

JAN 21 2011

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that too many of the
2 elderly suffer devastating and often fatal injuries due to
3 falls. Falls and fall-related injuries among the elderly impose
4 an enormous burden on individuals, society, and Hawaii's health
5 care system. The State's population of people sixty-five years
6 of age and older comprised 14.8 per cent of the 2008 population
7 or 190,067 persons, and in the next twenty years is anticipated
8 to increase to 22.3 per cent of the population or 327,000
9 persons.

10 Among the elderly, falls in Hawaii are the leading cause of
11 fatal injuries (forty-five per cent), injury-related
12 hospitalizations (eighty-three per cent), injury-related
13 emergency department visits (fifty-nine per cent), and injury-
14 related emergency medical service calls (eighty-one per cent).
15 Annually, falls result in seventy-eight deaths and nearly 1,800
16 hospitalizations among Hawaii's elderly. Statistics indicate
17 that every five hours an elderly person is injured so severely



1 by a fall that treatment in a hospital is necessary.
2 Furthermore, these elderly persons often never return home.
3 Emergency room, hospitalization, rehabilitation, and
4 long-term average annual costs directly related to senior falls
5 total \$143,800,000 per year or \$393,000 per day. Access to fall
6 prevention services and programs would significantly reduce
7 these costs. In addition, the early detection of fall
8 occurrences would reduce both costs and suffering by expediting
9 treatment, minimizing serious long-term consequences, reducing
10 the extent of the injury, and in some instances, avoiding death.

11 Falls among the elderly are a significant public health
12 issue. Yet, currently, there are insufficient resources to
13 develop a coordinated statewide approach to reducing and
14 promptly detecting falls among the elderly.

15 The legislature finds that a position dedicated to fall
16 prevention and early detection for the elderly should be
17 established in the department of health to serve as a focal
18 point for statewide injury prevention and detection efforts to
19 ensure multidisciplinary support, coordination of prevention and
20 detection efforts, and continuity of implementation and
21 accountability.



1 The purpose of this Act is to establish the position of
2 statewide fall prevention and early detection coordinator under
3 the department of health and to make an appropriation for the
4 position.

5 SECTION 2. Chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
6 amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately
7 designated and to read as follows:

8 "§321- Statewide fall prevention and early detection
9 coordinator. (a) There is established the position of
10 statewide fall prevention and early detection coordinator within
11 the department of health. The director of health shall employ,
12 without regard to chapters 76 and 89, a statewide fall
13 prevention and early detection coordinator, and shall fix the
14 compensation of that person and may at pleasure dismiss that
15 person.

16 (b) The statewide fall prevention and early detection
17 coordinator shall develop a statewide approach to falls among
18 the elderly by:

19 (1) Investigating and examining the immediate and
20 long-term dangers of fall injuries on the elderly
21 population;



- 1 (2) Examining the fiscal impact of falls by the elderly on
2 our medical system and health care costs;
- 3 (3) Recommending appropriate interventions and prevention
4 programs to reduce falls by the elderly and health
5 care costs associated with these falls;
- 6 (4) Investigating and implementing the most effective
7 means to enhance public awareness that falls are
8 preventable;
- 9 (5) Reviewing and developing the potential for increasing
10 for the elderly and their caregivers, on a statewide
11 basis, the availability and accessibility of fall
12 prevention programs that effectively use community
13 resources;
- 14 (6) Recommending measures that will promote early
15 detection of falls, particularly for those who live
16 alone or in circumstances where the likelihood of not
17 being discovered soon after a fall is great; and
- 18 (7) Investigating and recommending the best way to expand
19 the role of medical and health care professionals in
20 screening, educating, and referring the elderly to
21 fall prevention and early detection services and
22 programs.



1 For purposes of this subsection, the statewide fall
2 prevention and early detection coordinator shall collaborate
3 with interested stakeholders, including health care facilities,
4 community coalitions, government agencies, and organizations
5 concerned with protecting the elderly and preventing and
6 detecting elderly falls.

7 (c) The statewide fall prevention and early detection
8 coordinator shall report to the legislature no later than twenty
9 days prior to the convening of each regular session, beginning
10 with the regular session of 2013, describing the progress made
11 in implementing subsection (b), including the review of fall
12 prevention data and the impact of falls by the elderly on the
13 State's medical system and health care costs.

14 (d) For the purposes of this section, "the elderly" means
15 persons who are at least sixty-five years of age."

16 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
18 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2011-2012 and
19 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
20 year 2012-2013 for the position of statewide fall prevention and
21 early detection coordinator.



S.B. NO. 939

1 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
2 of health for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

4 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;
5 provided that section 3 shall take effect on July 1, 2011.

6

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Report Title:

Statewide Fall Prevention Coordinator; Appropriation; Kupuna
Caucus

Description:

Establishes a position of statewide fall prevention and early
detection coordinator under the department of health and makes
an appropriation for the position.

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not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

