

# HMSA



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**LATE  
Testimony**

March 18, 2010

The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair  
The Honorable Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Health

**Re: HCR 110 – Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Effects of Requiring Health Insurers to Provide Coverage for Weight Management and Obesity Treatment for Children.**

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

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HCR110, which requests an Auditor's study of insurance coverage for weight management and obesity treatment for children.

We are pleased that the Legislature is requesting an Auditor's study as required under Hawaii Revised Statutes 23-51 and 23-52. This study will provide decision-makers with objective information prior to including these new benefits. With health care costs continuing to escalate it is important to consider the impact that requiring such benefits will have on the cost of health care, especially for local employers who typically bear the brunt of such cost increases.

As part of Hawaii's community since 1938, HMSA has participated in programs that encourage our keiki to become more active and make healthy eating choices. We helped to develop the Fun 5 program which encourages A+ students to be active five days a week and eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. We also partnered with the TumbleBus to bring this "gym on wheels" to preschoolers. In addition, HMSA continues the encouragement of healthy habits into adolescence with our HealthPass program which gives teens the opportunity to meet with a professional consultant to obtain various health statistics and learn what they can do to improve overall health.

HMSA strives to provide members of all ages with information and access to programs that promote healthy lifestyles and we appreciate this study being conducted.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JDiesman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Jennifer Diesman**  
Vice President  
Government Relations

Testimony of  
**Phyllis Dendle**  
Director Government Relations

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

Testimony  
LATE

March 18, 2010  
10:30 am  
Conference Room 329

**HCR 110**     **REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO ASSESS THE SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL EFFECTS OF REQUIRING HEALTH INSURERS TO PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT AND OBESITY PREVENTION FOR CHILDREN**

Chair Yamane and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this resolution which requests that the Legislative Auditor perform a sunrise study on requiring health insurance plans to offer coverage for weight management and obesity prevention for children less than 16 year of age.

**Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports this measure.**

We already provide what is being proposed in SB794 and we have found it to be successful for the children and families we care for. Our department of pediatrics has adopted the Hawaii pediatric weight management tool kit into our system. We do obesity counseling at our well child visits and all patients have their body mass index (BMI) calculated automatically. We refer to dietary for counseling and do pertinent labs as necessary. When we examine our data in the next year or two we will be able document the effect of this evaluation and treatment. Anecdotally, our pediatricians say they are seeing enough success to be committed to continuing the program even though it is time consuming.

I have been told that the reason you are being asked to consider this mandate is that providers who are not in the Kaiser system have difficulty getting reimbursed for treatment and prevention of obesity, and many times patients have to pay out of pocket to see a dietician.

The office of the surgeon general recently reported that to date more than 12.5 million children and adolescents are overweight. That is 17.1 percent of people ages 2 to 19 years in the United States. As they grow older, overweight children and adolescents are more likely to have risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes. Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.

The proposed mandate may assist in reducing the number children and adolescents whose health is compromised by obesity. Thank you for your consideration.



# American Academy of Pediatrics

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March 16, 2010

Measure: **HCR110**, Obesity treatment for children.  
Committee on Health, Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair, Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 18, 2010 @10:30 am. Conference Room 329

Representatives Yamane & Nishimoto:

HCR 110 is desperately needed in Hawaii. In order to ameliorate the obesity epidemic in Hawaii and the resulting tremendous medical costs seen in our adult population, we must intervene during the early years of life when lifelong behaviors are being established. A major impediment towards a proper medical evaluation, prevention and intervention for an overweight child is that health plans have refused to include these types of patient visits to their primary care doctor in their health plan benefits structure. This short-sighted, non-prevention oriented business model is hurting the long term health of our population.

In 2007 the American Academy of Pediatrics issued its guidelines for identifying, evaluating and treating overweight and obese children and adolescents. In that same year our chapter issued its "Hawaii Pediatric Weight Management Toolkit" which assists our local pediatricians in implementing the national guidelines. In February of 2010 the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommended that all children six years of age and older be screened for obesity and intervention begun when indicated. Our surgeon general, Dr. Regina Benjamin has recently issued "The Surgeon General's Vision for a Fit and Healthy Nation 2010" and addresses the need for physicians to engage in medical evaluations and monitoring of obese children.

HCR 110 is the first step in untying the hands of pediatricians and beginning a process that will allow us to take a more proactive and staunch stand against pediatric and adult obesity, a truly silent but deadly chronic disease.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully

**Galen YK Chock MD**

President, The American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter.

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**Testimony**