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HAWAI'I PACIFIC HEALTH

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Monday – February 22, 2010 – 4:35pm
Conference Room 308

The House Committee on Finance

To: Representative Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Representative Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

From: Virginia Pressler, MD, MBA
Executive Vice President

Re: HB 2091 RELATING TO MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY - Testimony in Strong Support

My name is Ginny Pressler, MD Executive Vice President at Hawai'i Pacific Health (HPH). Hawai'i Pacific Health is a nonprofit health care system and the state's largest health care provider, committed to providing the highest quality medical care and service to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Region through its four affiliated hospitals, 44 outpatient clinics and more than 2,200 physicians and clinicians. The network is anchored by its four nonprofit hospitals: Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children, Kapi'olani Medical Center at Pali Momi, Straub Clinic & Hospital and Wilcox Memorial Hospital. Collectively, they lead the state in the areas of women's health, pediatric care, cardiovascular services, bone and joint services and cancer care. Hawai'i Pacific Health ranks among the top 3.8 percent of hospitals nationwide in electronic medical record adoption, with system-wide implementation that allows its hospitals to offer integrated, coordinated care throughout the state. Learn more at: <http://www.hawaiipacifichealth.org>

We are writing in strong support of HB 2091 Relating to Medicaid Eligibility which takes steps to solve the long term care problem by requiring the Department of Human Services to provide presumptive eligibility for Medicaid eligible patients who have been waitlisted for long-term care.

On any given day there are more than 250 patients in hospitals across Hawaii who have been treated and are now waiting to be transferred to a long term care facility but who must remain "waitlisted" in a hospital because long term care is not available. Discharge timeframes for waitlisted patients range from days to over a year. This represents a poor quality of life option for the patient, presents an often insurmountable dilemma for providers and patients, and creates a serious financial drain on acute care hospitals with ripple effects felt throughout other healthcare service sectors.

HB 2091 would establish a Medicaid presumptive eligibility process that is designed to reduce the period of time for determining whether a waitlisted patient qualifies for Medicaid. For financial reasons, Medicaid eligibility is required by many long term care facilities before certain types of patients are admitted. We ask that you pass HB 2091. Thank you for your time regarding this measure.

