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Hearing date:  
**Friday, January 28, 2011, 9:30 a.m.**  
**House Health Committee**  
Room 329

To: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director  
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Friday, January 28, 2011, 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 329

Subject: **HB 614: Establishes a hospital-based screening and assessment and intensive home visitation program under the department of health; appropriates funds from the tobacco settlement special fund and the temporary assistance to needy families fund.**

The Good Beginnings Alliance is a policy and advocacy organization focused on Hawaii's youngest children and their families. We strive to ensure a nurturing, safe and healthy development for all children from pre-birth to age eight. We believe all children deserve safe and supportive environments that meet their needs as they grow and develop.

As this committee considers this bill, we wish to provide you with information to help you decide on this bill. The Healthy Start Program was pioneered in Hawaii and championed by political leaders such as Governor Abercrombie when he was serving in the Legislature. Since then, this vital program has been improved upon considerably and directly supports the Parent Education and Family Support objectives for the Early Learning Council's Early Childhood System Development.

Addressing the needs of our most at-risk babies and families at the very beginnings is foundational to our early learning system. Hospital screenings as well as the home visits are critical to a prevention focus. This program initiates vitally important parental engagement and training as to how the family can foster a child's early learning and healthy growth.

Hawaii's families with young children have experienced significant cuts to our state's comprehensive early childhood system in the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services over the last two years including the Healthy Start Program. Hawaii's weakened economy has placed increased stress on families, and this program is a major part of the support system for at-risk children.

Mahalo for your consideration.

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COALITION FOR A  
TOBACCO-FREE HAWAII

To: The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair, Committee on Health  
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair, Committee on Health  
Members, House Committee on Health  
From: Trisha Y. Nakamura, Policy and Advocacy Director  
Date: January 28, 2011  
Hrg: House Committee on Health; Jan 28, 2011 in Rm 329 at 9:30 a.m.  
Re: **Comments re HB 614: Relating to Children**

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on HB 614, which will provide an appropriation of \$3,000,000 to Healthy Start. The comments here focus on providing your honorable committee with information about the Tobacco Settlement Special Fund. And to share our concern about the further erosion of funds away from tobacco prevention and treatment.

The Coalition for a Tobacco Free Hawaii (Coalition) is the only independent organization in Hawaii whose sole mission is to reduce tobacco use through education, policy and advocacy. Our organization is a small nonprofit of over 3,000 organizations and members that work to create a healthy Hawaii through comprehensive tobacco prevention and control efforts. The Coalition started in 1996, under the auspices of the American Cancer Society. The Coalition, along with its founding members, played a key role in establishing the Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund.

Hawai'i receives Tobacco Settlement moneys as the result of a settlement entered into between 46 states and the major tobacco companies to recover damages for tobacco-related health care costs paid by taxpayers because of the harms caused by tobacco. By joining the settlement, Hawai'i made a promise to the people of Hawai'i to reduce youth use of tobacco and to advance public health.<sup>1</sup> The Coalition's asks the Committee to remember the reason we have the tobacco settlement: Hawaii residents lost their lives to smoking and because of the tobacco industry's interest in maintaining profits. We must work to make sure the next generation never experiences the suffering of those who died and those whom they left behind.

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<sup>1</sup> Hawai'i upon signing the settlement, agreed to "reduc[e] underage tobacco use by discouraging such use and by preventing Youth access to Tobacco Products" and avoid further cost of litigation to "achieve for [Hawai'i and its] citizens significant funding for the advancement of public health." (See Master Settlement Agreement, Recitals. Available at <http://ag.ca.gov/tobacco/pdf/1msa.pdf> (last visited Jan 28, 2010).

Our programs are working to make sure this doesn't happen. From 2002 to 2008, there are 42,300 fewer adult smokers in Hawaii, saving 14,100 lives from tobacco-related deaths and saving our State an estimated \$402 million in direct medical costs. There is no mistake—this consistent dedicated source of funding from the Tobacco Settlement (from the tobacco industry which has cost our State billions of dollars in health-related costs) has resulted in lives and dollars saved.

**Although we've made significant progress in reducing tobacco use and saving lives because of the investment in tobacco prevention and control, tobacco use remains a serious health issue.** Tobacco continues to kill more people than alcohol, murders, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs and suicides COMBINED. In fact, lung cancer associated with tobacco use kills more women than breast cancer in Hawai'i. Hawai'i still has over 150,000 adult smokers throughout the State. And more than 1,000 Hawai'i youth become daily smokers each year. Smoking costs us over half a billion dollars per year in smoking-related health care costs and lost productivity. Clearly, the work of tobacco treatment and prevention is not over.

When Hawai'i started receiving tobacco settlement funds in 1999, 25% of the funds were dedicated to tobacco prevention and control efforts, 35% for the Department of Health, and 40% for the Rainy Day Fund. Since then, the portion for tobacco prevention has been cut down to 6.5%. We are concerned that this portion will continue to drop and concerned that we will see the end of resources for efforts that save lives and keep kids from tobacco.

Because of our concern for the people of the State that the Coalition urges the Committee to ensure funding for tobacco prevention and tobacco cessation work in perpetuity. All that stands between the tobacco industry and our kids is our prevention efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the funding for critical tobacco prevention and control funds. We ask that you continue funding for tobacco prevention and control via the Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund so that these community-based services can continue. **Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.**