

**SB 416**

**TESTIMONY**  
**from the**  
**Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities**

**Testifier's Name:** Waynette Cabral

**Position Title:** Executive Administrator

**Organization:** Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities

**Day, Date, and Time of Hearing:** Wednesday, February 18, 2009, 3:15 pm, Rm. 016

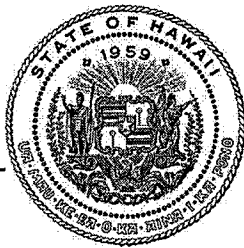
**Measure Number:** SB 416 – RELATING TO HAWAII HEALTH CORPS PROGRAM

**Name of Committee(s):** Senate Health (HTH)

**Number of copies the Committee is requesting:** 1 copy to Committee Clerk

**Room Number:** 215

**E-mailed to:** [HTHTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:HTHTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

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Statement of  
**THEODORE E. LIU**  
**Director**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH**  
Wednesday, February 18, 2009  
3:15 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

in consideration of  
**SB 416**  
**RELATING TO HAWAII HEALTH CORPS PROGRAM.**

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Green and Members of the Senate Committee on Health.

**Purpose:** Establishes the Hawaii Health Corps Program (“HHCP”) within the Department of Health (“DOH”). The HHCP would be comprised of a Federal Loan Repayment Program structured to obtain Federal matching funds that would be used to repay eligible student loans in exchange for a service commitment by physicians and dentists practicing in health professional shortage areas; and a Recruitment Program where incentives would be awarded to recruit and retain all types of health professionals practicing in areas designated by the DOH as experiencing a shortage of health care professionals.

**Position:** The Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (“DBEDT”) supports the intent of this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010. To further the Department’s workforce development objective, the Department offers amendments to this proposal.

Act 242, Session Laws of Hawaii 2008, requested that the DBEDT convene a working group to develop a plan to establish a program known as the Hawaii Health Corps. The program would be designed to recruit and retain health care professionals in rural and underserved areas in the State. Recruitment and retention of health care professionals requires a multi-pronged approach. Creation of a State Loan Repayment Program that qualifies for Federal funding and a

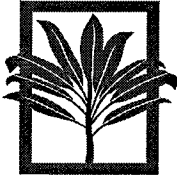
separate recruitment program that can provide a wide range of awards to all health care professionals is needed to address retention issues in areas throughout the State.

As workforce development is a key priority of the DBEDT and with the concurrence of the DOH, I propose that the proposal is amended to name the DBEDT as the agency to pursue Federal matching funds for the loan repayment program and work in our underserved communities to administer the recruitment program. The DOH would continue to identify federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (“HPSA”) as well as other areas while not designated as a HPSA, but is still experiencing a shortage.

The loan repayment program will be administered by the DBEDT in a manner that makes it eligible to receive Federal matching funds in the form of grants from the Bureau of Health Professions. Even if the eligibility to receive Federal matching funds contains restrictions and limitations, as health professional workforce development in rural and underserved areas within the State is a critical workforce development and community development priority, this mechanism must first be established. It will also be important for the DBEDT to establish the relationships within the community; such as with individual providers, public or private nonprofit organizations or communities recruiting or employing an eligible health professional to leverage locally available resources and enable the recruitment and retention program to be established.

Establishing the HHCP (as described in the January 2009 Report to the Legislature on the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program Hawaii Health Corps Program), with or without the benefit of a general fund appropriation is the essential first step in addressing the shortage of health care professionals in the underserved areas of our State. The working group comprised of: the Dean of the John A. Burns School of Medicine; the Department of Health; the Department of Human Services; the State Health Planning and Development Agency; and members of the State Senate and House of Representatives are in agreement that the time is here and now for the State to establish the HHCP. I urge the passage of this proposal (insofar as the priorities described in the Executive Biennium Budget are not replaced) as the necessary first step in addressing a critical need in the rural and underserved communities of our State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this proposal.



## Hawai'i Primary Care Association

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To: **The Senate Committee on Health**  
The Hon. David Y. Ige, Chair  
The Hon. Josh Green, MD, Vice Chair

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 416**  
**Relating to Hawaii Health Corps**  
**Submitted by Beth Giesting, CEO**  
**February 18, 2008, 3:15 p.m. agenda, Room 016**

The Hawaii Primary Care Association urges your support for this bill.

We support it because:

- It has the potential to address all of the most urgent health care shortages: physician, nurse practitioner, midwife, psychologist, physician assistant, social worker, dentist, hygienist, and other therapists.
- It offers two effective recruitment and retention programs, one being a loan repayment and the other a recruitment program and incentive payment.
- It identifies an essential clinical workforce to serve in the event of an emergency situation.

We do ask the Committee to consider a proposed change in § -14 Preference and selection.

(a) (1) Graduates of the university of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine or other program that trains physicians in Hawaii;

This preference is made as Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, in partnership with an accredited Medical school in Arizona, also offers medical training with a focus on developing physicians oriented toward delivering primary care in community health center-based settings. We greatly respect JABSOM's programs but believe that these additional candidates should also be prioritized for this program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

# HMSA



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

February 18, 2009

The Honorable David Ige, Chair  
The Honorable Josh Green M.D., Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health

**Re: SB 416 -- Relating to Hawaii Health Corps Program**

Dear Chair Ige, Vice Chair Green and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of SB 416.

All organizations and entities engaged in health care are working to ensure that the members of our community are able to access appropriate health care when they need it. Working towards this HMSA has supported UH's rural residency program, worked with the Hawaii/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center to provide travel support funding for up to 25 medical students to perform primary care clinical rotations on neighbor islands, and introduced its Online Care program to improve access across the state.

The initiatives contained in SB 416 will be a welcome addition to and compliment those already in place across the state. HMSA supports this comprehensive strategy to recruit and retain physicians in the more rural areas of the state.

Sincerely,

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

Jennifer Diesman  
Assistant Vice President  
Government Relations



**HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS**  
C O R P O R A T I O N

*"Touching Lives Every Day"*

**THE SENATE**

The Twenty-Fifth Legislature  
Regular Session of 2009

**Committee on Health**

**Senator David Y. Ige, Chair**  
**Senator Josh Green, M.D., Vice Chair**

Wednesday, February 18, 2009

3:15 PM

Conference Room 016  
Hawaii State Capitol

**SB 416 RELATING TO HAWAII HEALTH CORPS PROGRAM**

Establishes the Hawaii health corps program to address physician shortages in rural areas of the State; establishes a loan repayment program and an incentive plan for the recruitment of health care professionals to serve shortage areas.

By Howard Ainsley  
East Hawaii Regional CEO  
Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC)

On behalf of the East Hawaii Region, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 416 to establish the Hawaii health corps program to address physician shortages in rural areas of the State; establish a loan repayment program and an incentive plan for the recruitment of health care professionals to serve shortage areas.

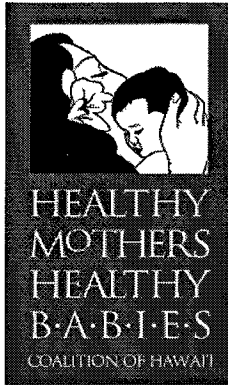
East Hawaii is no stranger to the reality of physician shortage. Our Emergency Department sees an extraordinary amount of visitors a year – over 35,000. Much of this is due in part to people not being able to get an appointment with their primary care physician or not having one to treat them for ordinary issues such as the flu.

I believe this bill is a definite way to attract and retain new physicians to our community. Your support for SB 416 is appreciated. It will send a strong message to our community that healthcare is a priority. Thank you for your consideration.

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[www.hhsc.org](http://www.hhsc.org)



February 17, 2009

TO: Senator David Y. Ige, Chair; Senator Josh Green, M.D., Vice Chair  
Members, Committee On Health  
FROM: Jackie Berry, Executive Director  
RE: **SB 416 Relating To Hawaii Health Corps Program**  
Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2009

Honorable Chairperson Ige, Vice Chairperson Green and Members of the Committee on Health

HMHB is a statewide coalition of public and private agencies and individuals committed to the improvement of maternal and infant health status in Hawaii through education, coordination and advocacy. **HMHB is testifying today in support of SB 416 to establish the Hawaii health corps program to address physician shortages in rural areas of the State; establishes a loan repayment program and an incentive plan for the recruitment of health care professionals to serve shortage areas.**

One of the central components to ensuring access to health care is having qualified health professionals to provide the services. As we all know, there are areas of the State of Hawaii that have very serious shortages. The data on access to prenatal care indicates that a major reason for late and inconsistent prenatal care is access to physicians, particularly on the island of Hawaii and in the rural areas of Oahu. Getting appropriate and timely prenatal care is a major indicator affecting birth outcomes.

We urge you support of this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill and our testimony.

1500 South Beretania St, #308, Honolulu Hawaii 96826  
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e-mail: [jackieb@hmhb-hawaii.org](mailto:jackieb@hmhb-hawaii.org) website: [www.hmhb-hawaii.org](http://www.hmhb-hawaii.org)



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**From:** sierra [sierra@alohabroadband.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 6:21 PM  
**To:** HTHTestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony SB 169 & SB 416

**Categories:** Green Category, Blue Category

SB 169 Establishes the Hawaii Health Corps SB 416 Relating to the Hawaii Health Corps

Senate Committee on Health  
Wednesday February 18, 2009  
3:15 PM  
Conference Room 016  
6 copies

Dear Chairman Ige, Vice Chair Green and Members of the Health Committee,

I am writing in support of both SB 169 and SB 416 which relate to the establishment and functional parameters of the Hawaii Health Corps.

The establishment of this Entity would go a long way in helping to solve the health care crisis we are facing on our neighbor islands. On the Big Island

we have an acute shortage of primary care physicians and specialists. We have lost many in the last two years.

I am a registered dental hygienist in Kona and have been practicing here for 22 years.

In my time here, we have always experienced a manpower distribution problem.

We have an adequate number of hygienists on Oahu, but have always had a shortage of hygienists on neighbor islands, especially the Big Island.

Establishing a program like the Hawaii Health Corps, will help to alleviate this problems by allowing for recruitment incentive programs which would be open to all health care professionals.

Please give your consideration and support to these Bills and help us find a way to provide improved medical and dental care for areas like the Big Island.

Mahalo for your attention,

Sierra Spruce, RDH  
Hawaii Dental Hygienists' Association  
Regulation and Practice Committee Chair  
2003 State President

POB 2138  
Kealakekua, HI 96750  
808-939-7100

**From:**

Robin G. Pilus, Manager  
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**Public hearing on SB 416 02-18-09 3:15pm in conference room 016**

**Copies, one for each member of the health committee**

*SB416 Establishes the Hawaii health corps program to address physician shortages in rural areas of the State; establishes a loan repayment program and an incentive plan for the recruitment of health care professionals to serve shortage areas.*

SB416 addresses physician shortages in rural areas of the state by only incentivizing newly recruited physicians to set up actual practices within these areas. The bill also addresses the very difficult realities of offering services in rural areas and the fact that consumers often require more services because health care needs are greater due to social-economic or geographic circumstances. What the bill does not do is encourage the broad use of telecare by our existing physicians...which would be the most expedient and least expensive way to provide real areas access to care

As a new member of the State Telehealth Collaborative I want to urge the committee to insert some specific language that includes a provision of providing an award to a healthcare provider that successfully provides medical services through innovative uses of telecare.

Many new and exciting medical technology innovations are now available and will soon be integrated into routine care plans increasing access to diagnostic and specialty services through HIPAA Compliant solutions. The DOH has actually launched a pilot project on Maui that is deploying a web-based telecare solution through Public Health Nurses that will help Kapuna 'age in place' and get consistent tracking of their status by linking patients competent physicians, along with health records, through telecare.

The Obama Stimulus package includes 18 billion dollars to states for digitizing of health records and the use of telecare. Perhaps some of these dollars could be maximized in this program if the proper language was inserted into the bill.

The State Telehealth Taskforce states in their 2009 Annual Report to the State Legislature we must look for additional Telehealth technology equipment and processes that must be flexible, easy and convenient for clinicians to use. Including Telehealth projects for our rural areas as potential recipients of awards through the Hawaii Health Corps will allow our existing physicians incentives to reach out to our rural areas with Telehealth solutions. We must remember that doctor-patient relations are already in place. All we need to do is add connectivity to improve access to health in rural areas.

Senate Bill 416  
Senate Committee on Health  
February 18, 2009, 3:15 p.m.  
From: Jerris Hedges, MD – Written only

Aloha. Thank you, Chair Sen. Ige, Vice Chair Sen. Green and members of the Senate Health Committee for this opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 416.

I am offering this testimony as an individual, who also happens to be the Dean of the John A. Burns School of Medicine.

The John A. Burns School of Medicine was founded in 1965 to provide opportunity to citizens of Hawai'i – both through the provision of physician education in Hawai'i for state residents and by providing a means to enhance the retention of practicing physicians with ties to Hawai'i within the state.

The current educational debt of the medical school graduates of the John A. Burns School of Medicine exceeds \$85,000 among those with educational debt. Coupled with a higher cost of living and lower physician reimbursement in Hawai'i than elsewhere in the U.S., the retention of medical school graduates in Hawai'i is becoming more challenging. This phenomenon has reached critical proportions on our neighbor islands.

A loan repayment program that provides some relief of this educational debt and assists with the establishment of new physician practices on the neighbor islands will assist with the significant physician access problem existing on the neighbor islands. As demonstrated on the mainland, educational debt loan repayment programs can aid physician recruitment to rural areas.

(more)

Page 2: Hedges Testimony SB 416

This program will be most successful if coupled with neighbor island educational programs that are underdevelopment by the John A. Burns School of Medicine. An extended exposure to our more rural communities while a medical student, resident (post medical school specialty training) and through such a loan repayment program will enhance long-term career and practice site choices favoring the neighbor islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Jerris R. Hedges, MD, MS, MMM  
Professor & Dean  
John A. Burns School of Medicine  
Barry & Virginia Weinman Endowed Chair  
University of Hawai'i – Manoa

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



LATE

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO, M.D.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P.O. Box 3378  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

**Senate Committee on Health**

**SB 416, RELATING TO HAWAII HEALTH CORPS PROGRAM**

**Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D.  
Director of Health**

**February 18, 2009  
3:15 PM**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of Business,  
2 Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) on this measure.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** There is an appropriation of an unspecified amount of general funds for FY 2010-  
4 2011.

5 **Purpose and Justification:** The measure as currently written establishes within the Department of  
6 Health the Hawaii Health Corps program to administer a loan repayment program structured to obtain  
7 federal matching funds that would be used to repay eligible student loans in exchange for a service  
8 commitment by physicians and dentists practicing in health professional shortage areas (HPSA). The  
9 program would also address recruitment and retention of these health care professionals through an  
10 incentive program.

11 Act 242, SLH 2008, created the working group within the DBEDT to develop a plan to establish  
12 the Hawaii Health Corps to address physician and dentist shortages by creating programs such as student  
13 loan repayments and state-funded stipends. This legislation is the result of the working group's findings  
14 and recommendations.

1           We defer to DBEDT and support their proposed amendments to this measure that further  
2 DBEDT's workforce development objectives.

3           We note there is a typographical error on page 2, line 5 – the sentence says health professional  
4 **storage** areas instead of health professional **shortage** areas.

5           Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**LATE**

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

February 18, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 416 – RELATING TO HAWAII HEALTH CORPS PROGRAM**  
Hearing: Wednesday, February 18 2009, 3:15 PM.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the Hawaii health corps program to address physician shortages in rural areas of the State; establishes a loan repayment program and an incentive plan for the recruitment of health care professionals to serve shortage areas. Appropriates general funds.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of S.B. 416; provided its passage does not adversely impact nor replace the priorities in the Executive Biennium Budget.

DHS is committed to ensuring access to its program recipients and recognizes that there are health professional shortage areas within the State. Accordingly, DHS was represented on the work group that helped with the content for this bill.

To address health care provider shortages, both recruitment and retention strategies are needed. DHS agrees that a program that combines both loan repayment

as well as recruitment and retention efforts would be beneficial, and we support the State Loan Repayment Program that seeks to leverage Federal matching funds.

Given the need for primary care physicians and dentists in the State, the intent of the bill is to improve the primary care and dental workforce in underserved areas. Consideration should be made to include advanced practice nurse practitioners and physician assistants working within their scopes of practice and under the appropriate supervision.

For recruitment and retention purposes, the Recruitment Program addresses the restrictions of the State Loan Repayment Program which is limited to primary care providers only, by giving a variety of incentives to a broader range of health professionals. This is intended to address the shortages of specialty trained physicians in our Neighbor Islands and will help efforts to recruit and retain specialists.

DHS agrees with the eligibility requirements for participating in the proposed programs and appreciates the stipulation that the shortage providers must participate in all Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP programs as many of these program participants reside in health care provider shortage areas. We also agree with the selection criteria, which give preferences to any ties to the State, in the expectation of improving retention. Service obligations and default rules are in line with Federal regulations for loan repayment programs.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.