

Testimony in support of HCR 97, HD1
Hearing @ 2:45 p.m. Room 016 on Friday, April 24, 2009

April 22, 2009

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

Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker Chair
Senator David Y. Ige, Vice Chair

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

In Support

Chairs & Committee Members:

As a representative for the local affiliate for the American Association for Respiratory Care, I am writing in support of HCR 97. The Hawaii Society for Respiratory Care serves as 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. Without regulation 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.

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. Hawaii and Alaska are the only states that do not currently have licensure in place. The people of Hawaii deserve the care of competent respiratory care practitioners. Practitioners who have lost their license in another state have been known to come to Hawaii to practice, where there is no form of regulation in place.

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. For this reason, the sooner this issue is resolved, the sooner a firewall is installed against respiratory care practitioners that have lost their privileges in other states from securing a position in Hawaii.