



Testimony in **support of HCR 97** Relating to Licensing on Respiratory Therapists  
House Committee on Health  
Hearing scheduled for April 3, 2009 @ 1030, in Room 329

April 2, 2009

To: House Committee on Health, Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair, Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

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

Re: **HCR 97--REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO ANALYZE A MEASURE TO REGULATE  
RESPIRATORY CARE PRACTITIONERS**

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Nishimoto 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, more commonly known as emphysema, chronic bronchitis and similar conditions. COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in the US and expected to be the third leading cause of death in the US and world by 2020. The American Lung Association has estimated that over 50,000 people in Hawaii have COPD. Many, many more people in Hawaii suffer from asthma, tuberculosis, pneumonia and other respiratory conditions.

I strongly SUPPORT the prompt passage of legislation to establish licensing and regulatory requirements for practice of respiratory care and to create a board for respiratory care. Respiratory Therapists are a very important of the healthcare team for COPD patients and their loved ones. They help the patients get their medication, keep their lungs clear, and learn to manage their breathing conditions. As has been noted, only Hawaii and Alaska lack certification for respiratory therapists. Hawaii needs a certification process in place and certifying the respiratory therapists will help to insure that all of therapists meet appropriate standards and are providing quality care to our many people in Hawaii who need respiratory care, including having a place and process for reporting and investigating incompetence and/or professional misconduct.

**HCR 97 REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO ANALYZE A MEASURE TO REGULATE  
RESPIRATORY CARE PRACTITIONERS**, is a very important step toward such legislation.

My husband, children, and I have asthma and additionally, I have severe emphysema. We have all used the services of respiratory therapists to test how well our lungs are working. I have also been fortunate enough to have a respiratory therapist in Colorado help me develop a personalized exercise program which is safe and appropriate for my lung condition. Respiratory nurses and respiratory therapists have also provided me with education on how to live actively with asthma and emphysema.

I have also enjoyed working with many respiratory therapists with our Hawaii COPD Coalition where we have:

- (1) Free breathing testing at Longs Drugs;
- (2) Free support group (run by two respiratory therapists); and
- (3) Free annual COPD education day.

Thanks for the opportunity to testify about this issue that is so vital to the health of Hawaii's people. Please promptly pass HCR 97, to help our state get licensing for our respiratory therapists. We need this protection NOW!

April 2, 2009

Testimony to: House Committee on Health  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Abegail Kopf, RRT, CPFT  
Educator, Respiratory Care Program

Re: HCR 97 Requesting the auditor to analyze a measure to  
regulate Respiratory Care Practitioners

Chairs and Committee Members:

I am writing in support of HCR 97. As a practitioner and teaching professional in the field of Respiratory Care, I am very concerned about this issue. Without regulations in place, Hawaii remains vulnerable to incompetent practitioners. Given the very real potential for harm to patients, it's imperative that Hawaii take action on this issue sooner rather than later.

I would also respectfully request a correction be made to the resolution. HCR 97 currently references HB 1823, but the reference should be to SB 1332, SD1, HD1, which was not heard by the House Committee on Consumer Protection. I understand that there was concern about establishing a precedent by bypassing the Sunrise requirement. The adoption of HCR 97 would address this concern.

- **Immediate oversight for respiratory care practitioners is necessary.**

Currently, there is nothing to prevent respiratory care practitioners who lose their license to practice in other states from securing employment in Hawaii. We remain one of two states vulnerable to this possibility. All other states, except Alaska currently have licensure in place. It is risky to say the least to permit an RCP to take care of our loved-ones here because they are not allowed to do it elsewhere.

- **Regulation of the profession ensures that a patient has a caregiver with adequate training in the respiratory field.** Advances in technology have made life-support machines and monitoring devices quite sophisticated compared to those utilized 10 to 15 years ago. Special training in these devices is necessary to ensure appropriate care for the patients. By defining a standard level of optimal care in cardiopulmonary health, accountability and patient safety is improved. Students enrolled in the Respiratory Care program at KCC go through several intense semesters of didactics and clinical rotations. As an educator, it is my responsibility to ensure that graduates are trained properly to be able to pass their boards and to meet the health demands of the public.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,  
Abegail Kopf

**Testimony in support of HCR 97  
Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Joan Loke

Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HCR 97.

The Resolution refers to HB 1823, which should be changed to SB 1332, SD1, and HD1 which was not scheduled for hearing in House Consumer Protection Committee. We believe the Chairman was concerned about establishing a precedent of bypassing the Sunrise requirement which would be addressed with the adoption of this Resolution.

There are little questions whether the need of oversight is necessary for the profession of Respiratory Care Practitioners, as evidenced by the fact that forty-eight of our fifty states have oversight protection.

From a health standpoint, if a barber or beautician is required to be licensed, the practice of respiratory is far more invasive and an error can be far more damaging to a patient.

The bottom line is the sooner this issue is resolved, the sooner a firewall is installed against Respiratory Practitioners that have lost their privileges in other states from applying for a position in Hawaii.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Joan Loke Respiratory Care Practitioner

Testimony on HCR97 for Friday, April 3, 2009 to House Committee on Health Friday, April 3, at 10:30 a.m. in Room 329

House Committee on Health  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Edmund J. Borza, BA, RRT-NPS, CPFT

Re: HCR 97 Requesting an audit of Respiratory Care

Aloha,

I am writing in support of HCR 97. I am a Registered Respiratory Therapist and an Educator in the Respiratory Care Program at Kapi'olani Community College. I strongly believe that Respiratory Therapists should be licensed and regulated by the state and was disappointed to hear that SB1332 and other related measures will not be considered further until another audit is performed. 2 audits have already been performed in the 1980's and again in 1995, but our profession has certainly changed over the last decade and a half.

Respiratory Therapists perform tasks and make clinical decisions that are among the most invasive and critical in modern healthcare. The risks of patient harm or death are far greater than most other medical professions regulated by the state and there is no governmental protection for the patients and the public from irresponsible or malicious respiratory therapists.

I feel confident that an audit of our profession will show a significant risk to the public if we are not licensed and will also show that the concerns are not just theoretical. There have been documented cases of respiratory therapists coming to Hawaii because they could not get licensed in other states. There is also at least one "therapist" working at an O'ahu hospital without any national credentials or formal training. As an educator, I thought this was no longer possible, but clearly it is and there is no law against that person practicing in the state of Hawaii. It had been argued that because hospitals require credentials, the public is already protected, but clearly, that isn't true. Also, as there are therapists increasingly working in homecare and subacute environments - the risks to the public continue to grow.

If the legislature insists on doing another study prior to enacting a licensure law, please do not hesitate. Direct the Auditor's office to expedite a study of the profession and provide them with the means to do so this year. The people of Hawaii can't wait for the protections that licensure will offer.

Thank you for your kind consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Ed Borza, BA, RRT-NPS, CPFT



**Testimony in support of HCR 97**  
Hearing @ 10:30 a.m. in Room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

April 1, 2009

To: Committee on Health  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Carol Agard RRT, RPFT, FAARC  
Past President and Co-Chair Legislative Affairs  
**Hawaii Society for Respiratory Care**

Although we are disappointed that our legislation to support the regulation of the practice of respiratory care in Hawaii was not granted the opportunity for a hearing by Consumer Protection and Commerce, this session, we do appreciate the overwhelming support of other legislative chairs and committee members who have helped to move our bill along. We only hope that this delay on our pathway to regulation, will not result in harm to individuals receiving respiratory services as a result.

As the local affiliate for the American Association for Respiratory Care, we are the patient's advocate facilitating processes to educate and ensure safety for patients and the public relating to the standards, practice and delivery of respiratory care in any setting

**The Resolution refers to HB 1823, which should be changed to SB 1332 SD 1, and HD1 which was not scheduled for a hearing in House Consumer Protection Committee. We believe the Chairman was concerned about establishing a precedent of bypassing the Sunrise requirement which would be addressed with the adoption of the Resolution.**

Forty-eight of our fifty states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have licensure laws in place for respiratory therapists. The people of Hawaii deserve the same oversight protection.

From a safety standpoint, if a barber or beautician is required to be licensed, the practice of respiratory care is far more invasive and an error can be far more damaging to a patient.

The bottom line is the sooner this issue is resolved, the sooner a firewall is installed against Respiratory Practitioners that have lost their privileges in other states from securing a position in Hawaii.

~~Testimony in support of HCR 97~~  
**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Marc Rezendes

Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HCR 97.

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Thank you for your kind attention.

Marc Rezendes Respiratory Care Practitioner

**Testimony in support of HCR 97**  
**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: STEVEN C. CAMARA

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Respiratory Care Practitioner

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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Cathleen A. Lee

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Thank you for your kind attention.

Cathleen A. Lee

Respiratory Care Practitioner

**Testimony in support of HCR 97  
Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Rose Mary Acosta

Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HCR 97.

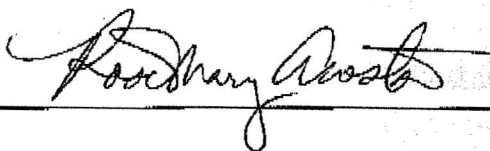
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Respiratory Care Practitioner

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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Scott Arvalo

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Respiratory Care Practitioner

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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Virginia Alatasi

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Thank you for your kind attention.

V. Alatasi

Respiratory Care Practitioner



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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Lela Y. Takahama

Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HCR 97.

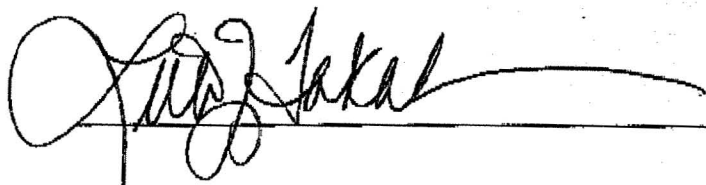
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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Rondalynn Cortez

Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HCR 97.

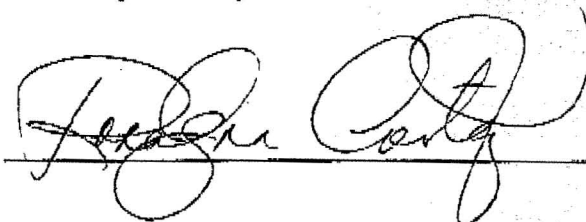
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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: David Tabe

Chairs and Committee Members:

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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Laurie McKeague

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Thank you for your kind attention.

Laurie McKeague RCP Respiratory Care Practitioner

**Testimony in support of HCR 97**  
**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Li Yuan Li

Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HCR 97.

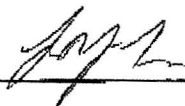
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Respiratory Care Practitioner

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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Stephanie Pruitt

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Thank you for your kind attention.

Stephanie Pruitt

Respiratory Care Practitioner

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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Gerardo Vazquez

Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HCR 97.

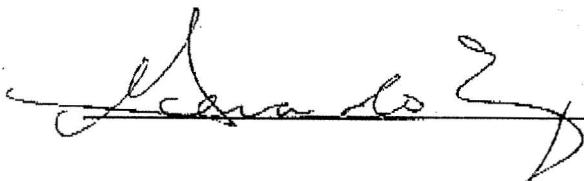
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To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
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By: April M. Mabe

Chairs and Committee Members:

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To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
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By: Roman Hollander

Chairs and Committee Members:

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To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
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By: Daniel Rausch

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Daniel Rausch

Respiratory Care Practitioner

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To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
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By: Jason B. Tabbaral

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Thank you for your kind attention.

Jason B. Tabbaral

Respiratory Care Practitioner

**Testimony in support of HCR 97**  
**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: 

Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HCR 97.


The Resolution refers to HB 1823, which should be changed to SB 1332, SD1, and HD1 which was not scheduled for hearing in House Consumer Protection Committee. We believe the Chairman was concerned about establishing a precedent of bypassing the Sunrise requirement which would be addressed with the adoption of this Resolution.

There are little questions whether the need of oversight is necessary for the profession of Respiratory Care Practitioners, as evidenced by the fact that forty-eight of our fifty states have oversight protection.

From a health standpoint, if a barber or beautician is required to be licensed, the practice of respiratory is far more invasive and an error can be far more damaging to a patient.

The bottom line is the sooner this issue is resolved, the sooner a firewall is installed against Respiratory Practitioners that have lost their privileges in other states from applying for a position in Hawaii.

Thank you for your kind attention.



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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: KENNETH NG

Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HCR 97.

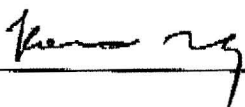
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Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Shelley Nagafichi

Chairs and Committee Members:

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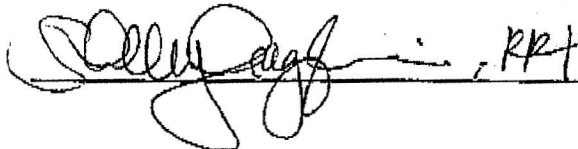
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By: Stephen M. Kaya

Chairs and Committee Members:

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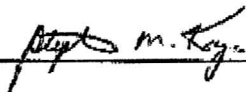
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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: DIANE BRENESEL

Chairs and Committee Members:

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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

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Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: GEORGE YANAGI

Chairs and Committee Members:

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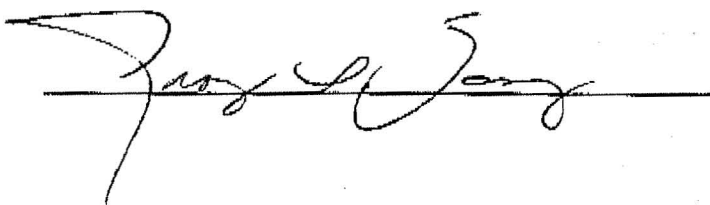
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Respiratory Care Practitioner

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**Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

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Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: DANNY LE

Chairs and Committee Members:

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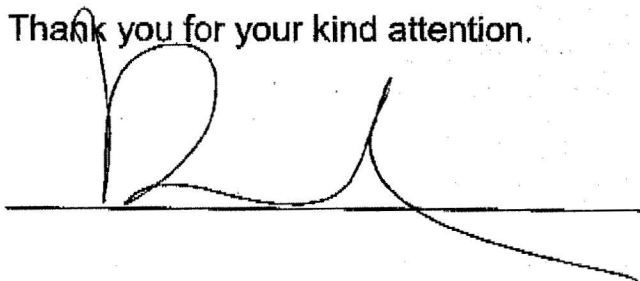
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To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Lionel Jaller

Chairs and Committee Members:

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To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Loretta dela Cruz

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Thank you for your kind attention.

Loretta de la Cruz, COPD patient



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Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
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By: Roy Omoto

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Roy Omoto, COPD patient

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Hearing @ 10:30 in room 329 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

By: Dollie Hinch

Chairs and Committee Members:

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Dollie Hinch, COPD patient