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Testimony in support of HCR 214 (related to SCR 136)

Senate Committee on Health

Hearing scheduled for Thursday, April 23 @ 9:30am

April 22, 2009

To: Senate Committee on Health
Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair, Representative Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair

By: Valerie Chang, JD, Executive Director
Hawaii COPD Coalition, <http://hawaiicopd.org>, (808)699-9839
733 Bishop Street, Suite 1550, Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: HCR 214, HD1 (corresponding with SCR 136, SD1)

Dear Chair Ige, Vice Chair Green and Members of the Committee:

My name is Valerie Chang. I am Executive Director of the Hawaii COPD Coalition. Our organization provides services and support to Hawaii's people affected by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), more commonly known as emphysema, chronic bronchitis and similar conditions. COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in the US. It is also the second leading cause of disability in the US. 2007 and 2008 Hawaii surveys show between 31,794 and 37,381 Hawaii people diagnosed with COPD.

No state funding is being sought for this resolution. This resolution mirrors SCR 136, which this body already passed as amended.

The Hawaii COPD Coalition strongly supports HCR 214, HD1 (and the corresponding joint concurrent resolution SCR 136, SD1), for the Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (CDC) **to develop a national plan to respond to COPD**. This is consistent with efforts currently underway in Congress to fund and develop such a program. In its November 13, 2008 CDC report, an article about COPD was released in its Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) with key findings: CDC estimates that additional health care costs total \$6000 each year for every COPD patient in the US. More than 126,000 Americans die of COPD each year.

Currently there is NO plan in place at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address COPD but the CDC has indicated an interest in creating one, provided there is appropriate federal funding. We urge that a joint, concurrent resolution be passed to request that the CDC establish a plan with sufficient federal funding, so that CDC can begin its long overdue work to raise awareness and combat this treatable disease.

Emphysema and chronic bronchitis are a huge cost to our nation and state. This resolution will clarify for our Hawaii Congressional delegation how important COPD is to our state (to date both Representatives Hirono and Abercrombie have signed dear colleague letters in support of this important federal legislation). Hawaii is one of the first states to add COPD questions to statewide health surveys in 2007 through 2009. Hawaii adding COPD questions has helped tremendously in raising awareness of this serious health issue.

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on this most important subject. It is heartening to see growing interest and support for more attention to be paid to this serious and progressively debilitating disease.