



Testimony to the House Committee on Health
Tuesday, February 17, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1369 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jim Tollefson and I am the President and CEO of The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill No. 1369 relating to the University of Hawaii.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,100 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

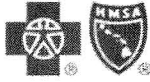
This measure establishes a loan repayment program and housing stipend program for University of Hawaii medical school graduates practicing in counties with a population of less than 500,000 for a minimum of 6 years..

The quality of healthcare that Hawaii has enjoyed for years is now in jeopardy. It is on the verge of declining because healthcare providers are no longer being paid for essential services at a level sufficient to cover annually increasing costs. The health care system must be maintained and challenges must be addressed.

Therefore, The Chamber supports improvements to the quality of our health care system that will increase long term care capacity and access statewide. We believe providing incentives, such as establishing a loan repayment program and housing stipend program will help address the shortage of doctors, especially on the neighbor islands, as well as keep the providers in Hawaii.

In light of the above, The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii supports HB 1369. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HMSA



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February 17, 2009

The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair

House Committee on Health

Re: HB 1369 – Relating to the University of Hawaii

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Nishimoto and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1369.

All organizations and entities engaged in health care in the community are working to ensure that the members of our community are able to access appropriate health care when they need it. Working towards this HMSA has supported UH's rural residency program, worked with the Hawaii/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center to provide travel support funding for up to 25 medical students to perform primary care clinical rotations on neighbor islands, and introduced its Online Care program to improve access across the state.

The initiatives contained in HB 1369 will be a welcome addition to and compliment those already in place across the state. HMSA supports this comprehensive strategy to recruit and retain physicians in the more rural areas of the state.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Diesman
Assistant Vice President
Government Relations