



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 4, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 2260 – RELATING TO QUEST HEALTH CARE PAYMENTS**

Hearing: Thursday, February 4, 2010, 9:00 am
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to restore basic dental benefits for indigent adults who are covered by the Medicaid program that expired at the end of fiscal year 2006-2007.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The DHS opposes expanding adult dental benefits during this period of economic crisis and substantial budget shortfall that will likely require decreases in Medicaid benefits.

Medicaid dental benefits are provided through a fee-for-service program, not through the contracted QUEST and QUEST Expanded Access health plans. Thus there may be title problems with this bill.

The reporting requirements in this bill are onerous, unnecessarily increase administrative cost, and would penalize DHS for a delay in reporting. Any appropriated general funds that DHS would have to pay to the treasury would mean that those funds could not be used to access federal funds. This provision could result in a loss of federal funds to the State.

This bill would require a new appropriation, at a time that the Department has a projected biennium budget deficit of more than \$100,000,000. Given the State's current fiscal situation and the \$1.23 billion budget shortfall for the biennium, pursuit of benefit expansions are not prudent at this time.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony.



HAWAII DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER

900 Fort Street Mall, Suite 1040, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone/TTY: (808) 949-2922 Toll Free: 1-800-882-1057 Fax: (808) 949-2928

E-mail: info@hawaiidisabilityrights.org Website: www.hawaiidisabilityrights.org

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

Committee on Human Services Committee on Health

Testimony in Support of H.B. 2260 Relating to Quest Health Care Payments

**Thursday, February 4, 2010, 9:00 A.M.
Conference Room 329**

Chair Mizuno, Chair Yamane , and Members of the Committees:

I am Louis Erteschik, Staff Attorney at the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, and am testifying in support of this bill.

The elimination of basic adult dental benefits for Medicaid recipients was a very shortsighted undertaking. It is ironic that while parents teach their children to brush their teeth so that they will avoid further health problems, Hawaii, the Health state, has a policy which says that we will not pay for preventive dental care and yet will gladly cover the cost of extracting a tooth that has decayed and rotted because of a failure to receive preventive care.

A recent example on the Big Island illustrates that this is not mere rhetoric. We unfortunately became aware, some months ago, of the case of an individual with developmental disabilities whose tooth became so infected that he died before proper medical attention could be administered, despite being flown by helicopter to Honolulu.

So, when advocates claim that proper oral health is essential to one's overall health and well being, this example should illustrate the truth of that statement. We urge the legislature to pass this common sense measure and provide this needed protection, so that hopefully no other individuals will suffer the same needless fate.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



Hawai'i Primary Care Association

345 Queen Street | Suite 601 | Honolulu, HI 96813-4718 | Tel: 808.536.8442 | Fax: 808.524.0347
www.hawaiipca.net

Joint House Committees on Human Services and Health

The Hon. John Mizuno, Chair

The Hon. Tom Brower, Vice Chair

The Hon. Ryan Yamane, Chair

The Hon. Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2260

Relating to QUEST Health Care Payments

Submitted by Beth Giesting, Chief Executive Officer

February 4, 2010 9:00 a.m. Agenda, Room 329

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association strongly supports this measure which appropriates funds to restore basic dental services for adults covered by Med-QUEST.

The mouth, teeth, and gums are as essential to health as any other part of the body. We should no more exclude the mouth from routine health care than the arms, liver, or ears. Accordingly, dental coverage limited to emergency-only services threatens the overall health of an individual: Recent research points to associations between chronic oral infections and diabetes, heart and lung disease, stroke, and low-birth-weight births—conditions that are more complicated and costly to treat than effective, timely oral health care. In addition, poor oral health and its impact on a person's appearance are linked to poorer prospects for getting and maintaining employment.

Adults covered by Med-QUEST are, by definition, low income and hence unable to pay out of pocket for the often substantial amount of dental care they need. Health centers, which should be the safety net for these underserved adults, are unable to meet the challenge because of the high cost of care and shortage of public support for this service. This financial conundrum severely hampers their ability to expand services to meet the needs of both Med-QUEST enrollees and the very large number of other low income people who have no dental insurance. Covering dental services through Med-QUEST is also a good investment because it earns a considerable federal match.

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association and its membership of community health centers, Native Hawaiian Health Systems, and other primary care organizations, providers and advocates, consider this measure among our highest priority legislative initiatives for 2010.

We all urge you to pass this measure and restore this essential health service. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this very important bill.



Sierra Spruce, RDH - Chair --Regulation and Practice for Hawaii Dental Hygienists' Association

HB 2260 Relating to Quest Health Care Payments

DATE: Thursday February 4, 2010

TIME: 9:00 AM

PLACE: Conference Room 329 - State Capitol
Committee on Health Committee on Human Service

Representative John Mizuno Chair HUS
Representative Tom Brower, Vice Chair HUS
Representative Ryan Yamane Chair HLT
Representative Scott Nishimoto Vice Chair HLT
and Members of the Committees,

The Hawaii Dental Hygienists Association supports HB 2260, which would restore basic dental services to adults under the Quest/Medicaid Program. It is widely accepted that early treatment of dental disease, whether the cause is dental decay or periodontal disease, will most often prevent the need for subsequent emergency care. The correlation between disease in the mouth (oral) and disease in the body (systemic), has been established. A healthy mouth is key to getting proper nourishment. A healthier individual will cost the Medicaid system far less in the long run.

We appreciate and acknowledge all that the State has done in providing dental services for our keiki. It's time to do the same for our kupuna.

Mahalo for your attention,

Sierra Spruce, RDH

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 7:39 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: jillf2184@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2260 on 2/4/2010 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for HUS/HLT 2/4/2010 9:00:00 AM HB2260

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jill Friedman
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone: 808-635-5919
E-mail: jillf2184@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/1/2010

Comments:

House Committee on Human Services
House Committee on Health
House Committee on Finance

Testimony in support of HB2260
Restore Adult Dental Care under QUEST

Thursday, February 4, 2010, 9:00 a.m.
House Conference Room 329

Dear: Committee chair John M. Mizuno and Members of Committee on Human Services
Committee chair Ryan I. Yamane and Members of Committee on Health
Committee chair Marcus R. Oshiro and Members of Committee on Finance

My name is Kimberly Lee. I am a graduate student at University of Hawaii, Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. I am writing in support of HB2260, "relating to restore adult dental care under QUEST..."

Through the social work training and experiences I have, I am more aware of social issues related to lack of dental health care for those in need of public assistance. Oral health problems occur more frequently among the adults with limited capital and resources and certainly this is the case in Hawai'i. Such financial barriers make it more difficult for individuals to access dental care. Despite the considerable dental needs for these populations, this issue has not been critically addressed in the public health domain. For these reason, I strongly believe that our state needs to enhance the quality of oral care and improve dental care plans for this segment of the population. The purpose of this bill is to "restore basic dental benefits for adults who are covered by the Medicaid program". Although coverage may be limited, it can significantly enhance individual oral health and also prevent negative consequences resulting from problems associated with dental disease and problems. In long term, HB2260 will benefit the state by reducing expenditures on health care services. I respectfully ask for passage of this legislation before it becomes a serious health problem for adults with limited financial resources.

Thank you for your consideration of this health issues and the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Mahalo,

Kimberly Lee
Student, MSW Program, UHM
kktllee@hawaii.edu