

Tuesday – January 24, 2011 – 10:00am
Conference Room 329

LATE TESTIMONY

The House Committee on Health

To: Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

From: Brigitte McKale
Chief Nurse Executive

Re: **HB 1926 RELATING TO ASSAULTS MEDICAL SERVICES - Testimony in Strong Support**

My name is Brigitte McKale, Chief Nurse Executive for Pali Momi Medical Center. Pali Momi Medical Center is a nonprofit hospital located in West O'ahu. It is dedicated to the health and well-being of all Hawai'i residents. With 116 beds and more than 370 physicians on its medical staff, Pali Momi offers a full range of services. It has delivered many medical firsts for the community, including West O'ahu's only interventional cardiac catheterization unit to detect and treat heart disease, a fully integrated minimally invasive surgical suite, CT scan and MRI services, emergency services, a Women's Center, and the state's first Retina Center. Pali Momi is the only medical facility in Hawai'i that utilizes a team triage approach in its Emergency Room, where patients are promptly evaluated by an emergency physician. The American Heart Association has recognized the hospital for excellence in the treatment of coronary artery disease and heart failure, one of only a few hospitals in the nation. Pali Momi was founded in 1989 and is an affiliate of Hawai'i Pacific Health, the state's largest health care provider.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony supporting HB 1926 which increases penalties for violence against medical service workers. This bill provides the same protection to any medical service provider as current emergency medical service providers receive while performing their duties.

All health care workers today face a significant increase in the number of job related violent incidents while on duty compared to other workers. Statistics show that there has been an increase in the number of nurses that have experienced assaults, and this is of great concern. At Pali Momi, our staff has been experiencing an increase in encounters with violent patients. Passage of this bill will help to deter assaults and provide a safer environment for all medical service workers. Therefore, we are in support of HB 1926.

Thank you for your time. We ask that you pass this measure.



LATE TESTIMONY

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Ryan Yamane, Chair

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

Supporting HB 1926 with an amendment

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. In addition to providing quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 40,000 people. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1926, which increases penalties for violence against emergency medical service personnel in medical clinics and federally qualified health centers. Personnel in hospital emergency rooms are already covered.

While the Healthcare Association supports this bill, the added protection should be extended beyond the emergency room to cover employees engaged in the performance of duty in any hospital, long term care facility, home health agency, home care agency, hospice, physician's office, or dentist's office. Health care workers have faced a significant risk of job-related violence for many years.

Injury rates reveal the increased risk. The Bureau of Labor Statistics measures the number of assaults resulting in injury per 10,000 full-time workers in different categories. Health service workers overall had an incidence rate of 9.3. The rate for nursing and personal care facility workers was 25. These rates compare to an overall private sector injury rate of 2.

The increased risk of job-related assaults among health care workers is the result of a number of factors, including the following:

- The availability of drugs or money at hospitals, clinics and pharmacies, making them likely robbery targets;
- The unrestricted movement of the public in clinics and hospitals; and
- Isolated work with clients during examinations or treatment.

Hawaii statute recognizes that certain groups deserve increased legal protection, such as educational workers, correctional workers, firefighters, and workers at State mental health facilities. Conduct classified as Assault in the Second Degree for these groups is classified as Assault in the Third Degree for others. Emergency medical service personnel in hospitals are also currently given increased protection, and this increased protection should be extended to employees in any hospital, long term care facility, home health agency, home care agency, hospice, physician's office, or dentist's office.

With this amendment, the Healthcare Association supports HB 1926.