
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that about ten per cent
2 of the adult population of Hawaii has no public or private
3 health insurance. In the current economic climate of the state,
4 this number is likely to increase with work layoffs and business
5 closures. According to the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and
6 the Uninsured:

7 (1) Over four out of five uninsured people are in working
8 families;

9 (2) Uninsured people are more likely than those with
10 insurance to be hospitalized for conditions that could
11 have been avoided;

12 (3) Because the uninsured are less likely to seek regular
13 and preventative care, those with various forms of
14 cancer or with chronic conditions are more likely to
15 be diagnosed in later stages of their diseases
16 resulting in higher rates of death and disability; and

17 (4) Nearly forty per cent of uninsured adults neglected to
18 get a recommended medical test or treatment, and

1 twenty per cent did not get care for a serious problem
2 requiring treatment in the past year.

3 The significant number of uninsured residents has a
4 considerable economic impact on the State's hospitals, community
5 health centers, and other health care providers, threatening the
6 effectiveness of these providers to serve the whole community.

7 The legislature finds that it is in the best interests of
8 the state to ensure access to primary and preventative health
9 care for its residents. In addition to facilitating a healthier
10 population, state expenditures attributable to hospital and
11 emergency room services for preventable injuries or illnesses
12 would be reduced.

13 The legislature further finds that the most effective means
14 to encourage access to primary health care for residents without
15 health insurance is through Hawaii's system of federally
16 qualified health centers, which:

- 17 (1) Are nonprofit, community-based organizations whose
18 purpose and expertise lie in serving people who
19 otherwise have limited or no access to health care;
- 20 (2) Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate
21 health care and a broad range of primary care and
22 preventative services;

- 1 (3) Are located in medically-underserved areas where
2 people have limited access to other health care
3 providers because of geographic and socio-economic
4 barriers;
- 5 (4) Contribute greatly to the economies and livability of
6 the communities they serve; and
- 7 (5) Are cost-effective providers whose services result in
8 healthier patients and decreased use of emergency,
9 specialty, and in-patient services.

10 A recent study indicated that community health centers
11 saved Hawaii an estimated \$29 million in 2007 in their services
12 to the uninsured. Unfortunately, while federally qualified
13 health centers represent one of the most effective and
14 responsive systems of community-based primary care for uninsured
15 people, financial support for these providers is inadequate to
16 meet the community's needs for medical, behavioral health, and
17 dental services.

18 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to provide
19 cost-effective care for uninsured Hawaii residents and ensure
20 that the community health center system remains financially
21 viable and stable as the number of uninsured persons grows.

1 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
3 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009-2010, and the
4 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
5 2010-2011 for to provide direct health care services to
6 uninsured residents, including medical, dental, and behavioral
7 health care through nonprofit, community-based health care
8 providers; provided that the distribution of funds may be on a
9 "per visit" basis, considering the needs on all of the islands.

10 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
11 health for the purposes of this Act.

12 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2009.

Report Title:

Health Care for the Uninsured

Description:

Appropriates funds to provide health care for uninsured Hawaii residents through nonprofit community-based health care providers. (SD1)