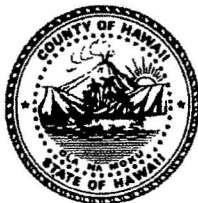


William P. Kenoi
Mayor



William T. Takaba
Managing Director

Walter K.M. Lau
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i

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March 3, 2009

The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Finance
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE: HB 343 House Draft 1, Relating to Rural Primary Health Care Training
Testimony of William P. Kenoi, Mayor, County of Hawai'i, in Support

Dear Chair Oshiro and Representatives:

Hawai'i County strongly supports HB 343, House Draft 1, which as originally drafted would re-appropriate \$1,500,000 in fiscal year 2010 and \$2.5 million in fiscal year 2011 to provide rural primary health care services by expanding the family medicine residency program at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine's department of family medicine and community health.

The County of Hawai'i is experiencing extreme shortages of physicians, and this rural residency program is a proven strategy for attracting physicians to the communities where their skills are needed most. When physicians train in rural areas, they are more likely to consider rural areas of our islands as a place to establish their practice. At the same time, they are delivering care to medically needy and underserved rural populations.

The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare provided a grant to the John A. Burns School of Medicine to temporarily operate a rural residency program on the Big Island, and that effort has allowed 18 individuals to train on our island in one or more rotations each. Three of those physicians then went on to establish practices in Hilo, which is just what we all had hoped. This program works.

Unfortunately, funding for the demonstration grant that financed this program ends on June 30. This has been a collaborative effort that involved funding and support from U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, HMSA Foundation, Hilo Medical Center, the John A. Burns School of Medicine, local physicians, local businesses and Hawai'i County. We now need the State to step in and support this as well.

The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair

Page 2

March 3, 2009

The Legislature wisely appropriated funding for rural residency in Act 277 in 2007, and we thank you for that contribution to this critical effort. Unfortunately, that funding was never released, and we now ask the Legislature to once again appropriate money for this program to give the badly needed Big Island residency program another chance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. P. Keno', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William P. Keno
Mayor



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
March 3, 2009, 3:00 p.m.

By

Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
and

Jerris R. Hedges, MD, MS, MMM
Dean and Professor

John A. Burns School of Medicine
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 0343, HD1 RELATING TO RURAL PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TRAINING

Chair Marcus Oshiro, Vice Chair Marilyn Lee, and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, John A. Burns School of Medicine wishes to convey its strong support for the intent of HB 343, HD1 provided it does not adversely affect our UH priorities as set in our budget request, most notably in health and safety and repairs and maintenance issues. Addressing these urgent needs is critical to our ability to perform our core mission for the State of Hawai'i. We recognize that you have many priorities and issues to weigh for the state, and certainly one of these is the critical shortage of medical care on our Neighbor Islands.

Recent evaluations of workforce need demonstrate that the big island of Hawai'i is currently SHORT 18 primary care physicians based upon current population and health care demands. Equally important is that on the Big Island, 55% of the present primary care physicians are in or close to retiring age.

The scope and intent to develop the rural primary care workforce pipeline remains critically important to the state. If funded, this bill is likely to improve short and long term primary care access in rural areas by training medical students and residents in areas of need.

This bill will allow the medical school to develop a clinical "footprint" on the neighbor islands leading to opportunities for improved access to specialty services.

This measure will allow collaborative interdisciplinary training including nursing, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, and other allied health professionals.

The placement of faculty physicians in neighbor island settings is likely to act as an economic stimulus to both the local hospitals and the surrounding communities. Research has found that each new physician generates an annual \$1,000,000 downstream benefit to the community from hiring staff and opening a practice site.

The needs on the Big Island will not be fully met until we can establish a sustainable post-graduate educational program there as part of the medical school's educational portfolio.

Establishment of such a program is dependent upon initial state investment in educators and (post-medical school, graduate medical school) resident salaries. Once established, generally in 3-4 years, the clinical activity of the faculty and resident practitioners should sustain the majority of the practice and most educational expense. Given such a resident education program, additional medical student education can take place on the Big Island.

These experiences will enhance general medical student interest in neighbor island practice by demonstrating the value of connecting with smaller neighbor island communities in Hawai'i. As demonstrated on the mainland, this exposure to practice outside of the larger urban communities leads to career and practice site choices favoring the neighbor islands by medical students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, we appreciate all interest in the University, and want to emphasize that we will be able to perform better in all arenas and best serve the state with support of the current campus priorities approved by the Board of Regents.



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

March 2, 2009

The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chairman
The Honorable Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chairman
Committee on Finance
House Committee on Finance
State Capital
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: House Bill 343 HD-1 – Relating to Rural Primary Health Care Training

Dear Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Committee:

As you know the John A. Burns School of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health has been working for several years to strengthen the primary care training pipeline in Hawaii. Our efforts are focused on improving access to care for rural and underserved areas of our state.

While the population health benefits of a robust primary care workforce has been well described, there has been less discussion of the benefits of deploying physicians at the community level. Research shows that hospitals collect six dollars from diagnostic tests and consultations for every one dollar billed by a family physician. Since physicians rent office space and hire staff there is a one million dollar per year downstream economic benefit to the community from each new community based physician.

For these health and economic reasons, we urge you to support HB 343 which will act as an economic stimulus while strengthening the training of family physicians and other health professionals in Central Oahu and on the neighbor islands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neal A. Palafox".

Neal A. Palafox, MD, MPH
Professor and Chair



Hawai'i Primary Care Association

345 Queen Street | Suite 601 | Honolulu, HI 96813-4718 | Tel: 808.536.8442 | Fax: 808.524.0347
www.hawaiiPCA.net

To: **The House Committee on Finance**
The Hon. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
The Hon. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of House Bill 343, HD 1
Relating to Rural Primary Health Care Training
Submitted by Beth Giesting, CEO
March 3, 2009, 3:00 p.m. agenda, Room 308

The Hawaii Primary Care Association urges your support for this bill. Encouraging an increased family medicine workforce is vitally important if we hope to improve the health of Hawaii's population and reduce health care costs. We believe expanding the family medicine residency in rural areas will be a critically important step.

Federally qualified health centers would enjoy working with such a residency program and both the residents and the community health centers would greatly benefit by the association. Accordingly, we would like to ask that the bill include collaboration between the residency and federally qualified health centers wherever possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HMSA



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

March 3, 2009

The Honorable Marcus Oshiro, Chair
The Honorable Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair

House Committee on Finance

Re: HB 343 HD1 – Relating to Rural Primary Health Care Training

Dear Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of HB 343 HD1.

As you may know, the HMSA Foundation has supported the development of the University of Hawaii's family medicine training program in Hilo through a three year grant of \$535,000 beginning in 2007. We believe that programs such as these enhance physician recruitment for Neighbor Island practices by exposing students to Neighbor Island life, culture and communities. Studies have shown that oftentimes individuals remain to practice medicine in the area where they have completed their residency training. The expansion of this program to other Neighbor Islands will only increase the likelihood that physicians will stay to practice in the more remote areas of our state.

HMSA is working to ensure that our members have access to the services they need wherever they may reside in the State. This includes working with community partners to facilitate recruitment of physicians as well as supporting programs such as the rural residency program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JD", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jennifer Diesman
Assistant Vice President
Government Relations



To: House Committee on Finance
Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

Date: 03-03-09 3:00 PM in House conference room 308

Re: **HB 343, HD1, RELATING TO RURAL PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TRAINING**

Chair Oshiro and Committee Members:

My name is Jackie Boland and I'm an Associate State Director for AARP Hawaii. AARP is a membership organization of people 50 and older with nearly 160,000 members in Hawaii. We are submitting testimony **in support of HB 343** which appropriates funds to develop a statewide Rural Primary Health Care Training Program and supports the Family Medicine Residency Program of the UH John A Burns School of Medicine's Department of Family Medicine and Community Health.

It is no secret that Hawaii's rural islands have a critical shortage of physicians and that the problem is getting worse as doctors retire or leave the islands. AARP believes that all individuals have a right to health care services when they need them and that the public, through government, has the ultimate responsibility to develop a system that ensures access to needed physical and mental health care services for all individuals with special consideration given to eliminating disparities in care and ensuring access for minorities, people with disabilities and medically underserved communities.

Our members on the neighbor islands, particularly the Big Island, are having trouble getting care when they need it. In the AARP 2008 Hawaii Health and Long-term Care Survey, 24% of participants statewide said that in the preceding two years, they had skipped a doctor's visit when they needed one. Of the Big Island respondents, 20% of those in Hilo and 13% in Kona said that the reason for not visiting the doctor was that there was no doctor or health care provider available. The full survey can be accessed at www.aarp.org/research/longtermcare/programfunding/hi_ltc_08.html

Within our own volunteer corps, we find that many are traveling to Oahu for care or have had to wait for care. When the grandson of our Chapter President in Hilo broke his arm, there was no orthopedic doctor available to set it, and the boy had to wait three days for his cast. Another member had been traveling for two years between Oahu and Waimea to care for her father who suffered from dementia. When his condition worsened beyond her ability to provide care, she finally made the decision to put him in a Hilo nursing facility. However, though there was a bed available, she discovered that he could not be admitted without a Hilo physician. No physicians in Hilo were accepting new patients so she could not get him admitted and was faced with the choice of removing him from his home island or providing him with minimal care in the face of his growing need.

Hawaii's population is aging at a rapid rate and in the next 22 years we can expect an 86% increase in those 65+. Ensuring that our people have access to medical services is critical. Our neighbor islands are already underserved. If we fail to find ways to address the physician shortages, the disparity in care will continue to grow, forcing people to leave their homes and communities. The cost of doing nothing on this issue is great. We urge you to pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 8:01 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: ecabatu@hhsc.org
Subject: Testimony for HB343 on 3/3/2009 3:00:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 3/3/2009 3:00:00 PM HB343

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Elena Cabatu
Organization: Individual
Address: 1190 Waianuenue Avenue Hilo, Hawaii
Phone: 974-4738
E-mail: ecabatu@hhsc.org
Submitted on: 3/3/2009

Comments:

Please accept this late testimony in support of HB 343 HD 1 to appropriate funds to: (1) Develop a statewide Rural Primary Health Care Training Program; and (2) Support the Family Medicine Residency Program of the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine's Department of Family Medicine and Community Health.

Right now on the Big Island we are moving forward in developing the Rural Primary Health Care Training Program. Hilo Medical Center, its Foundation and the community fully supports this program. We are well aware of the physician shortages in our community.

I would encourage any and all of the House members on the Committee on Finance to try to obtain a primary care physician on the Big Island as a new patient. More than likely, you would experience what many new residents on the Big Island - a road block, regardless of your insurance. Many physicians on the Big Island are not taking on new patients simply because they do not feel confident taking on more patients while caring for the heavy patient load they already have.

The Rural Primary Health Care Training Program located in Hilo is within our grasp. The clinic and education space is very near completion. Dr. Donovan, the program's medical director will soon see patients in the space. In April Dr. Lucy Bucci, the second faculty member will also start and in August, a third faculty member will follow. At the program's fruition in 2012, 5 teaching faculty physicians and 18 physician residents will in the program. Every year after that, six residents will graduate as Board Certified and six new residents will enter the program - a sure-fire, cost-effective way to train and retain physicians in our community.

I ask for your support of HB 343 HD 1. State funds for this program are so crucial at this point in establishing the program. Please help us see it through. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2009 5:34 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: palafox@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony for HB343 on 3/3/2009 3:00:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 3/3/2009 3:00:00 PM HB343

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Dr. Neal Palafox
Organization: Individual
Address: 651 Ilalo St. Honolulu HI
Phone: 692-0897
E-mail: palafox@hawaii.edu
Submitted on: 3/2/2009

Comments: