



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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March 18, 2010

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

House Resolution 7/House Concurrent Resolution 13 – Extending the Deadline for the Home for Life Task Force to Report on its Findings and Recommendations for Reducing Barriers to Aging in Place and Facilitating Multigenerational Living

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports both House Resolution 7 and House Concurrent Resolution 13 requesting extending the deadline for the Home for Life Task Force to report on its findings to reducing barriers to aging in place and facilitating multigenerational living.

Through its numerous phone calls and inquiries, the DCAB staff have observed the difficulties faced by many individuals with disabilities when their physical residence is no longer able to accommodate their mobility limitations. While we review the new construction and alteration of public housing, public-supported housing via tax credits, Hawaiian Homes sites, and transient lodging (shelters) these residential arrangements represent a fraction of the locations where people live. We need to also examine single-family construction and alteration strategies and promote public policies which allow for living in one's home as long as desired.

The 'aging in place' concept not only refers to people who are elderly and want to 'age in place' but for people with disabilities who want to 'live in place.' Both groups have a common desire to stay in a home that is familiar and avoid more costly institutional care.

DCAB was appointed to serve as a member of the task force to ensure issues related to accessibility for individuals with disabilities are included in recommendations made from this task force. We support the resolution to allow the group to progress with this much needed work.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES W. FLEMING
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

1360 S. Beretania St., Suite 301, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

Written Only - Testimony by: Avis Sakata, OTR

HCR 13/HR7, Extending the Deadline for the Home for Life Task Force to Report on its Findings and Recommendations for Reducing Barriers to Aging in Place and Facilitating Multigenerational Living.

**Hse HLT/HUS Hearing – Thursday, March 18, 2010
Room 329 – 10:30 am**

Position: Support

Chairs Yamane and Mizuno, and Members of the House HLT/HUS Committees:

I am Avis Sakata, OTR and president of the Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii, (OTAH), which represents 507 occupational therapists (OTs) licensed in Hawaii. OT's work in many settings throughout the State, including hospitals, schools, prisons, skilled nursing to private facilities and community-based programs.

Occupational Therapy is a science driven, evidenced-based profession that enables people of all ages, from infants to the elderly, to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health and prevent or live better with illness, injury or disability. Occupational Therapists are recognized members of the Healthcare Rehabilitation team which is comprised also of physicians, nurses, physical therapists, speech therapists, social workers and others. As a healthcare provider, OTs provide, but are not limited to: 1) assessment and evaluation of our patients/clients needs and development of an appropriate treatment plan, 2) interventions focused on daily living skills (including self-care), work readiness, play or educational performance skills, 3) and interventions that include sensorimotor, neuromuscular functioning, cognitive or psychosocial components.

OTAH supports the extending of the Home for Life Task Force reporting deadline and supports empowering the existing Task Force members to fill the positions that have not yet been appointed by the Governor. The work of the Home For Life Task Force is an important foundation for meeting the needs of our elders and their desire to live at home for as long as possible.

OTAH's national organization, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) has ventured into a partnership with AARP and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) to collaborate to provide solutions to address this growing societal need of aging in place. Over the past 2 years, AOTA along with AARP and NAHB have jointly presented seminars at many conferences across the U.S. Three percent of NAHB's designations for Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS) are filled by occupational therapy practitioners.

Occupational Therapy practitioners evaluate the skills of the patient/client and the environmental factors that support or limit performance of skills at home. Based on patient/client assessment, occupational therapists recommend modifications that will improve the environment to support independence and safety within the home.

In addition to supporting this measure, we offer our expertise to the Home for Life Task Force. I can be reached at 522-4602 if further information is needed. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

**Written Only - Testimony by:
Lucy Lessard, PT**



**HCR13/HR17, Extending the Deadline for the Home for Life Task Force to Report On Its Findings and Recommendations for Reducing Barriers to Aging in Place and Facilitating Multi-Generational Living
Hse HLT/HUS Hearing – Thursday, March 18, 2010
Room 329 – 10:30 am**

Position: Support

Chair Yamane and Mizuno, and Members of the Hse HLT/HUS Committees:

I am Lucy Lessard, P.T., and Chair of the HAPTA Legislative Committee and member of the Hawaii Chapter – American Physical Therapy Association (HAPTA). The Hawaii Chapter – American Physical Therapy Association (HAPTA) is comprised of 300 member physical therapists and physical therapist assistants employed in hospitals and health care facilities, the Department of Education and Department of Health systems, and private practice. Our members represent Hawaii at the national American Physical Therapy Association and are delegates for Pediatrics, Women’s Health, Parkinson’s Disease and other issue sections. We are part of the spectrum of care for Hawaii, and provide rehabilitative services for infants and children, youth, adults and the elderly. Rehabilitative services are a vital part of restoring optimum function from neuromusculoskeletal injuries and impairments.

We support this authorization that allows the task force to select and fill positions vacant due to any non-appointment by the Governor, and that allows for extending the deadline for reporting from this task force. As PTs throughout the State, we see Hawaii’s older generation living longer and staying at home more often than in other states. We see that there is a chronic lack of long term care, and it is in our collective best interest to keep these citizens in their homes as long as possible.

However, we also see many elders living in unsafe situations due a combination of their impairments and disabilities and the design of their lodging. Elders have unique impairments that require special design elements above and beyond adaptations in order to keep them safe and prevent injuries. Physical therapists, through training and education, have unique skills in dealing with elders who are healthy, impaired and disabled to keep them supported in their homes.

We are very interested in participating in the Task Force and look forward to working with all stakeholders on this important issue. I can be reached at (808) 753-6507 if there are any questions.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.