



THE QUEEN'S MEDICAL CENTER

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Rep. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

February 24, 2011 – 2:15 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In Support of HB 597, Relating to Health Care

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cynthia Kamikawa. I am the Vice President of Nursing, Emergency and Trauma Services and the Chief Nursing Officer at The Queen's Medical Center. I am testifying on behalf of The Queen's Medical Center in support of HB 597 which provides peer review protections to HAH's Patient Safety and Quality Committee.

One of the cornerstones of modern medical care is an effective quality assurance program. Such a program must entail a recurrent, methodical and collaborative examination of actual patients and the treatments that they receive, both at an individual and systems level. This will then allow caregivers to identify problems and correct them as well as to improve upon already effective care.

The intent of this bill is to encourage full and free discussion that leads to effective changes in policies, procedures, or practices. In order to encourage open and voluntary participation by provider organizations represented by HAH members, it is necessary that HAH's Patient Safety and Quality Committee have similar protections as those committees formed by hospitals, health maintenance organizations and statewide trauma care systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HOUSE COMMITTEE JUDICIARY
Rep. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair

Conference Room 325
Feb. 24, 2011 at 2:15 p.m.

Supporting HB 597.

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii advocates for its member organizations that span the entire spectrum of health care, including all acute care hospitals, as well as long term care facilities, home care agencies, and hospices. Our members employ more than 40,000 people throughout the state, delivering quality care to all of Hawaii's people. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 597, which provides peer review protection to HAH's Patient Safety and Quality Committee.

HAH has established a Patient Safety and Quality Committee whose mission is to improve the quality of health care delivered by the full range of provider organizations represented by HAH members. The committee would like to examine medical cases. However, in order to ensure full and free discussion, information about the cases must be protected from being used in medical malpractice lawsuits.

Individual health care organizations have already been granted the authority to establish peer review committees that may discuss information about medical cases that is protected from being used in lawsuits. The intent is to encourage full and free discussion that leads to changes in policies, procedures, or practices. The absence of such protections would limit discussion and therefore limit improvements in the quality of care.

Until recently, peer review protections have been confined to individual facilities. In the 2010 session a bill was passed extending peer review protections to committees established by the Department of Health to improve Hawaii's trauma care system. These committees consist of representatives of different health care facilities. Under HB 597, peer review protections would be extended to HAH's Patient Safety and Quality Committee.

For the foregoing reasons, the Healthcare Association supports HB 597.