

# HB 343 HD 1

**Measure  
Title:**

**RELATING TO RURAL PRIMARY  
HEALTH CARE TRAINING.**

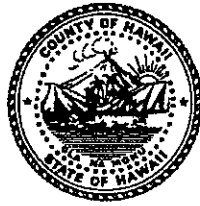
**Report  
Title:**

**Primary Health Care; Rural Areas**

**Description:**

**Appropriates 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. Effective 7/1/2020. (HB343 HD1)**

William P. Kenoi  
Mayor



William T. Takaba  
Managing Director

Walter K.M. Lau  
Deputy Managing Director

## County of Hawai'i

891 Uluani Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-3982 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553  
KONA: 75-5706 Kuakini Highway, Suite 103 • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740  
(808) 329-5226 • Fax (808) 326-5663

March 18, 2009

The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair, and Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and  
Senate Committee on Higher Education

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 David Y. Ige, Chair  
The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Page 2  
March 18, 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 'William P. Kenoi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William P. Kenoi  
MAYOR

# HMSA



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

March 18, 2009

The Honorable David Ige, Chair  
The Honorable Jill Tokuda, Chair

Senate Committees on Health and Higher Education

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

Dear Chair Ige, Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committees:

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



## 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 Senate Committee on Health**  
The Hon. David Y. Ige, Chair  
The Hon. Josh Green, MD, Vice Chair

**The Senate Committee on Higher Education**  
The Hon. Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
The Hon. Norman Sakamoto, Vice Chair

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 343, HD 1**  
**Relating to Rural Primary Health Care Training**  
**Submitted by Beth Giesting, CEO**  
**March 18, 2009, 2:45 p.m. agenda, Room 016**

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 like to work 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.



**OFFICERS**

Gary Okamoto, MD  
President

Robert Marvit, MD  
President Elect

Cynthia Jean Goto, MD  
Immediate Past President

Thomas Kosasa, MD  
Secretary

Jonathan Cho, MD  
Treasurer

April Donahue  
Executive Director

**Wednesday, March 18, 2009, 2:45 P.M., CR 016**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Senator David Y. Ige, Chair  
Senator Josh Green, M.D., Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Norman Sakamoto, Vice Chair

From: Hawaii Medical Association  
Gary A. Okamoto, MD, President  
Philip Hellreich, MD, Legislative Co-Chair  
Linda Rasmussen, MD, Legislative Co-Chair  
April Donahue, Executive Director  
Richard C. Botti, Government Affairs  
Lauren Zirbel, Government Affairs

Re: HB 343 RELATING TO RURAL PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TRAINING

**Chairs & Committee Members:**

Hawaii Medical Association supports this measure as one of the steps to address the ever-increasing shortages of physicians in rural Hawaii, particularly primary care and family medicine physicians.

While further steps are also needed, eventually, these training programs will help our rural communities have better access to care by placing potential "home-grown" physicians, and medical faculty, in underserved areas.

Additionally, these communities are likely to experience economic growth as a result of the influx of health care workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Hawaii Medical Association  
1360 S. Beretania St.  
Suite 200  
Honolulu, HI 96814  
(808) 536-7702  
(808) 528-2376 fax  
www.hmaonline.net



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII  
MĀNOA

March 17, 2009

The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair  
The Honorable Josh Green, Vice Chair  
Senate Health Committee  
The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
The Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Vice-Chair  
Senate Higher Education Committee  
State Capital  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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

**Dear Chairs Ige and Tokuda, Vice-Chairs Green and Sakamoto and members of the Committees:**

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,

Handwritten signature of Neal A. Palafox in black ink.

Neal A. Palafox, MD, MPH  
Professor and Chair



To: Committee on Health  
Senator David Y. Ige, Chair  
Senator Josh Green, M.D., Vice Chair

Committee on Higher Education  
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Norman Sakamoto, Vice Chair

Date: 03-18-09 2:45 PM in Conference Room 016

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

Chairs Ige and Tokuda 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, HD1** 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 experiences 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 and that government has the responsibility to develop a system that ensures access to health care services for all individuals. This should include physical and mental health services with special consideration to ensuring access for minorities, people with disabilities and those who reside in medically underserved communities.

Our AARP 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](http://www.aarp.org/research/longtermcare/programfunding/hi_ltc_08.html)

Within AARP's volunteer corps, we find that many neighbor islanders travel to Oahu for care or have had to simply 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. Though there was a bed available, she found 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. 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.

**TESTIMONY OF ROBERT TOYOFUKU ON BEHALF OF THE HAWAII  
ASSOCIATION FOR JUSTICE (HAJ) IN SUPPORT OF HB No. 343, HD 1  
RELATING TO RURAL HEALTH CARE TRAINING**

**March 18, 2009**

To: Chairman David Ige and Chairperson Jill Tokuda and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and the Senate Committee on Higher Education:

My name is Bob Toyofuku and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Association for Justice (formerly known as CLH\*) in support of H.B. No. 343, HD 1.

This is a positive approach in attempting to solve the shortage of primary care health providers in rural areas. HAJ has been involved in health care access issues for several years and this approach and the rural health care training program is one of the ways that we feel will work best to bring physicians permanently to rural areas.

HAJ wholeheartedly supports this bill and is of the opinion that funds should be appropriated at this time in spite of the current economic situation.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of H.B. No. 343, HD 1.

\* CLH has changed its name to conform to the name of its national organization the American Association for Justice.

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2009 8:49 AM  
**To:** HTHTestimony  
**Cc:** dand@punahealth.org  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB343 on 3/18/2009 2:45:00 PM

**Categories:** Green Category, Blue Category

Testimony for HTH/HRE 3/18/2009 2:45:00 PM HB343

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Dan Domizio PA/MPH  
Organization: Puna Community Medical Center  
Address: 15-2662 Pahoia Village Rd, Ste 306 Pahoia, HI  
Phone: 808-930-6001  
E-mail: [dand@punahealth.org](mailto:dand@punahealth.org)  
Submitted on: 3/16/2009

**Comments:**

Representatives Ige and Tokuda, Chairpersons Respected committee members;

We are writing is strong support of SB343; Hawaii needs to cultivate and support any effort to secure health service delivery to our rural communities. Please pass this important piece of legislation that will develop a cadre of service providers to our rural populations.

Thank You  
Dan Domizio PA/MPH  
Clinical Programs Director  
Puna Community Med Ctr.