



AlohaCare

For a healthy Hawaii.

March 15, 2011
8:30am
Conference Room 329

To: The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health

From: Paula Arcena, Director of Public Policy
Robert Toyofuku, Government Affairs

Re: SB1453, SD2 Relating to Prescription Medications

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

AlohaCare supports SB14534, SD2 which requires a working group to discuss potential improvements to the current prior authorization process for prescription medications.

The SD2 version of this measure provides an opportunity for dialogue among stakeholders and identify ways to resolve issues.

We would like to inform the Committee that AlohaCare's formulary of prescription drugs emphasize generic drugs to prevent escalating costs. Prior authorizations are required largely for non-formulary brand name drugs, which are more costly. We require prior authorizations to ensure they are medically necessary and to verify member eligibility and benefits. Our prior authorization process for non-formulary prescription drugs is designed to provide quick a turn-around. For prior authorization requests received after-hours or in emergency situations, AlohaCare members receive a three-day emergency supply of non-formulary medications or a ten-day supply for antibiotics and providers are asked to follow up with a prior authorization request to continue the non-formulary prescription. Expedited requests are processed within 72-hours.

AlohaCare is a non-profit, Hawaii based health plan founded in 1994 by Hawaii's community health centers to serve low-income families and medically vulnerable members of our community through government sponsored health insurance programs. We serve beneficiaries of Medicaid and Medicare on all islands.

AlohaCare has been contracted by the Hawaii Department of Human Services since the QUEST program started in 1994 to provide insurance coverage for Medicaid eligible beneficiaries through the QUEST program. We serve approximately 75,000 QUEST enrollees statewide.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Ryan Yamane, Chair

Conference Room 329
March 15, 2011 at 8:30 a.m.

Supporting SB 1453 SD 2.

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 statewide, delivering quality care to the people of Hawaii. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 1453 SD 2, which creates a working group convened by the Healthcare Association to consider the issue of prior authorization requirements for prescription medications.

Prior authorization requirements imposed by health care insurers are designed to control costs and risks posed by prescription drugs. Although prior authorization has beneficial purposes, it may result in delays for patients in receiving prescription drugs.

The Healthcare Association has a tradition of bringing key stakeholders together from across the continuum of care to discuss issues that face our industry. We would be honored to be designated as the convener of a working group to address prior authorization issues and hope to produce a report that will inform the decision-making process.

For the foregoing reasons, the Healthcare Association supports SB 1453 SD 2.

March 12, 2011

The Honorable Roz Baker
Hawaii State Capitol - Room 230
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 1453 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Baker,

The Neuropathy Action Foundation (NAF), which is dedicated to ensuring neuropathy patients obtain the necessary resources and tools to access individualized treatment to improve their quality of life, supports SB 1453. Thank you for introducing SB 1453, which protects provider autonomy and preserves patient access to life and limb saving treatments by attempting to create a standardized/universal prior authorization form and process.

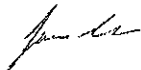
SB 1453 is important for the thousands of Hawaiians who suffer from neuropathy. The NAF receives calls from Hawaii patients quite often informing us that their health plan suddenly forced them to go through a prior authorization process forcing them to go days and sometimes weeks before they obtain or continue treatments deemed necessary by their provider.

Widespread adoption and effective implementation of health information technology (HIT) such as standardized and electronic prior authorizations carries with it the promise of improved patient care, increased cooperation and coordination among health care professionals and reduced health care costs by making patient care more efficient. However, without proper oversight from Hawaii legislators and implementation standards there is a significant opportunity for HIT abuse. Health insurers already use protocols such as prior authorization to delay care and those protocols are having a significant impact on patients and physicians.

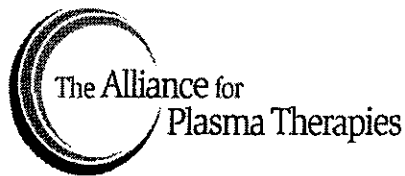
We humbly request that you institute patient privacy protections and set standards for e-prescribing that will preserve the provider-patient relationship and prevent insurers from exploiting HIT to further deny or delay patient access to care. This bill is a definite step in the right direction.

Please help neuropathy patients and others by supporting SB 1453. Should you have any questions please contact me at 877-512-7262.

Regards,



James D. Lee
Public Affairs Chair



March 13, 2011

The Honorable Roz Baker
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 230
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 1453 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Baker,

The Alliance for Plasma Therapies, a non-profit organization established to provide a unified, powerful voice of patient organizations and healthcare providers to educate about the diseases that rely on plasma derived therapies and advocate for fair access to plasma therapies for patients who benefit from their lifesaving effects, supports SB 1453. SB 1453 increases patient access to life and limb saving treatments by creating a standardized/universal prior authorization (PA) form and process. Patients in Hawaii deserve this patient access and protection.

PA is often a non-automated and non-standardized process, creating a significant administrative burden on providers and patients. Providers often do not know if a drug will need PA until the patient takes the script to the pharmacy. Providers then have to fill out PA forms by hand and fax them to the payer. After it is reviewed, the application is often followed by requests for additional information before it can be approved; the process can take several days. To complicate the situation, insurers typically maintain their own lists of medications that require PA and specific information that providers must supply for approval. As a result, the patient may experience delays in filling prescriptions or forgo medications that require PA.

A standardized prior authorization process would mean prescribers can use the same form for all payers. Using a standardized form and authorization process would save prescribers and patient's time and money. A standardized PA form will also increase continuity and quality of care for our patients in Hawaii.

Please help all patients in Hawaii who suffer from chronic and rare disorders by supporting this patient protection bill that directly strengthens the doctor patient relationship.

Sincerely,

Michelle Vogel
Executive Director

Faith Action for



Community Equity

Gamaliel Foundation Affiliate

March 15, 2011

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair

DATE: Tuesday, March 15, 2011
TIME: 8:30AM
PLACE: Conference Room 329

1352 Liliha Street, Room 2
Honolulu, HI 96817

**RELATING TO PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS
SB 1453, SD2**

Phone (808) 522-1304

Fax (512) 532-7448

face.office@facehawaii.org

www.facehawaii.org

Good morning Chair Yamane and committee members:

The Rev. Alan Mark
Statewide President

I am Rev. Bob Nakata and I am the Chair of the FACE Health Care Committee and its past President. FACE is the largest State inter-faith and community organizing non-profit. We have 24 institutions on Maui, 27 on Oahu and one statewide. There are 38 churches, a Buddhist Temple, 2 Jewish congregations, 10 community groups and non-profit organizations and one labor union. FACE has a statewide participating membership base in excess of 40,000.

The Rev. Sam Domingo
Oahu President

The Rt. Rev. Monsignor
Terrence Watanabe
Maui President

We SUPPORT this measure. All too often the patient suffers the consequences of a delay in the ability of their physician to prescribe the right medications. Physicians should be able to promptly provide their patients the medications they need to take right away that will help with pain management and chronic diseases. The administrative requirements for physicians to locate the correct prior authorization form do follow up phone calls with patients, pharmacies, and the requirement of faxing the document, is time consuming and creates unnecessary delays for patients. FACE recommends that a standardized prior authorization process would not only benefit the people of Hawaii but save time and money for payers and providers.

Mr. Rosario Baniaga
Statewide Treasurer

Ms. Judy Ott
Statewide Secretary

Please pass this measure.

Mr. Drew Astolfi
Executive Director

Rev. Bob Nakata
Chair
FACE Health Care Committee

Mr. Patrick Zukemura
Oahu Lead Organizer

Ms. Terri Erwin
Maui Lead Organizer