

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER, ESQ.  
DIRECTOR

HENRY OLIVA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

LATE

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

February 6, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
House Committee on Health  
  
Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 698 – RELATING TO HEALTH CARE**  
Hearing: Friday, February 6, 2009, 9:00 A.M.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a temporary health insurance program for unemployed individuals. Places the program in the Department of Human Services and appropriates general funds.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: We appreciate the intent of this bill provided its passage does not negatively impact the funding priorities of the Executive Biennium Budget.

As unemployment is rising, an increasing number of people may lose their health insurance. These people may forego primary and preventive health care and result in conditions requiring more expensive emergent or inpatient care.

Finding a health insurer willing to cover half of the premium may be challenging, and it is important to the State that the premium is not artificially inflated so that the State's share is, in effect, the full cost. The coverage offered should be limited like in QUEST-ACE.

The Federal stimulus package is expected to have specific provisions for coverage of those unemployed. Any temporary health insurance authorized by this bill should be able to be revised based on the provisions of the stimulus package. However, if the stimulus package does not have such provisions, the health insurance program proposed by this bill would be completely State funded.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



LATE

**HB698**  
**Relating to Health Care**

Committee on Health and  
Committee on Human Services

Date: February 6, 2009  
Room: 329

Time: 9:00am

---

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs is pleased to support House Bill 698, calling for establishing a temporary three year pilot program, Hawaii health care, to provide health care coverage to certain individuals who become uninsured due to the loss of a job and for appropriation of funds to provide cost-effective health care for the uninsured residents of Hawaii.

During the recent economic environment, we experienced many Native Hawaiians requests for assistance with their medical care and costs for monthly medicines. The Native Hawaiian population is represented by an unusually high number ailing with chronic diseases. Access to medical care and medications became a major problem for those unemployed unexpectedly. Immediate and short term relief proved most effective and most helpful when stabilizing families.

There are near 20,000 Native Hawaiians who are uninsured. Supporting low-cost quality health care through a Federally-qualified health care center and the Native Hawaiian health care systems is proving to be a valuable partnership for all residents in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.