

SB 2264

Late Testimony



MĀLAMA I KE OLA
HEALTH CENTER

1881 Nani St
Wailuku, HI 96793
(808) 871-7772
Fax (808) 872-4029

SATELLITE CLINICS

Ka Hale A Ke Ola
Resource Center
670-A Waiale Dr
Wailuku, HI 96793

Na Hale O Waine'e
15 Ipu Amakua Lane
Lahaina, HI 96761

M E M O

Date: February 24, 2010

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Conference Room 211
Wednesday, February 24, 2010, 10:10 a.m.

From: BJ Ott, CFO/Deputy Director
Community Clinic of Maui, Inc., DBA Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center

Re: Senate Bill 2264

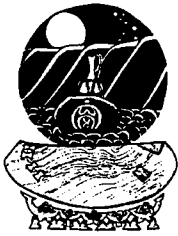
Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2264. The purpose of SB 2264 is to restore adult dental care under QUEST.

Historically, states have primarily targeted adult dental coverage when making Medicaid cuts. However, a 2005 Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of eliminating adult dental Medicaid coverage in Massachusetts found that the savings from benefit reductions were less than one percent of the state's share of total program spending, and it appeared that some costs were shifted to the state's uncompensated care pool.

The study further found that, due to increased costs, many enrollees' dental problems went untreated, exacerbating other chronic or disabling health conditions (a report published by the Surgeon General in 2000 noted the importance of dental examinations in detecting early signs of nutritional deficiencies and systemic disease, and the association between oral health and conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and adverse pregnancy outcomes). In addition, with providers' treatment plans compromised by the lack of coverage, the number of private dentists treating Medicaid patients in Massachusetts declined, further straining the limited capacity of the dental safety net.

CCM was able to implement its dental expansion by committing to the Bureau of Primary Health Care that it would serve only Medicaid and uninsured/underinsured patients to address the vast unmet need. The revenue shortfalls resulting from the reduction in adult dental benefits will likely force CCM to open its practice to the privately insured, which will in turn negatively impact the finances of private dentists who have already experienced declines in revenue from the Medicaid cuts.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of SB 2264.



Waimānalo Health Center
Ola Hāloa
The Sustaining of Life

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
 The Hon. Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
 The Hon. Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Andrew Jamila, Jr.
 President

Moana DeMello
 Vice-President

Mary Ann "Kanoelani" Crowell
 2nd Vice-President

James "Jim" Wood, CPA
 Treasurer

Deborah Smith
 Secretary

DIRECTORS

Bruce Anderson, PhD

John "Keoni" Aylett

Kathy Conner

Johnene "Noe" Galeai, MBA

Mele Look, MBA

Elizabeth "Liz" Martinez

ADVISORY COUNCIL

James "Jim" Kastner

Maydene Simmons

STAFF EXECUTIVE TEAM

May Akamine, RN, MS
 Executive Director

Christina Kealoha Lee, MD
 Medical Director

Uyanga Batzogs, MBA
 Finance Director

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2264
Relating to QUEST Health Care Payments

February 24, 2010 10:10 a.m. Agenda, Room 211
 Submitted by May Akamine, RN, MS, Executive Director

Waimānalo Health Center strongly supports this bill which appropriates funds to restore basic dental services for adults covered by Med-QUEST.

Oral health is critical to overall health. Currently, dental coverage is limited to emergencies only which threaten a person's health: Research shows correlations between chronic oral infections and diabetes, heart and lung disease, stroke, etc. – conditions that have more complications and are more expensive to treat than effective, timely oral health care. In addition, poor oral health affects a person's appearance which negatively impacts job prospects which not only affects self-esteem, but has reverberating effects on personal as well as societal levels. Furthermore, toothlessness is linked to a poor diet because of the inability to chew healthy foods such as vegetables.

School of Medicine Professor Dr. Harrigan conducted a survey at Waimānalo Health Center, "Oral Health Disparities and Periodontal Disease in Asian and Pacific Island Populations", *Ethnic Disease*, May 2006, which showed that our patients had less number of teeth, deeper tooth pocket depth, higher extent of attachment loss, greater extent of bleeding sites, and more decayed coronal surfaces when compared to a national survey sample. This study concluded "... if the pilot study sample adequately represents the Waimānalo population, the community's oral health status is quite poor." This study is aligned with other findings from our State Department of Health which show that Native Hawaiian adults have a high rate of tooth loss and extensive periodontal disease and caries, yet have the lowest dental care utilization when compared with other ethnic groups in Hawaii.

Because Waimānalo, a largely Native Hawaiian community, needed affordable oral health services, we opened our *Waimānalo Smiles!* Dental Clinic in April 2009. Before QUEST benefits were cut in August 2009, we lived up to our *Waimanalo Smiles!* name. There were many smiles on the faces of people who received dentures after many years of not having teeth. Now, our adult patients, including our kupuna, do not return for services because they cannot afford to pay for dental care. Plus, it makes a lot of economic sense to restore dental benefits for our adult patients on QUEST. If upfront, primary dental care is provided to our people, we will save on the costly Emergency Room and hospitalizations that will, inevitably, be utilized when primary and preventive dental care is not sought. I am proud of the high quality and compassionate care that WHC provides all our patients.

We all urge you to pass this bill and restore essential oral health services. Mahalo nui loa for your kokūa and support of our kupuna and other adults of our community. They deserve full QUEST benefits. Aloha!





HO'ŌLA LĀHUI HAWAI'I
P.O. Box 3990; Līhu'e, Hawai'i
Phone: 808.240.0100 Fax: 808.246.9551



Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Hon. Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Hon. Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2264
Relating to QUEST Health Care Payments
Submitted by David Peters, Chief Executive Officer
February 24, 2010 10:10 a.m. Agenda, Room 211

Ho'ola Lahui Hawai'i strongly supports this measure which appropriates funds to restore basic dental services for adults covered by Med-QUEST.

Ho'ola Lahui Hawai'i believes that the restoration of this program will not increase the costs spent on dental care. It is basically a cost shift from emergency services to preventive and restorative care. In other words our billing to the Department of Human Services for emergency visits is not that much less than what we were billing previously for preventive and restorative care—the service has shifted from a preventive/restorative to an emergency visit. As the committee is aware this is not in the best interests of the health of our patients. Primary dental care must not be denied to those who have no means of affording the care.

Medicaid patients were left without coverage except for emergency extractions and infections on August 10, 2009. This was a devastating blow to those most in need of dental care here on Kaua'i. While many of our patients were converted to our sliding fee scale they are still unable to afford to pay even a fraction of the cost of their care due to limited incomes. Many of those patients postponed coming to us for care and are now coming as emergency patients.

It is imperative that this benefit be restored to those most in need of care. We understand the gravity of the budget deficit. We also understand first hand that cost shifting will not assist in meeting the needs of the budget deficit. As you know the current federal match for Medicaid is greater in the current year due to ARRA funding. Please ensure that we take full advantage of that matching fund.

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 critical bill.