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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many youth entering  
2 foster care exhibit chronic health, developmental, and  
3 psychiatric disorders. The legislature also finds that mental  
4 health and medical care needs of youth in foster care can differ  
5 from youth not in care. One 2003 study found that eighty per  
6 cent of youth in foster care received services for mental health  
7 issues during foster care placement. Another study found that  
8 fifty-four per cent of former foster youth had a mental health  
9 diagnosis after leaving foster care. The same study also found  
10 that one-third of former foster youth lacked health insurance.

11           The legislature further finds that former foster youth  
12 without health insurance, lack access to crucial medical  
13 services, including mental health care, reproductive health  
14 services, and prescription drug coverage. Lack of health  
15 insurance may result in numerous visits to the emergency room  
16 and inpatient care, the progression of chronic disease, and  
17 thousands of dollars of medical debt, all of which can be



1 devastating to former foster youth transitioning to independent  
2 lives after foster care.

3 The purpose of this Act is to require the department of  
4 human services to offer and provide former foster youth  
5 enrollment in an appropriate medical assistance program until  
6 they reach age twenty-six.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
8 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
9 and to read as follows:

10 "§346- Medical assistance for former foster youth. (a)

11 The department shall offer and provide medical assistance to  
12 former foster youth who:

13 (1) Are under the age of twenty-four years on July 1,  
14 2012; under the age of twenty-five years on January 1,  
15 2013; and under the age of twenty-six years on January  
16 1, 2014;

17 (2) Were formerly in the foster care system, under the  
18 responsibility of the State on the date of attaining  
19 eighteen years of age or an older age, as elected by  
20 the State pursuant to section 1902(a)(10)(A)(i)(IX) of  
21 the Social Security Act;



1       (3) Were enrolled in the medicaid program while in the  
2           foster care system; and

3       (4) Have a household income of up to three hundred per  
4           cent of the federal poverty level for Hawaii.

5       (b) Upon enrollment, the department shall notify the  
6       former foster youth of enrollment and provide written  
7       instructions for accessing medical care.

8       (c) The department shall seek the approval of the federal  
9       Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to implement this  
10       section and shall obtain the approval prior to providing any  
11       medical assistance authorized under this section.

12       (d) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter  
13       91 to effectuate the purposes of this section."

14       SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

15       SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

Former Foster Youth; Medical Assistance; Keiki Caucus

**Description:**

Requires the department of human services to offer and provide former foster youth enrollment in an appropriate medical assistance program and continue to provide assistance to the former foster youth until they reach age twenty-six. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

