



## HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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# LATE TESTIMONY

**Tuesday, March 29, 2011 9:00 AM Conference Room 329**

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

From: Hawaii Medical Association  
Dr. Morris Mitsunaga, MD, President  
Linda Rasmussen, MD, Legislative Co-Chair  
Dr. Joseph Zobian, MD, Legislative Co-Chair  
Dr. Christopher Flanders, DO, Executive Director  
Lauren Zirbel, Community and Government Relations

Re: HCR 68/ HR 61 REQUESTING HEALTH INSURERS IN HAWAII TO PROVIDE  
COVERAGE OR REIMBURSEMENT FOR SERVICES RELATED TO PALLIATIVE  
CARE.

### In Support

Chairs & Committee Members:

The Hawaii Medical Association strongly supports HCR 68/ HR 61 REQUESTING  
HEALTH INSURERS IN HAWAII TO PROVIDE COVERAGE OR REIMBURSEMENT  
FOR SERVICES RELATED TO PALLIATIVE CARE.

The HMA agrees that research increasingly supports the use of palliative care for severely ill patients, because it improves the quality of life, allows patients to choose their treatment options, and is a cost—effective alternative treatment.

As such, the HMA believes that it is worthwhile that accident and health or sickness insurers in Hawaii, including mutual benefit societies and health maintenance organizations, are requested to provide coverage or reimbursement for palliative care services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

### OFFICERS

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**St. Francis**

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OF HAWAII  
A Legacy of Caring for Hawaii's People

**LATE TESTIMONY**

**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH**

**Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair**  
**Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair**

**DATE: Tuesday, March 29, 2011**  
**TIME: 9:00am**  
**PLACE: Conference Room 329**  
**State Capitol**  
**415 South Beretania Street**

**SUPPORT FOR HCR 25**  
**SUPPORT FOR HCR 68/HR61**  
**SUPPORT FOR HCR55/HR48**

I am Joy Yadao, RN, Director of Advocacy and former Executive Director of the St Francis Palliative Care and Hospice Programs. The St Francis Healthcare System greatly appreciates the support of the House Health Committee regarding palliative care in Hawaii. We are encouraged by the enthusiasm of our legislature to improve Hawaii's healthcare delivery system and the continuum of care.

**HCR 25 REQUESTS THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT ON LEGISLATION MANDATING COVERAGE OF PALLIATIVE CARE.**

**HCR 68/HR61 REQUESTS HEALTH INSURERS IN HAWAII TO PROVIDE COVERAGE OR REIMBURSEMENT FOR SERVICES RELATED TO PALLIATIVE CARE.**

**HCR55/HR48 REQUESTS THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PAIN AND PALLIATIVE CARE POLICY.**

Each of the three of these important resolutions addresses an aspect of the needs to improve the delivery of palliative services in this state.

Palliative Care has been a priority of the Sisters of St. Francis since the arrival of Mother Marianne 127 years ago. Caring for those with serious illness requires expertise, compassion and a dedicated team approach to patient and family – centered care.

There are many excellent providers of palliative care in our state. Hospice programs provide palliative care for the terminally ill under the Medicare Benefit. Hospitals all across the state are developing or have established inpatient Palliative Care teams to address pain, symptom management and quality of life. St Francis began its outpatient Palliative Care Program in 2009 addressing the needs in the community and skilled nursing facilities.

There is a need to examine reimbursement in this area as physician palliative care consultations and the team services, which often include advanced practice nurses, licensed clinical social workers, chaplains and other disciplines, are time intense. Conversations and family discussions regarding treatment options, goals of care and value-based decision making require skilled professionals. Physicians and other clinicians complete thorough assessments and develop individualized plans to relieve symptoms of serious illness.

Hawaii is fortunate to have a state-wide Hospice and Palliative Care organization, Kokua Mau, as well as engaged third party payors, like HMSA who are making great efforts to increase the capacity for excellent palliative care. Through HMSA's Integrated Case Management Services as well as the HMSA Foundation, we have been able to provide care for more patients.

We believe that continuing the discussion regarding the value of palliative care and subsequent reimbursement is important and the development of a state-wide policy will enhance our efforts.

St Francis Healthcare System and I personally, appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts and applaud your dedication to improving health care in Hawaii.



# LATE TESTIMONY

*The Official Sponsor of Birthdays*

March 28, 2011

Committee on Health  
Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair  
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

**Hearing:**

March 29, 2011, 9:00 a.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Rm. 329

**RE: HCR 68, HR48 – REQUESTING HEALTH INSURERS IN HAWAII TO PROVIDE COVERAGE OR REIMBURSEMENT FOR SERVICES RELATED PALLIATIVE CARE.**

## **Testimony in Strong Support**

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Morikawa and members of the Committee on Health:  
On behalf of the American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc., thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony and comments in strong support of resolutions HCR68 and HR48, which requests health insurers in Hawaii to provide coverage or reimbursement for services related to palliative care.

For over 60 years, the American Cancer Society in Hawaii has been leading the fight against cancer in Hawaii. Although we have made much progress in saving lives through early detection and new cutting edge treatments as a result of on going research, the reality is we don't win them all.

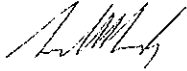
Palliative care is an essential component of cancer care. Palliative care helps patients transition from curative treatment to end-of-life care. The palliative care can help patients and their loved ones prepare for physical changes that may occur near the end of life and how to best address symptom management for that stage of care. The team can also help patients cope with the different thoughts and emotional issues that arise, such as, worries about leaving loved ones behind, reflections about their legacy and relationships, or reaching closure with their life. In addition, palliative care can support family members and loved ones emotionally and with issues, such as, when to withdraw cancer therapy, grief counseling, and transition to hospice.

Finally, the eventual passage of a palliative care benefit will also alleviate financial worries that many cancer patients have. It is well documented that the burden of out-of-pocket and total expenditures is heaviest for cancer patients compared to individuals without cancer. Many of our cancer patients in Hawaii are low-income, elderly, uninsured or underinsured.

We strongly believe that providing health insurance coverage reimbursement for palliative care will greatly improve and enhance care for cancer patients.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in strong support of HCR 68 and HR61.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Massengale", written in a cursive style.

George S. Massengale, JD  
Director of Government Relations