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## DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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### TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

#### House Bill 725 – Relating to Health Care

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is a statewide board with seventeen (17) members appointed by the Governor, thirteen (13) of whom are persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full inclusion, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society. This testimony represents a position voted upon by the Legislative Committee of the Board.

DCAB supports the intent of House Bill 725 - Relating to Health Care that requires health care facilities and providers to notify the state designated protection and advocacy agency prior to transferring a person who is elderly or has a disability to an out-of-state treatment, rehabilitation, or long-term care facility. This bill provides a means to ensure that individuals who are elderly or have disabilities are informed of their rights and allowed to make informed decisions regarding out-of-state placement.

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii convened a task force in 2007 to address the issue of waitlisted individuals in long-term care facilities. This task force examined the problem of patients in acute care hospitals waitlisted for long-term care and proposed solutions and recommendations to the 2008 Legislature. Pursuant to subsequent resolutions passed by the 2008 Legislature, the task force continued to meet to develop solutions to address patients in hospitals who are waitlisted for long-term care and report findings and recommendations to the 2009 Legislature.

The Department of Human Services also has grant money to assist individuals living in health care institutions from six months to two years to transition back into the community. Activities of the project involve developing new community-based services to support and sustain the individual in the local community. Several agencies are working to develop local programs to support and provide services to individuals needing long-term care in Hawaii. If this trend is successful, it will decrease the number of individuals requiring out-of-state placement that necessitate a reporting mechanism to the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, the state's protection and advocacy agency.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this issue.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES W. FLEMING  
Chairperson

FRANCINE WAI  
Executive Director