



PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Coalition of Homeless Providers

COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF HB 1905 HD2, SD1: RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Senator David Ige, Chair; Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair; and Members, Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Gladys Peraro, Advocacy Chair, Partners In Care (PIC)

HEARING: Thursday, 3/29/12, 9:00 am; CR 211

Chair Ige, Chair Kidani, and Members, Committees on Ways & Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1905 SD1, which addresses a range of concerns on human services. I am Gladys Peraro, Partners In Care (PIC), our coalition focuses on the needs of homeless persons and strategies to end homelessness. PIC supports Part 1 and Part V of this bill.

RE: PART I: Part 1 would provide flexibility to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to utilize funds appropriated to the department for General Assistance. Partners In Care remains steadfast in our concern about the possibility that many persons now receiving General Assistance will be forced into homelessness if their General Assistance payments are further reduced. HB 1905 HD2, SD11 would give the department the flexibility to use savings garnered from other programs as a stopgap measure to continue benefits, if an emergency appropriation is insufficient to meet the need.

The current benefit is scarcely enough to pay rent even at subsidized housing or special housing such as clean and sober homes. The benefit has already been reduced in FY 2012 from \$353 to \$319, its current level. Without help from the legislature, the benefit will be further reduced to \$275 in April 2012. This reduction could force many recipients into homeless situations. It would be much more costly to the State to have to provide homeless services and regain housing, rather than keeping them in housing with the General Assistance payments.

RE: PART V: Part V establishes the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness in statute. Partners In Care also supports this important measure to coordinate planning and initiatives to end homelessness in our State. Having the right government and community leaders at the table to tackle this complex issue is crucial. The Council has already begun its work and has involved a multitude of stakeholders. There is no "quick fix" to ending homelessness; it requires ongoing effort and collaboration, which the Interagency Council on Homelessness would provide. PIC supports the language of SB 2804, which was inserted into this bill. We urge your support for this ongoing initiative to end homelessness.

Partners In Care, c/o Aloha United Way, 200 N. Vineyard Blvd. Suite 700
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Partners in Care is a membership organization of homeless service providers, other service professionals, units of local and state government, homeless consumers, and other community representatives located in Hawai'i on O'ahu. It is a planning, coordinating, and advocacy body that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill gaps in the Continuum of Care on O'ahu.



**HB1905 HD2 SD1
RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES
Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

March 29, 2012

9:00 a.m.

Conference Room 211

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) would like to offer comments and suggest minimal changes to HB1905 HD2 SD1. This bill includes various provisions relating to human services and in particular establishes the Hawaii interagency council on homelessness to be repealed on June 30, 2022.

In regards to OHA representation at the Hawaii interagency council on homelessness, OHA appreciates the intent and would be able to provide unique insight on homelessness and the issues and concerns that face our beneficiaries. Traditionally, when OHA is asked to be part of the membership of a task force or council set forth by the legislature, it would include the appointment of the OHA Administrator or designee. **We recommend an amendment to Page 20, Line 6 to read the “Administrator of the office of Hawaiians affairs or designee”.**

A considerable number of Native Hawaiians are homeless, and a coordinated effort to address homelessness in Hawaii will provide the guidance and direction the state needs to combat this significant issue. Native Hawaiians experience disproportionately high rates of unsheltered homelessness and make up a significant portion of the population in shelters. A high percentage of Native Hawaiians also spend a significant amount of their income on housing costs and must compete for both rental and homeownership opportunities in an inflated market.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.



March 29, 2012

The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB 1905, HD2, SD1 – Relating to Human Services

Dear Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Richard Jackson and I am chair of the Public Policy Committee of the Hawaii Association of Health Plans (HAHP). HAHP is a non-profit organization consisting of eight (8) member organizations: AlohaCare, HMAA, HMSA, HWMG, Kaiser Permanente, MDX Hawai'i, UHA, and UnitedHealthcare. Our mission is to promote initiatives aimed at improving the overall health of Hawaii. HAHP is also active participants in the legislative process. Before providing any testimony, all HAHP member organizations must be in unanimous agreement of the statement or position.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1905 HD2 SD1. Our comments refer specifically to Part X of the legislation, which would require plans to submit quarterly reports on our enrolled commercial members to the Department of Human Services (DHS). We do not have comments on any other sections of the bill.

Currently, eligibility determinations for members who receive dual coverage under both a private and QUEST plan are made by the Med-QUEST division in the DHS. DHS then uses claims data from these QUEST-eligible members to evaluate the correct reimbursements. While we understand the need of the DHS to determine the eligibility of those receiving benefits from government-funded health care services, we do have concerns and believe that this type of submission would best be handled if the necessary claims data were sent to DHS through a third party administrator, such as the Hawaii Health Information Exchange (HHIE). By obtaining information through an administrator such as HHIE, DHS would need to interface with only one entity versus the five local commercial plans and four mainland insurers doing business in Hawaii. This third party administrator may also be used by the plans as a central repository to obtain "coordination of benefits" (COB) information, a functionality not currently available in Hawaii which would lower both payer and provider administrative costs.

We believe that an update in the DHS determinations system would also help to streamline the eligibility process without requiring health insurers to provide QUEST-eligible member lists. DHS is now able to utilize federal funds to update these determinations systems, and in turn will be able to work with HHIE to make sure that member information is accessible in a secure environment.

We thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns over Part X of HB 1905 HD2 SD1, and ask that you consider holding this measure today.

Sincerely,

Richard Jackson
Chair, Public Policy Committee

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: wilson.family7@hawaiiantel.net
Subject: Testimony for HB1905 on 3/29/2012 9:00:00 AM
Date: Thursday, March 29, 2012 8:10:01 AM

Testimony for WAM 3/29/2012 9:00:00 AM HB1905

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: Comments Only
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Sally Wilson
Organization: Individual
E-mail: wilson.family7@hawaiiantel.net
Submitted on: 3/29/2012

Comments:

- 1) Please restore \$446,000 in funding for three child welfare contracts that were eliminated effective November 30, 2011: Permanency Support Services-Oahu, Family Centers-Kauai, and Substance Abuse Counseling Services-Maui.
- 2) Please support the Department of Human Services' supplemental budget request for \$1.5 Million for the Domestic Abuse Shelters (HMS 301).