); and with many DOH workers lacking formal education in public health. A recent national report on the public health workforce status recognized Hawaii as one of trouble spots for public health, which was primarily attributed to the closing of Hawaii's School of Public Health and its lingering negative impact on current and future workforce needs of the health sector in Hawaii.

A viable School of Public Health will allow us to better respond to Hawaii's public health needs, including issues relating a potential pandemic flu epidemic, substance use, disparities in health status, environmental health problems, diabetes, elder health, injury prevention, childhood obesity, bioterrorism, SARS, and many other local and global health challenges.

Disparities in health and socioeconomic status as well as existing barriers to access available health care, social and educational services are clearly documented in Hawaii. An estimated 29% of our population now lives on neighbor islands, and a growing number of people lives in suburban and rural areas of Oahu. This sizable population group has expressed significant needs for public health training and education, which is now only minimally accessible.

Reviving our Hawaii School of Public Health brings other advantages. It will increase our eligibility and potential to be awarded more federal grants. It increases our ability to attract and graduate students supported by international scholarship programs. It will allow us to develop distance education programs to facilitate enrollment of students living and working on neighbor islands. There is a recognized the need to expand PH distance education capacity and scope in order to reach more under-represented public health students, to create high-quality local health workforce and also to compete in the national public health educational market with other academic institutions, schools and programs.

We appreciate your strong and unequivocal support for SCR 94 to help us move forward in rebuilding our critically-needed Hawaii School of Public Health for Hawaii by 2012. Thank you for hearing this important public health resolution.

*PAMELA G. LICHTY, MPH
2216 AHA NIU PLACE
HONOLULU, HI 96821
808 735-8001*

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
FROM: PAMELA LICHTY, MPH
RE: SCR 94
DATE: APRIL 3, 2008
URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO BEGIN REBUILDING
THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH BY 2012 – **IN STRONG SUPPORT**

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Bertram and members of the Committee. My name is Pam Lichty and I'm testifying once again today as an alumna of the UH School of Public Health. I earned my Masters of Public Health in Health Services Administration and Planning in 1987.

Like many other graduates, I was distressed to see the school lose its accreditation and was among many who attended countless meetings and wrote dozens of letters to prevent it from closing.

Ever since it closed in 1999, we have been repeatedly assured by several successive administrations that they would bring back a full School of Public Health.

The reasons this is needed are very well articulated in the resolution. I add my voice to those who are calling for the reestablishment of this critical link in health services training in Hawai'i and throughout the Pacific basin. Please pass out SCR 94.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today.

HEDtestimony

From: Jane Do [chungjae@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2008 3:49 PM
To: HEDtestimony
Subject: SCR 94: rebuilding the School of Public Health by 2012

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
DATE: Thursday, April 3, 2008
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 309

Resolution resolution SCR 94: rebuilding the School of Public Health by 2012

Dear members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Jane Chung-Do and I am testifying in support for SCR 94 rebuilding the School of Public Health by 2012. I am currently in my last semester as a Public Health student at UH and will be continuing on to earn my DrPH in Public Health. I believe that Public Health plays a vital role in promoting & protecting the health of Hawaii, Asia, the Pacific, and the US.

For example, 1 in 4 child in Hawaii is obese. Diabetes and other cardiovascular diseases are on the rise in our State. In addition, youth violence is increasing in our schools, while the aging population is steadily increasing. These are concerns that only trained public health professionals can appropriately address. Hawaii's diverse populations and environment creates unique and diverse health needs, making it essential to train professionals in Hawaii.

The Department of Public Health Sciences has made significant strides towards the rebuilding of education, research, and training since the closure of the School in 2000 and have graduated well-qualified professionals. However, most public health professionals in Hawaii are in their 40s and 50s and approaching retirement. University of Hawaii needs to continue training future public health professionals in innovative and comprehensive methods. To do this, the School of Public Health must be rebuilt. Currently, students can choose from 2 specializations in Social and Behavioral Health or Epidemiology.

However, International Health, Biostatistics, and Environmental Health are not offered as they are in other Public Health training.

Without a fully accredited School of Public Health, Hawaii is ineligible to receive maximum federal Public Health research and educational funding. Please support this resolution and support the future of Hawaii's people. Without our health, we cannot enjoy this beautiful place we call home.

Thank you,
Jane Chung-Do

46-129 Punalei Place
Kaneohe, HI 96744

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For example, 1 in 4 child in Hawaii is obese. Diabetes and other cardiovascular diseases are on the rise in our State. In addition, youth violence is increasing in our schools, while the aging population is steadily increasing. These are concerns that only trained public health professionals can appropriately address. Hawaii's diverse populations and environment creates unique and diverse health needs, making it essential to train professionals in Hawaii.

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Thank you,
Jane Chung-Do

46-129 Punalei Place
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Testimony by
Jay Maddock, Ph.D.
Director and Associate Professor
Office of Public Health Studies
University of Hawai`i at Mānoa
April 3, 2008

Honorable Chair Person Chang and Higher Education Committee Members:

I am the Director of the Office of Public Health Studies testifying as an individual in favor of **SCR 94**, Urging the University of Hawai`i to Rebuild the School of Public Health by 2012. My statement on this resolution does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawai`i.

The School of Public Health at the University of Hawai`i was closed in 1999 and reorganized into the Office of Public Health Studies. As an Office, we have been very successful in providing excellence in public health education and research. In 2007, we were awarded seven years of accreditation of our graduate programs by the Council on Education in Public Health, the longest possible. We currently offer training in epidemiology and the social and behavioral health sciences. We will begin offering the Doctorate in Public Health again starting in the fall of 2008. Despite our success as a small program, the lack of a School of Public Health in Hawai`i puts us at grave risk. In almost 10 years, we have not graduated any students in environmental health, health services, health policy and biostatistics. With an aging workforce, the Department of Health will soon be facing numerous vacancies that they are unable to fill with qualified people. The public health threat to Hawai`i is real. Pandemic influenza, SARS, bioterrorism, childhood obesity, the aging population and climate change are all real and present dangers. Faculty from a School of Public Health could inform us about the safety of the sand after the sewage spill in Waikiki or the effects of pharmaceuticals in our water supply.

The Office of Public Health Studies has recently completed a business plan that outlines what it would take to rebuild the School of Public Health. We estimate that the School of Public Health would require about \$4 million annually to operate. This funding would result in 350 newly trained public health workers and an estimated \$45 million in extramural grants. The value of the protection of the people of Hawai`i is of course incalculable.

Your support of this resolution will help us on our path, supporting the expansion of public health education and research in Hawai`i and beginning to stem the public health workforce crisis that faces the state.

March 11, 2008

TO: Honorable Chairperson Jerry L. Chang
Honorable Vice-Chairperson Joe Betram III
Higher Education Committee

FROM: Yuka Jokura Chairperson of Hui Ola Pono (UHM Public Health student group)

RE: Bill SCR 94, Urging the University of Hawaii to Rebuild the School of Public Health by 2012.

I am writing on behalf of the public health student body group in favor of **SCR 94**, Urging the University of Hawai'i to Rebuild the School of Public Health by 2012.

Hawaii is currently facing significant and emerging public health issues requiring a skilled and educated workforce to help address these problems. A substantial percentage of Hawai'i's public health workforce has either retired or is on the verge of retiring, especially those in leadership and mid-level management. Additionally, many non-profits and the public health workforce in rural areas of our neighbor islands are in dire need of replacements to meet the public health demands. As soon-to-be members of the public health workforce in Hawaii, we feel that it is imperative that we have enough well-trained colleagues to work with in order to effectively address these pressing public health issues.

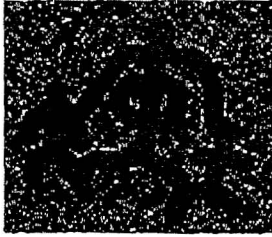
Since the downsizing of the School of Public Health, students are now offered two out of the five areas of public health specializations that are considered standard in other schools of public health. In order for us to adequately respond to problems in public health such as geographic and ethnic health disparities, disaster management, water quality, childhood obesity, epidemics of chronic disease and homelessness we will be required to have more comprehensive training in these other specialization areas.

A School of Public Health can offer greater opportunities for research, education, and community service that broaden the public health infrastructure for Hawai'i, the Pacific and Asia region which would attract and support students. As students and future public health workers we would benefit the most from greater choices and availability in practicum opportunities, classes, fellowship positions and research areas.

On behalf of the Public Health student group, we thank you for taking the time to review this testimony and hear this important public health resolution.

Sincerely

Yuka Jokura, Chairperson
Hui Ola Pono



Hawaii State Rural Health Association
 P.O. Box 558 Kaunakakai, HI 96748
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 jasmikami@yahoo.com

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Testimony for SCR 94 to the House Higher Education Committee
 FAX: 1-800-535-3859

4/2/08

The Hawaii State Rural Health Association would like to express our strongest support for SCR 94, rebuilding the University of Hawaii's School of Public Health by the year 2012. We have conducted published research on the rural health care needs across the state and found that while all communities are unique, there are some themes that are common. Needs that are commonly identified in our rural and underserved communities include:

1. Financial assistance (insurance coverage, medication, free services)
2. Expanding services that are available to rural communities (including telehealth services)
3. Improving access to available services (Long term care, primary care, mental health care, specialty care, substance abuse treatment, health care training and other services)
4. Decreasing drug use
5. Increasing health education and training opportunities for community members
5. Increasing the number of health care providers working in rural areas
6. Increasing cultural sensitivity of providers

The Hawaii State Rural Health Association supports legislation that will increase public health services to rural communities, including legislation that supports expanding the health workforce, developing assistance programs for rural areas, and expanding the facilities available to rural citizens. We expect this to be done in culturally appropriate ways with significant grass roots community involvement at all steps of the process.

Therefore the Hawaii State Rural Health Association fully supports SCR 94, because it will ultimately increase the number of health care providers and services in Hawaii's rural areas.

Sincerely,

Judy Mikami
 Judy Mikami

President, Hawaii State Rural Health Association



COALITION FOR A
TOBACCO-FREE HAWAII

**House Committee on Higher Education
Representative Jerry Chang, Chair & Representative Joe Bertram, Vice Chair**

Hearing schedule: April 3, 2008, 2:00 P.M., Conference Room 309

Re: SCR 94

Testimony in strong support of SCR 94

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Bertram and members of the Committee on Higher Education. My name is Deborah Zysman and I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SCR 194, which would urge the University of Hawaii to begin rebuilding the School of Public Health by 2012.

As most of committee members know, the Coalition, worked diligently to gain passage of Act 295, Hawaii's Smoke-Free Law which is our nation's gold standard. The Public Health Studies department of University Hawaii School of Medicine strongly supported the Coalition's efforts to pass Act 295, clearly recognizing that its passage to be one of the most important public health measures to be enacted in the State of Hawaii.

Rebuilding the school of public health along with its recent accreditation from the Council on Education in Public Health will improve our state's ability to obtain research funding to address our public health needs including; disparities and health care, diabetes, obesity, substance abuse, SARS, and other public health challenges.

Clearly, a fully accredited school of public health in Hawaii is essential to the future health of our State.

Thank you of the opportunity to testify here today on this important resolution.

Sincerely yours,
Deborah Zysman, MPH
Executive Director

March 10, 2008

To: Representative Jerry Chang, Chair
And Members of the Committee on Higher Education

Testimony in Support of SCR 94
Urging the University of Hawaii to Begin Rebuilding
the School of Public Health by 2012

As a graduate of the University of Hawaii School of Public Health and executive director of a health and human services non-profit organization, I strongly support efforts to re-establish the School of Public Health.

Hawaii needs a pool of qualified public health workers to address many serious issues such as maternal and child health, smoking prevention, sexually transmitted infections and environmental health concerns. About 40% of our current public health workers are close to retirement so we need to train the next generation of public health workers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH
48-218 Kamehameha Hwy.
Kaneohe, HI 96744
239-7024
jfclark@hotmail.com