

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



LATE TESTIMONY

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In reply, please refer to:
File:

House Committee on Health

H.B. 1708, Relating to Mental Health

Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Director of Health

Tuesday, January 24, 2012, 10:00 a.m., Room 329

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports this bill.

2 **Purpose and Justification:** This bill authorizes the emergency examination of a patient by
3 telemedicine for the purposes of emergency hospitalization in a psychiatric facility.

4 Telemedicine is a growing area of mental health, especially in rural and underserved areas. The
5 proposed legislation would create another area of use for telemedicine, namely in the emergency
6 examination of an individual delivered for an emergency examination and treatment pursuant to
7 HRS 334-59. This expansion would allow rural and underserved areas to provide for timely assessments
8 of individuals who may require emergency psychiatric hospitalization to be examined by telemedicine,
9 so long as a licensed health care professional is present with the patient. This safeguard allows a live
10 person to be present to assist and render services should that be necessary during the procedure.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.