

JAN 26 2011

S.B. NO. 1277

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CONSUMER PROTECTION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 488, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by adding two new sections to be appropriately
3 designated and to read as follows:

4 "§488- Access to records. (a) Every plan and its
5 owners, operators, officers, employees, and representatives
6 shall be subject to investigation or examination by the
7 commissioner, shall produce and make freely accessible to the
8 commissioner the accounts, records, documents, and files in the
9 person's possession or control relating to the subject of the
10 investigation or examination, and shall otherwise facilitate the
11 investigation or examination.

12 (b) If the commissioner finds the accounts or records to
13 be inadequate, improperly kept, or improperly posted, the
14 commissioner may employ experts to rewrite, post, or balance the
15 accounts at the expense of the plan being examined, if the plan
16 has failed to correct the accounting records after the
17 commissioner has given the plan written notice and a reasonable
18 opportunity to do so.

1 (c) A plan administrator shall provide a written response
2 within seven days to any written inquiry made by the
3 commissioner. The response shall be more than an
4 acknowledgement that the commissioner's communication was
5 received, and shall adequately address the concerns stated in
6 the communication.

7 §488- Records and reports. (a) The commissioner shall
8 preserve in permanent form records and reports of the
9 commissioner's proceedings, hearings, investigations, and
10 examinations, and shall file the records in the commissioner's
11 office.

12 (b) The records of the commissioner and filings in the
13 commissioner's office shall be open to public inspection, except
14 as otherwise provided in this chapter.

15 (c) The following records and reports on file with the
16 commissioner shall be confidential by law and privileged, shall
17 not be made public, shall not be subject to subpoena or
18 discovery, and shall not be admissible as evidence in any
19 private civil action; provided that:

20 (1) This section shall not be construed to limit the
21 commissioner's authority to use the documents,
22 materials, or other information in furtherance of any

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1 regulatory or legal action brought as part of the
2 commissioner's official duties;

3 (2) Neither the commissioner nor any person who received
4 documents, materials, or other information while
5 acting under the authority of the commissioner shall
6 be permitted or required to testify in any private
7 civil action concerning any confidential documents,
8 materials, or information subject to this subsection;
9 and

10 (3) Any documents or information received from the
11 National Association of Insurance Commissioners, the
12 federal government, insurance regulatory agencies of
13 foreign countries, or insurance departments of other
14 states, territories, and commonwealths that are
15 confidential in other jurisdictions. The commissioner
16 may share information, including otherwise
17 confidential information, with the National
18 Association of Insurance Commissioners, the federal
19 government, insurance regulatory agencies of foreign
20 countries, or insurance departments of other states,
21 territories, and commonwealths so long as the statutes
22 or regulations of the other jurisdictions permit them

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1 to maintain the same level of confidentiality as
2 required under Hawaii law.

3 (d) The commissioner shall not disclose any information
4 that is exempt from disclosure by federal or Hawaii statutes."

5 SECTION 2. Chapter 488, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
6 amended by amending the title to read as follows:

7 " ~~[+]~~ CHAPTER 488 ~~[+]~~

8 ~~[PREPAID] LEGAL [SERVICES] SERVICE PLANS"~~

9 SECTION 3. Section 488-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
10 amended by:

11 1. Adding a new definition of "legal service plan" to
12 read as follows:

13 "Legal service plan" or "plan" means any arrangement by
14 which a person as defined in section 431:1-212, or entity, not
15 otherwise authorized to engage in the practice of law, offers to
16 provide or arranges the provision of legal services in exchange
17 for any valuable consideration that is paid to the plan."

18 2. Repealing the definitions of "department", "group
19 legal service plan", and "prepaid legal service plan":

20 ~~["Department" means the department of commerce and~~
21 ~~consumer affairs.~~

1 ~~"Group legal service plan" is a plan by which legal~~
2 ~~services are rendered to individual members of a group~~
3 ~~identifiable in terms of some common interest."~~

4 ~~"Prepaid legal service plan" or "plan" means a group legal~~
5 ~~service plan in which the cost of the services are prepaid by~~
6 ~~the group member or by some other person or organization in the~~
7 ~~member's behalf."]~~

8 SECTION 4. Section 488-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
9 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

10 "(a) This chapter shall apply to all plans in the State
11 other than:

12 (1) Plans in which any party to the plan is the federal
13 government or any agency thereof; or

14 (2) Any employer-employee plan that is subject to the
15 federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of
16 1974, Public Law 93-406.

17 Plans that are owned and operated by an insurer subject to
18 chapter 431 shall be exempt from the requirements of this
19 chapter, provided that the insurer complies with the provisions
20 of chapter 431 and files a statement certifying compliance with
21 chapter 431."

1 SECTION 5. Section 488-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended to read as follows:

3 "~~§488-3 [Filing and other requirements. (a) Sixty days~~
4 ~~prior to implementation of any plan and the accumulation or~~
5 ~~payment of money thereunder, all plan documents shall be~~
6 ~~submitted in writing for approval by the commissioner.]~~

7 Application for authority; authority issued or denied. (a)
8 Before conducting business in this State, a plan shall submit
9 for approval with the commissioner an application for a
10 certificate of authority, shall file documentation with the
11 commissioner, and shall pay to the commissioner a fee as
12 provided under section 431:7-101.

13 (b) The documentation required by subsection (a) shall
14 contain in writing the following:

15 (1) A brief statement of the plan's financial structure,
16 including a statement of the amount of prepayment,
17 other charges or dues to be paid by plan members, and
18 the manner in which the amounts are to be paid;

19 (2) A statement of the amount of benefits, legal services,
20 or reimbursement for legal services to be furnished
21 each member of a plan, and the period during which
22 ~~[it]~~ they will be furnished; and, if there are

1 exceptions, reductions, exclusions, limitations, or
2 restrictions of benefits, legal services, or
3 reimbursements, a detailed statement of the
4 exceptions, reductions, exclusions, limitations, or
5 restrictions;

6 (3) A statement of the terms and conditions upon which the
7 plan may be canceled or otherwise terminated by the
8 group, the plan administrator, the persons furnishing
9 legal services, or the member; provided that for any
10 cancellation or termination, other than by a member,
11 there shall be provision made for the disposition of
12 funds accumulated under the plan;

13 (4) A statement describing the applicability or
14 nonapplicability of the benefits of the plan to the
15 family dependents of the member;

16 (5) A statement of the period of grace which will be
17 allowed the member or the member's group for making
18 any payment due under the plan;

19 (6) A statement describing a procedure for settling
20 disputes between or among the group, the plan
21 administrator, the persons furnishing legal services,
22 and the member; [and]

1 (7) A statement that the plan includes the endorsements
2 thereon and attached papers, if any, and contains the
3 entire contract or contracts to be used among all
4 parties to a plan[-], including the executed written
5 agreement between the plan and any person providing
6 legal services to the plan; and

7 (8) A listing of the owners, operators, officers, and plan
8 administrator of the plan, including the current
9 business address, home address, mailing address,
10 business phone number, business fax number, business
11 electronic mail address, business website address, and
12 home phone number.

13 Any amendments or changes to the documents filed under
14 paragraphs (1) to [~~7~~] (8) shall be filed with the commissioner
15 for approval at least sixty days before they take effect. All
16 documents filed under this section shall be public documents.

17 (c) If the commissioner finds that a plan has met the
18 requirements for and is fully entitled thereto under this
19 section, the commissioner shall issue to it a proper certificate
20 of authority.

1 (d) If the commissioner does not so find, the commissioner
2 shall deny the plan certificate of authority within a reasonable
3 length of time following filing of the application by the plan."

4 SECTION 6. Section 488-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended to read as follows:

6 "~~§488-4~~ **Accumulated funds, protection, violation.** [~~(a)~~
7 ~~Any plan which accumulates funds from payments of premiums prior~~
8 ~~to paying those funds to persons providing legal services shall~~
9 ~~meet the requirements of this section.~~

10 ~~(b)~~ (a) The plan administrator shall have the
11 responsibilities of a trustee for all funds received,
12 accumulated, or collected under this chapter.

13 [~~(c)~~] (b) The plan administrator, upon receipt of
14 [~~premium~~] funds intended for payment to a person providing legal
15 services pursuant to this chapter, shall maintain the funds at
16 all times in a federally insured account with a bank, savings
17 and loan association, or financial services loan company located
18 in Hawaii, separate from the plan's own funds or funds held by
19 the plan administrator in any other capacity, in an amount at
20 least equal to the funds collected and unpaid to the persons
21 providing legal services, unless otherwise approved by the
22 commissioner. Only additional funds as may be reasonably

1 necessary to pay bank, savings and loan association, or
2 financial services loan company charges may be commingled with
3 the [~~premium~~] funds. If the bank, savings and loan association,
4 or financial services loan company account is an interest
5 earning account, the plan may not retain the interest earned on
6 such funds for the plan or plan administrator's own use or
7 benefit without the prior written consent of the person entitled
8 to the funds. A plan trustee account shall be designated on the
9 records of the bank, savings and loan association, or financial
10 services loan company as a "trustee account established pursuant
11 to section 488-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes", or words of similar
12 import.

13 ~~[(d)]~~ (c) The plan administrator shall obtain a \$100,000
14 bond [~~in an amount and form approved by the commissioner~~] which
15 shall be executed by the plan administrator and a surety company
16 authorized to do business in the state as a surety. [~~The bond~~
17 ~~shall be to the benefit of the members of the plan and shall be~~
18 ~~filed with the commissioner.~~] The bond shall run to the state
19 for the benefit of any claimants against the plan to secure the
20 faithful performance of the obligations of the plan. The
21 aggregate liability of the surety shall not exceed the principal
22 sum of the bond. The plan administrator shall provide the

1 commissioner with proof of the bond at the time of the initial
2 request for approval and at any time thereafter as requested by
3 the commissioner. The plan shall not release the bond without
4 the commissioner's approval. In lieu of the bond required by
5 this section, the commissioner may accept letters of credit,
6 certificates of deposits, or other [~~evidences~~] evidence of
7 security in form and amounts deemed appropriate by the
8 commissioner.

9 [~~(e)~~] (d) Any person, including a plan administrator,
10 owner, operator, officer, employee, or representative who, not
11 being lawfully entitled to [~~such funds,~~] do so, diverts or
12 appropriates funds or any portion thereof [~~to the plan or plan~~
13 administrator's] for the person's own use, shall be subject to
14 penalties as provided by law."

15 SECTION 7. Section 488-7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended to read as follows:

17 "**§488-7 Failure to comply; penalty.** (a) Any plan that
18 neglects or refuses to comply with this chapter shall be
19 notified in writing by the commissioner of the neglect or
20 refusal, and of the need to take corrective action within seven
21 days. If the neglect or refusal continues for seven days after
22 notification, the plan[~~, group,~~] or plan administrator may be

1 fined not more than \$1,000 [~~. Every day's neglect or refusal~~
2 ~~after the expiration of seven days shall be a separate offense.]~~
3 per day for each day of noncompliance.

4 (b) [The] In addition to penalties provided in subsection
5 (a), the commissioner may deny, suspend, revoke, or refuse to
6 approve the certificate of authority of any plan or any plan
7 amendments [and may levy civil penalties as allowed by chapters
8 431, 432, 480, 481A, 481B, 481C, and any applicable law for any
9 violation of this chapter].

10 (c) If the commissioner takes any action pursuant to
11 subsection (b), the commissioner shall notify the applicant or
12 licensee in writing of the reason for that action. The
13 applicant or licensee may make written demand upon the
14 commissioner, within ten days of the date of receipt of the
15 notice, for a hearing before the commissioner to determine the
16 reasonableness of the commissioner's action. The hearing shall
17 be held within thirty days of receipt of the written demand,
18 unless postponed by mutual consent, and shall be held pursuant
19 to chapter 91.

20 (d) If the commissioner has cause to believe that any plan
21 is violating or is about to violate any provision of this
22 chapter or any order of the commissioner, the commissioner may

1 issue a cease and desist order to enforce compliance with this
2 chapter or any order of the commissioner, or bring an action in
3 any court of competent jurisdiction to enjoin the plan from
4 continuing the violation or doing any act in furtherance
5 thereof. The commissioner shall have the discretion to include
6 in a cease and desist order, or to request in an action brought
7 in any court, restitution on behalf of persons aggrieved by a
8 violation of this chapter and an assessment of a monetary
9 penalty against any plan, plan administrator, or owner,
10 operator, or officer of the plan that violates this chapter or
11 who has violated an order of the commissioner."

12 SECTION 8. Act 59, Session Laws of Hawaii 2010, is amended
13 by amending sections 4 and 5 to read as follows:

14 "SECTION 4. Section 431:7-101, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
15 amended by amending subsections (a) and (b) to read as follows:

16 (a) The commissioner shall collect in advance the
17 following fees:

- 18 (1) Certificate of authority: Issuance.....\$900
- 19 (2) Organization of domestic insurers and affiliated
- 20 corporations:

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- 1 (A) Application and all other papers required for
- 2 issuance of solicitation permit,
- 3 filing..... \$1,500
- 4 (B) Issuance of solicitation permit.....\$150
- 5 (3) Producer's license:
- 6 (A) Issuance, regular license.....\$50
- 7 (B) Issuance, temporary license.....\$50
- 8 (4) Nonresident producer's license:
- 9 Issuance.....\$75
- 10 (5) Independent adjuster's license: Issuance....\$75
- 11 (6) Public adjuster's license: Issuance.....\$75
- 12 (7) [~~Workers' compensation claim~~] Claims adjuster's
- 13 limited license: Issuance.....\$75
- 14 (8) Independent bill reviewer's license:
- 15 Issuance.....\$80
- 16 (9) Limited producer's license: Issuance.....\$60
- 17 (10) Managing general agent's license: Issuance..\$75
- 18 (11) Reinsurance intermediary's license:
- 19 Issuance.....\$75
- 20 (12) Surplus lines broker's license: Issuance...\$150
- 21 (13) Service contract provider's registration:
- 22 Issuance.....\$75

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- 1 (14) Approved course provider certificate:
- 2 Issuance.....\$100
- 3 (15) Approved continuing education course certificate:
- 4 Issuance.....\$30
- 5 (16) Vehicle protection product warrantor's registration:
- 6 Issuance.....\$75
- 7 (17) Criminal history record check; fingerprinting: For
- 8 each criminal history record check and fingerprinting
- 9 check, a fee to be established by the commissioner.
- 10 (18) Limited line motor vehicle rental company producer's
- 11 license: Issuance.....\$1,000
- 12 ~~(19) Life settlement contract provider's license:~~
- 13 ~~Issuance.....\$75~~
- 14 ~~(20) Life settlement contract broker's license:~~
- 15 ~~Issuance.....\$75]~~
- 16 (19) Legal service plan certificate of authority:
- 17 Issuance.....\$500
- 18 ~~(21)]~~ (20) Examination for license: For each examination, a
- 19 fee to be established by the commissioner.
- 20 (b) The fees for services of the department of commerce
- 21 and consumer affairs subsequent to the issuance of a certificate
- 22 of authority, license, or other certificate are as follows:

- 1 (1) \$600 per year for all services (including extension of
2 the certificate of authority) for an authorized
3 insurer;
- 4 (2) \$50 per year for all services (including extension of
5 the license) for a regularly licensed producer;
- 6 (3) \$75 per year for all services (including extension of
7 the license) for a regularly licensed nonresident
8 producer;
- 9 (4) \$45 per year for all services (including extension of
10 the license) for a regularly licensed independent
11 adjuster;
- 12 (5) \$45 per year for all services (including extension of
13 the license) for a regularly licensed public adjuster;
- 14 (6) \$45 per year for all services (including extension of
15 the license) for a [~~workers' compensation~~] claims
16 adjuster's limited license;
- 17 (7) \$60 per year for all services (including extension of
18 the license) for a regularly licensed independent bill
19 reviewer;
- 20 (8) \$45 per year for all services (including extension of
21 the license) for a producer's limited license;

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- 1 (9) \$75 per year for all services (including extension of
2 the license) for a regularly licensed managing general
3 agent;
- 4 (10) \$75 per year for all services (including extension of
5 the license) for a regularly licensed reinsurance
6 intermediary;
- 7 (11) \$45 per year for all services (including extension of
8 the license) for a licensed surplus lines broker;
- 9 (12) \$75 per year for all services (including renewal of
10 registration) for a service contract provider;
- 11 (13) \$65 per year for all services (including extension of
12 the certificate) for an approved course provider;
- 13 (14) \$20 per year for all services (including extension of
14 the certificate) for an approved continuing education
15 course;
- 16 (15) \$75 per year for all services (including renewal of
17 registration) for a vehicle protection product
18 warrantor;
- 19 (16) \$20 for a criminal history record check;
20 fingerprinting: For each criminal history record
21 check and fingerprinting check, a fee to be
22 established by the commissioner.

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1 (17) \$600 per year for all services (including extension of
2 the license) for a regularly licensed limited line
3 motor vehicle rental company producer; and

4 [~~(18) \$75 per year for all services (including extension of~~
5 ~~the license) for a regularly licensed life settlement~~
6 ~~contract provider; and~~

7 ~~(19) \$75 per year for all services (including extension of~~
8 ~~the license) for a regularly licensed life settlement~~
9 ~~contract broker.]~~

10 (18) \$500 per year for all services (including extension of
11 the certificate) for an authorized legal service plan.

12 The services referred to in paragraphs (1) to [~~(19)~~] (18)
13 shall not include services in connection with examinations,
14 investigations, hearings, appeals, and deposits with a
15 depository other than the department of commerce and consumer
16 affairs.

17 SECTION 5. Section 431:7-101, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
18 amended to read as follows:

19 1. By amending subsections (a) and (b) to read:

20 (a) The commissioner shall collect in advance the
21 following fees:

22 (1) Certificate of authority: Issuance.....\$1,800

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- 1 (2) Organization of domestic insurers and affiliated
- 2 corporations:
- 3 (A) Application and all other papers required for
- 4 issuance of solicitation permit,
- 5 filing.....\$3,000
- 6 (B) Issuance of solicitation permit.....\$300
- 7 (3) Producer's license:
- 8 (A) Issuance, regular license.....\$100
- 9 (B) Issuance, temporary license.....\$100
- 10 (4) Nonresident producer's license:
- 11 Issuance.....\$150
- 12 (5) Independent adjuster's license: Issuance.....\$150
- 13 (6) Public adjuster's license: Issuance.....\$150
- 14 (7) [~~Workers' compensation claim~~] Claim adjuster's limited
- 15 license: Issuance.....\$150
- 16 (8) Independent bill reviewer's license:
- 17 Issuance.....\$160
- 18 (9) Limited producer's license: Issuance.....\$120
- 19 (10) Managing general agent's license: Issuance.....\$150
- 20 (11) Reinsurance intermediary's license:
- 21 Issuance.....\$150
- 22 (12) Surplus lines broker's license: Issuance.....\$300

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- 1 (13) Service contract provider's registration:
- 2 Issuance.....\$150
- 3 (14) Approved course provider certificate:
- 4 Issuance.....\$200
- 5 (15) Approved continuing education course certificate:
- 6 Issuance.....\$60
- 7 (16) Vehicle protection product warrantor's registration:
- 8 Issuance.....\$150
- 9 (17) Criminal history record check; fingerprinting: For
- 10 each criminal history record check and fingerprinting
- 11 check, a fee to be established by the commissioner.
- 12 (18) Limited line motor vehicle rental company producer's
- 13 license: Issuance.....\$2,000
- 14 [~~(19)~~ ~~Life settlement contract provider's license:~~
- 15 ~~Issuance.....\$150~~
- 16 [~~(20)~~ ~~Life settlement contract broker's license:~~
- 17 ~~Issuance.....\$150]~~
- 18 (19) Legal service plan certificate of authority:
- 19 Issuance.....\$1,000
- 20 ~~(21)]~~ (20) Examination for license: For each examination,
- 21 a fee to be established by the commissioner.

1 (b) The fees for services of the department of commerce
2 and consumer affairs subsequent to the issuance of a certificate
3 of authority, license, or other certificate are as follows:

- 4 (1) \$1,200 per year for all services (including extension
5 of the certificate of authority) for an authorized
6 insurer;
- 7 (2) \$100 per year for all services (including extension of
8 the license) for a regularly licensed producer;
- 9 (3) \$150 per year for all services (including extension of
10 the license) for a regularly licensed nonresident
11 producer;
- 12 (4) \$90 per year for all services (including extension of
13 the license) for a regularly licensed independent
14 adjuster;
- 15 (5) \$90 per year for all services (including extension of
16 the license) for a regularly licensed public adjuster;
- 17 (6) \$90 per year for all services (including extension of
18 the license) for a [~~workers' compensation~~] claims
19 adjuster's limited license;
- 20 (7) \$120 per year for all services (including extension of
21 the license) for a regularly licensed independent bill
22 reviewer;

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- 1 (8) \$90 per year for all services (including extension of
2 the license) for a producer's limited license;
- 3 (9) \$150 per year for all services (including extension of
4 the license) for a regularly licensed managing general
5 agent;
- 6 (10) \$150 per year for all services (including extension of
7 the license) for a regularly licensed reinsurance
8 intermediary;
- 9 (11) \$90 per year for all services (including extension of
10 the license) for a licensed surplus lines broker;
- 11 (12) \$150 per year for all services (including renewal of
12 registration) for a service contract provider;
- 13 (13) \$130 per year for all services (including extension of
14 the certificate) for an approved course provider;
- 15 (14) \$40 per year for all services (including extension of
16 the certificate) for an approved continuing education
17 course;
- 18 (15) \$150 per year for all services (including renewal of
19 registration) for a vehicle protection product
20 warrantor;
- 21 (16) \$40 for a criminal history record check; and

- 1 (17) \$1,200 per year for all services (including extension
2 of the license) for a regularly licensed limited line
3 motor vehicle rental company producer; and
4 [~~(18) \$150 per year for all services (including extension~~
5 ~~of the license) for a regularly licensed life~~
6 ~~settlement contract provider; and~~
7 ~~(19) \$150 per year for all services (including extension of~~
8 ~~the license) for a regularly licensed life settlement~~
9 ~~contract broker.]~~
- 10 (18) \$1,000 per year for all services (including extension
11 of the certificate) for an authorized legal service
12 plan.

13 The services referred to in paragraphs (1) to [~~(19)~~] (18)
14 shall not include services in connection with examinations,
15 investigations, hearings, appeals, and deposits with a
16 depository other than the department of commerce and consumer
17 affairs.

18 2. By amending subsection (e) to read as follows:

19 (e) All fees and penalties shall be deposited to the
20 credit of the compliance resolution fund; provided that
21 beginning July 1, 2010, the statutory fees collected pursuant to
22 subsections (a) and (b), not including administratively set fees

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1 and assessments as may be authorized under this section, shall
2 be deposited as follows:

3 (1) Fifty per cent shall be deposited into the compliance
4 resolution fund; and

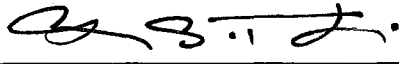
5 (2) Fifty per cent shall constitute an insurance license
6 and service tax, which shall be deposited into the
7 general fund."

8 SECTION 9. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
9 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

10 SECTION 10. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

11

12

INTRODUCED BY: 

13

BY REQUEST

Report Title:

Legal Service Plans

Description:

Updates regulation of legal service plans.

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Commerce and Consumer Affairs

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CONSUMER PROTECTION.

PURPOSE: To modernize the laws regulating legal service plans by amending statutory definitions and allowing the insurance commissioner (commissioner) to take enforcement action against plans that fail to comply with the law.

MEANS: Add two new sections to chapter 488, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS); amend title of chapter; amend sections 488-1, 488-2(a), 488-3, 488-4, and 488-7, HRS and sections 4 and 5 of Act 59, Session Laws of Hawaii 2010.

JUSTIFICATION: Prepaid legal service plans have a low rate of compliance with Hawaii law.

The commissioner continues to receive complaints from consumers about prepaid legal service plans. Prepaid legal service plans are currently regulated by chapter 488. The law was amended in 2010 by Act 47, Session Laws of Hawaii 2010. Further clarification of that chapter will enhance the commissioner's ability to regulate these plans and to enforce these laws.

Currently, there is no fee charged for the licensing or renewal of prepaid legal service plans. Since there is no renewal process, a plan operator does not inform the commissioner when it has ceased operations. Adding a fee will encourage operators of legal service plans to notify the commissioner of their continued existence and provide certainty as to which plans are legitimately operating in the State.

Impact on the public: This bill will increase consumer protection for the public and for members of prepaid legal service plans.

Impact on the department and other agencies: These amendments reduce confusion and inefficiency in implementing Hawaii laws pertaining to legal service plans. The proposed licensing and renewal fees is likely minimal, as there are currently few plans operating in the State.

GENERAL FUND: None.

OTHER FUNDS: Compliance resolution fund.

PPBS PROGRAM DESIGNATION: CCA-106.

OTHER AFFECTED AGENCIES: None.

EFFECTIVE DATE: On approval.