
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The cost of health care in Hawaii and the
2 nation is escalating exponentially, and medicaid reimbursements
3 are frequently less than the actual cost of care. Additionally,
4 health insurance premium costs and prescription drug costs are
5 rising rapidly.

6 In recent years, some of the largest hospitals in the state
7 reported that consumers and employers will likely pay more for
8 labor costs due to increased hospital fees and higher insurance
9 premiums, yet receive fewer services in return.

10 The increase in premium costs translates into increased
11 costs for employers. Under the state's Prepaid Health Care Act,
12 private-sector employers are required to pay the bulk of health
13 insurance premiums for their regular employees who work twenty
14 hours or more per week. Because the Act does not require
15 employers to provide health insurance coverage for employees
16 working fewer than twenty hours a week, increased health
17 insurance costs may lead to employers hiring individuals to work
18 fewer than twenty hours per week to avoid higher costs.

1 Increased health care costs can also be traced to the
2 demand for access to the newest technology for treatment of
3 illnesses. It is estimated that new technology is responsible
4 for almost fifty per cent of the total increase in health care
5 over the last thirty years. While greatly improving the quality
6 of life for patients, the costs involved in providing these
7 services place a heavy burden on the state's already struggling
8 health care system.

9 Health agencies are also concerned about the growing number
10 of uninsured individuals in the state. Hawaii was once known
11 for its low number of uninsured people, between two and five per
12 cent in 1994. The Healthcare Association of Hawaii estimates
13 that the current rate of uninsured individuals is more than ten
14 per cent of the state's population.

15 While the Prepaid Health Care Act has served its purpose
16 well for many years, it is now time to consider other options to
17 address these increased health care costs. There is a need for
18 new and innovative legislation that will provide affordable
19 health care for all of Hawaii's residents.

20 The legislature recognizes the accomplishments of Ah Quon
21 McElrath (1915-2008) toward improving the welfare of the people
22 of the state. As a lifelong champion of the underdog and an

1 eloquent, irrepressible, and forceful spokesperson for labor,
2 human rights, and progressive causes, McElrath never hesitated
3 to challenge the establishment to promote standard-of-living
4 improvements for working men and women in areas such as
5 occupational safety, ethnic equality, health care, and
6 education. It was her dream for everyone in our state and
7 nation to have access to affordable health care. Accordingly,
8 the legislature dedicates this Act to Ah Quon McElrath.

9 The purpose of this Act is to initiate the comprehensive
10 reformation of Hawaii's health care system with the ultimate
11 goal of facilitating universal coverage through the provision of
12 affordable, high-quality medical services for Hawaii's residents
13 by establishing the Hawaii health authority to develop a
14 comprehensive plan to provide universal health care in Hawaii.

15 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
16 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
17 as follows:

18 "CHAPTER

19 HAWAII HEALTH AUTHORITY

20 § -1 **Hawaii health authority; establishment.** (a) There
21 is established within the department of budget and finance for
22 administrative purposes the Hawaii health authority. The

1 authority shall be an autonomous public body corporate and
2 politic and an instrumentality of the State.

3 (b) The authority shall be composed of nine members
4 appointed by the governor as provided in section 26-34; provided
5 that three members shall be appointed from a list of nominees
6 submitted by the speaker of the house of representatives and
7 three members shall be appointed from a list of nominees
8 submitted by the president of the senate. All members shall be
9 appointed for terms of four years each.

10 (c) One member shall be selected to be the executive
11 director and confirmed by a majority vote of a quorum of the
12 members of the Hawaii health authority.

13 (d) Each member shall hold office until the member's
14 successor is appointed and qualified.

15 (e) Five members shall constitute a quorum, whose
16 affirmative vote shall be necessary for all valid actions by the
17 authority.

18 **§ -2 Hawaii health authority; duties and**

19 **responsibilities.** (a) The authority shall be responsible for
20 overall health planning for the state and shall be responsible
21 for determining future capacity needs for health providers,
22 facilities, equipment, and support services providers.

1 (b) The authority shall develop a comprehensive health
2 plan that includes:

3 (1) Establishment of eligibility for inclusion in a health
4 plan for all individuals;

5 (2) Determination of all reimbursable services to be paid
6 by the authority;

7 (3) Determination of all approved providers of services in
8 a health plan for all individuals;

9 (4) Evaluation of health care and cost effectiveness of
10 all aspects of a health plan for all individuals; and

11 (5) Establishment of a budget for a health plan for all
12 individuals in the state.

13 (c) The authority shall determine the waivers that are
14 necessary and available by federal law, rule, or regulation
15 necessary to implement and maintain this chapter.

16 (d) The authority shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
17 necessary for the purposes of this chapter.

18 (e) The authority shall submit a comprehensive health plan
19 for all individuals in the state, including its findings and
20 recommendations, to the legislature no later than twenty days
21 prior to the convening of the regular session of 2011."

1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009-2010 for
4 the purpose of operating the Hawaii health authority.

5 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
6 budget and finance for the purposes of this Act.

7 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.

Report Title:

Universal Health Care; Hawaii Health Authority

Description:

Creates the Hawaii Health Authority to develop a comprehensive plan to provide universal health care in Hawaii. Effective 7/1/50. (SD1)