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LATE TESTIMONY

February 3, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 655 – RELATING TO REMOTE DISPENSING PHARMACIES**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 3, 2009, 8:30 AM.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to allow remote dispensing pharmacies to operate on islands without a pharmacy, provide medications to patients with health insurance, and dispense controlled substances.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services supports this bill to enhance access to prescription medications on Neighbor Islands.

Because of Hawaii's unique geography and population distribution, certain areas have limited access to prescription medications. Every island has at least one pharmacy but unfortunately, individuals living in underserved or remote areas have limited access to medications and pharmacy services. Beginning a remote dispensing pilot for areas with limited pharmacy access seems in the interest of patients with potential benefits exceeding potential harms. Increasing access to prescription medications is an important step to improving health outcomes.

All persons should have access to the remote dispensing pharmacy, understanding that their cost-share may vary based on their health insurer's contractual relationship with the pharmacy responsible for overseeing the remote dispensing pharmacy, or they may pay out-of-pocket if not insured.

A remote dispensing pharmacy should have all protections to ensure patients receive the appropriate medication, dose, and supply. Patients should also have the ability to receive counseling, which should be offered at the time of dispensing. In addition, the medications, particularly narcotics, should be secured and monitored.

Remote dispensing pharmacy policy should not negatively impact a provider's ability to dispense medications in underserved areas, and mail order pharmacy should be available and perhaps encouraged for medications for chronic conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony of
Phyllis Dendle
Director of Government Affairs

Before:
House Committee on Health
The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

February 3, 2009
8:30 am
Conference Room 329

HB 655 Relating to Remote Dispensing Pharmacies

Chair Yamane and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 655 which would provide greater access to medications and pharmacy services through remote dispensing.

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports this bill.

We support remote dispensing because we think we will see improved compliance with drug therapy if patients have immediate access to their prescriptions. This secure technology will offer access to medication when a pharmacy is unavailable on island or is not open.. It will be particularly helpful for our members on Lanai where there is no pharmacy. Currently many have to travel to Maui to get their prescriptions filled.

With a nationwide shortage of pharmacists it is not just geographically isolated locations that would not have a pharmacist or a pharmacy available. Sometimes it is time rather than location that makes it difficult for patients to get their prescriptions.

For example, increasingly Kaiser Permanente Hawaii is expanding the access to care for patients by extending the hours that clinics are open. In our smaller, more rural clinics such as those in Kahuku, Waimea, and Kapolei, we do not have a pharmacy located at the clinic. As a convenience for our members we have arranged for them to get their medication from local pharmacies. These pharmacies are not open the same hours as the clinic. However, we always have pharmacist at the hospital who could supervise the remote dispensing in these clinics.

With that in mind we request that you permit health maintenance organization regulated under chapter 432D HRS to have remote dispensing in our facilities. We request that we also be permitted to provide medication to patients with health insurance, to dispense controlled substances and to operate regardless of the physical location of other pharmacies.

We believe this will permit better service and access for KP members that we hope will translate into better medication compliance by patients and ultimately to their improved health.

We urge you to pass this bill with the suggested amendment and thank you for your consideration.

LATE

LĀNA'Ī WOMEN'S CENTER DBA LĀNA'Ī COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

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Tuesday, February 3 2009
Conference Room 329
8:30am

The House Committee on Health

To: The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair and
The Honorable Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

From: Diana V. Shaw, PhD, MPH, MBA, FACMPE
Executive Director

RE: Testimony in Strong Support of HB 655
Relating to Remote Dispensing Pharmacies

LĀNA'Ī WOMEN'S CENTER DBA LĀNA'Ī COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER (LCHC) strongly urges the passing of HB 655. A common challenge faced by all healthcare providers is providing timely and quality healthcare to communities facing geographic barriers to access. Lāna'ī is a community particularly affected by its remoteness and is an underserved population. There are no pharmacies on island. While we have the ability to dispense medicines to our patients, Lāna'ī residents traveling to Oahu or any of the other neighbor islands with prescriptions ordered by non-LCHC providers are unable to have their prescriptions filled on Lāna'ī. In instances when non-LCHC providers visit the islands - (dentist, psychiatrist, podiatrist, etc.) to provide care to Lāna'ī residents, their patients are also not able to receive their medications prescribed by these healthcare professionals. In these instances, LCHC staff assist patients with setting up pharmaceutical accounts with their insurance company's mail order pharmacy. As you can imagine, this creates unnecessary hardship and inconvenience for many Lāna'ī residents.

LCHC is working with a neighbor island pharmacy to install a remote dispensing pharmacy kiosk. Currently, this will allow a licensed pharmacist from another location the ability to dispense pharmaceuticals prescribed by a physician at another location - made possible by last year's Act 212 signed into law with the purpose to improve access to medications and pharmacy services by authorizing the operation of remote pharmaceutical drug dispensing machines in the state. As the law currently stands, the remote kiosk will be helpful in addressing the pharmaceutical needs patients enrolled in Quest and Medicaid - a help approximately 90% of all Lanai residents are not enrolled in either Quest or Medicaid! Additionally, the current law does not allow for the dispensing of narcotics.

HB 655 will allow Lāna'ī residents, and residents of any other islands that do not have a pharmacy, to participate in Act 212. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I strongly urge you to pass HB 655 from this committee.

E Ola nō Lāna'ī

LIFE, HEALTH, and WELL-BEING FOR LĀNA'Ī

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LATE TESTIMONY

Tuesday, February 3 2009
Conference Room 329
8:30am

The House Committee on Health

To: The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair and
The Honorable Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

From: Butch Gima, Social Worker
DOH-Adult Mental Health Division

**RE: Testimony in Strong Support of HB 655
Relating to Remote Dispensing Pharmacies**

My name is Butch Gima and I'm asking that you support HB 655. I am a Social Worker for Lanai Counseling Services (LCS), a satellite office of the Maui Community Mental Health Center of the Adult Mental Health Division of the Department of Health. I have been serving the community I grew up in since 1990.

LCS serves approximately 25-30 registered patients. I provide case management and therapy services while psychiatric evaluations and medication management services are provided once a month by our psychiatrist

Some contextual history. Straub Lanai Family Health Center, affectionately called the "Clinic" by residents of Lanai has been serving our community long before I was born in 1954. In addition to providing primary care services, the Clinic dispensed medications to our residents as there has been no other pharmacy related service on the island. Our community has been served well all these years, without incident I might add.

To my knowledge, "no harm was done" to patients or other businesses as a result of the dispensing services the Clinic provided. The Clinic made it easy for residents to receive their care and medication treatment.

For approximately the last year, the Clinic has not been able to dispense medications to the residents of Lanai as they have done for 50+ years, for reasons I am not privy to. This has impacted several segments of our community-our elderly, our immigrants whose primary language is not English, our visitors and lastly, my patients. We all are impacted because the Clinic can only dispense medications to patients treated by Straub Lanai Family Health Center physicians. Consequently, patients being treated by non-Straub physicians or non-Lanai Straub physicians must get their medications filled on Oahu, Maui and/or through mail order.

For many this is not a problem if the medication is a short term medication or only one medication is needed. However, for many of those impacted, they are in need of lifelong medication treatment and/or take 3-10 medications daily. Therefore, switching to an off island pharmacy has created huge coordination and logistical problems. For those whose primary language is not English you already can surmise how this situation is compounded by utilizing unfamiliar, and usually, monolingual off-island services.

Many of my patients are diagnosed with a SMI, Severe Mental Illness. Their overall functioning improves with structure, consistency, clarity and simplicity. For some the change in obtaining their medications was a hardship; for others it was upsetting and an inconvenience. The added stress did not help in the management of their illness and symptoms. Most importantly, it took away their opportunity to be responsible for their care, treatment and recovery. They no longer called the Clinic to refill their medications and they no longer went to the Clinic to pick up their refills. They basically were at the mercy of others coordinating their medication refills and/or had to incur traveling expenses to Oahu or Maui to fill their prescriptions.

Eighty percent of my patients have private insurance so the current Act 212 would not meet their needs. HB 655 would enable Remote Dispensing services to serve all residents of, and visitors to Lanai.

Passage of this bill would give many of our impacted residents peace of mind. They will again have easy access to having their prescriptions filled. They will again have face-to-face contact with staff that is bi-lingual. They will not have to incur added costs to receive care and treatment. And they will again be able to take full responsibility for their care and treatment of their illness.

I trust that you will see the merits of this bill and the benefits it will provide to the residents of our island. Therefore, please pass HB 655 from this committee. Thank you for considering my testimony.