

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P.O. Box 3378  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

**House Committee on Health**

**H.C.R. 150, DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS  
AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII**

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

**March 27, 2012**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports H.C. R. 150 to designate April as  
2 Autism Awareness Month in Hawai'i. Early screening, evaluation, and intervention services for young  
3 children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can help to improve their development and ability to  
4 reach their full potential.

5 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

6 **Purpose and Justification:** This resolution designates the month of April of each year as Autism  
7 Awareness Month, to increase awareness of the importance of screening for ASD in young children.

8 Screening for autism using standardized screening tools is recommended for young children at  
9 18 and 24 months of age. Early screening and evaluation, followed by early intervention (EI) services,  
10 can support young children with ASD in their development of skills needed later in school and as they  
11 transition to adult life.

12 The importance and need for services for children with ASD is highlighted by data from the  
13 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) 2009-2010 which show  
14 disparities for children and youth with ASD age 0-17 years. In comparison to CSHCN who do not have  
15 ASD, CSHCN with ASD are less likely to have families that partner in decision-making, receive care

1 within a medical home, have adequate health insurance for needed services, have families that find the  
2 community-based services are easy to use, and receive needed services to transition to adult life  
3 (*CSHCN system of care core outcomes*).

4 The DOH Early Intervention Section (EIS) provides EI services for over 2,000 children age 0-3  
5 years with or at biological risk for developmental delays, including children with ASD. Intensive  
6 behavioral support services are provided for approximately 200 children with ASD each year.

7 The DOH Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD) provides a variety of individualized  
8 supports to over 3,500 individuals, of which many are children and adults with ASD. The DDD website  
9 includes information on national and local resources for individuals with ASD and their caregivers.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
919 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD, ROOM 113  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543  
March 27, 2012

The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Health  
Twenty-Sixth Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representatives Yamane and Morikawa and Members of the Committee:

**SUBJECT: HCR 150/HR 113 – DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII.**

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS HCR 150 and HR 113**. The purpose of the resolutions is to declare the month of April of each year as autism awareness month.

Autism is included in a group of autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). There are three types of ASD, 1) autistic disorder, 2) asperger syndrome and 3) pervasive developmental disorder. ASDs are considered developmental disabilities that can have significant challenges on an individual's behavioral, communication and social skills.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is estimated that between 1 in 80 and 1 in 240 with an average of 1 in 110 children in the United States have autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). That rate is anticipated to increase in the next decade as noted in the fourth WHEREAS clause, autism is growing at a startling rate of ten to seventeen percent per year.

Education and awareness about autism is important to inform the public about ASDs and the emerging trends and services available for individuals and families. Several initiatives are underway such as Act Early and Learn the Signs that are supported by the Hawaii Maternal Child Health Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities program and various autism organizations in Hawaii. The Council believes that public awareness about ASD should be an


The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair  
Page 2  
March 27, 2012

ongoing activity throughout the year. However, designating the month of April as Autism Awareness Month would fall in line with National Autism Awareness Month, and would provide a wonderful opportunity for Hawaii's advocates and state and private agencies to work together to educate the community about ASDs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HCR 150 and HR 113.

Sincerely,

  
Liz Ann Salvador  
Chair

  
Waynette K.Y. Cabral, MSW  
Executive Administrator



**AUTISM SPEAKS™**  
It's time to listen.

March 26, 2012

*Via Email: HLTtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov*

Representative Ryan I. Yamane  
Chair, Committee on Health  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 420

**Re: HCR150/HR113 – Declaring the Month of April of Each Year as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii**  
**Hearing date & time: Tuesday, March 27, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.**  
**Conference Room 329**

Dear Chair Yamane and Members of the Committee on Health:

I am Lorri Unumb, Vice President, State Government Affairs, of Autism Speaks. Autism Speaks was founded in February 2005 and has grown into the nation's largest autism science and advocacy organization, dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a cure for autism; increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders; and advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families.

Autism Speaks submits testimony in **strong support** of HCR150/HR113, which declare the month of April of each year as autism awareness month in Hawaii.

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that inhibits a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships, and is often accompanied by behavioral challenges. Autism spectrum disorders are diagnosed in one in 110 children in the United States, affecting four times as many boys as girls. The prevalence of autism increased 57 percent from 2002 to 2006. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called autism an urgent public health concern for which the cause and cure remain unknown.

The U.S. Surgeon General has reported that treatment for autism can spare an individual from life-long dependency as a ward of the state. In the absence of health insurance coverage, families are often required to pay out-of-pocket for treatments that can cost upwards of \$50,000 per year. In the process, many risk their homes and the educations of their unaffected children – essentially mortgaging their entire futures. Worse yet, children born into families without means go untreated. Without treatment, these individuals become a significant financial burden on the state. According to a Harvard School of Public Health study, the lifetime societal cost of autism is estimated to be \$3.2 million per person. This cost can be reduced dramatically or eliminated with appropriate intervention.

Autism Speaks has advocated for the enactment of insurance legislation at the state level across the nation. So far, 29 states have adopted insurance coverage legislation: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. In the states where the laws are effective, individuals with autism are making remarkable progress, and the impact on premiums has been minimal. The average fiscal impact across five of the early-adopting states that have reported data is approximately 31 cents per month for each member of the plan as a result of the added autism benefit.

In Hawaii, a number of measures providing insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorder were considered before the Legislature this session. While these bills have failed to move forward this session, we firmly believe that further education is necessary to bring awareness to the issues regarding autism spectrum disorder and its treatment, and to provide support for the Hawaii children and families who struggle with everyday impacts of not having adequate access to treatment.

We therefore respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of HCR150 and HR113.

Lorri Unumb, Esq., Vice President  
State Government Affairs  
Autism Speaks  
803-582-9905



# HILOPA'A

Family to Family Health Information Center

Date: March 27, 2012

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

Fr: Leolinda Parlin, State Coordinator for Family Voices of Hawai'i

Re: **SUPPORT – HCR150/HR 113 – DELARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTHIN HAWAI'I**

On behalf of Family Voices of Hawai'i, I offer testimony in support of HCR150 AND HR 113 which delares each year the month of April to be Autism Awareness Month. As an organization, Family Voices is national grass roots organization of family of friends of child with special health care needs. In Hawai'i, we operate the federally funded Hilopa'a Family to Family Health Information Center.

As highlighted in the resolution, Autism is an equal opportunity disability. It does not discriminate by socioeconomic status or ethnicity. The numbers of new children diagnosed are increasing each year. HCR150/HR133 provides the opportunity to continue to raise attention and awareness to this disorder. The continued attention and awareness in Autism in recent years has enabled significant research in Autism. This research has generated evidence based best practices in intervention and treatment.

I apologize for not providing testimony in person today. In celebrating Autism, today we are training professionals in navigating the system of care for children with special needs and their families as well as on the M-CHAT which is also highlighted in the resolution.

Kalma K. Wong  
P.O. Box 240364  
Honolulu, HI 96824  
(808) 393-5218/ kalma.keiko@gmail.com

March 26, 2012

Representative Ryan Yamane  
Chair, Cmte. on Health  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 420

Representative Dee Morikawa  
Vice Chair, Cmte. on Health  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 310

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HCR150, Declaring the month of April each year as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii, Committee on HLT, March 27, 2012, 9:00 a.m., Room 329

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Health:

I am writing to express my support for House Concurrent Resolution 150, which declares the month of April of each year as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii.

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that currently affects 1 in 110 children, according to the Centers for Disease Control. This disorder is four times more likely to affect boys than girls. Autism impairs a person's ability to communicate and relate to others, and is often associated with repetitive behaviors, poor eye contact, rigidity in routines, speech disorders, muscle or joint problems, ear infections, allergies, vision and hearing problems, and gut issues. The wide range of co-occurring problems leads to the need for services from trained medical professionals and for a full-range of therapies, including but not limited to speech therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral therapy, and biomedical interventions.

Early diagnosis and intervention are crucial to the success of the children reaching their full potential. However, early diagnosis is only possible if awareness of autism exists.

As the mother of two children affected by autism, I can personally attest to the need for autism awareness in Hawaii. Declaring the month of April each year as Autism Awareness Month will help to educate the public and increase understanding of autism spectrum disorders.

Please pass HCR150 and make autism awareness a priority in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Kalma K. Wong



**Testimony  
Transmittal Cover**

**Testifier's Name:** Alexa Fong

**Organization:** N/A

**Name of Committee(s) comments are directed to:** Committee on Health

**Date and Time of Hearing:** March, 27<sup>th</sup> 9:00amm

**Measure Number:** HCR 150/ HR 113 – DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII

Alexa Fong  
621 11<sup>th</sup> Ave UnitA1  
Honolulu, HI 96816  
Afong9@hawaii.edu

March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair &  
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
Twenty-Sixth Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**HCR 150/HR 113 – DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR  
AS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII.**

Dear Representative Yamane, Representative Morikawa, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alexa Fong and I am currently pursuing my Master's in Social Work at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. I **strongly support HCR 150 and HR 113** and urge the committee to pass this resolution to acknowledge April as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii. I have been working with children with autism spectrum disorders for many years and have seen the impact the diagnosis has on the child, the family, and the community. I currently work for Imua Family Services, a provider for Early Intervention on Maui.

Autism spectrum disorders are known to occur to all ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups and according to the Centers on Disease Control, occur in 1 in 110 children. This number is staggering. The health community is working to identifying children on the spectrum earlier, in order for therapy and interventions to be efficacious. Early identification and screening is important and should be emphasized to all parents and families in Hawaii. This resolution is significant in bringing awareness to an issue that, with early identification and intervention, may positively impact families for a lifetime.

Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to present my testimony. I ask for your full support of the passage of **HCR 150/HR 113**.

Thank you,  
Alexa Fong

DATE: Saturday, March 24, 2012

ATTN: House Committee on Health

Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair  
Rep. Della Au Belatti  
Rep. Faye P. Hanohano  
Rep. Jo Jordan  
Rep. Chris Lee  
Rep. John M. Mizuno  
Rep. Jessica Wooley  
Rep. Corinne W. L. Ching  
Rep. Kymberly Marcos Pine

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, March 27, 2012

HEARING PLACE: Conference Room 329 – State Capitol – 415 South Beratania St.

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

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Dear Committee on Health,

Aloha,

My name is Andrea Long and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. I am submitting testimony in **strong support of HCR 150/HR 113** which declares the month of April as “Autism Awareness Month.”

In the 1990s, scientists thought autism was a rare disorder that affected 1 in every 2,000 kids. Today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that autism affects 1 in every 110 children. The fact that the prevalence rate has dramatically increased is both alarming and a cause for concern.

According to the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, the cost of autism over the lifespan is 3.2 million dollars per person. However, the cost of lifelong care can be reduced by 2/3 with early diagnosis and intervention.

Early intervention can greatly improve a child’s development. The first three years of life are particularly critical. And that is why educating people to be able to recognize the signs of autism early are very important. So children can get treatment when it is most likely to be effective.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HCR 150/HR 113.

Sincerely,

Andrea Long

## **morikawa2 - Grant**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 25, 2012 12:37 PM  
**To:** HLTtestimony  
**Cc:** Kawaihapai@hawaii.rr.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for HR113 on 3/27/2012 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for HLT 3/27/2012 9:00:00 AM HR113

Conference room: 329  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Thomas T Shirai Jr  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [Kawaihapai@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:Kawaihapai@hawaii.rr.com)  
Submitted on: 3/25/2012

**Comments:**

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Yamane & Committee Members, I strongly support HCR 150 & HR 113. It's highly deserving for children who have this disease of which my treasured grand daughter has. Since learning of her disease, my wife and I have educated ourselves about. Like many illnesses and diseases, ongoing educating is paramount as we proceed into the future. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony strongly supporting HCR 150 and its companion HR 113. Mahalo Ke Akua.

Thomas T Shirai Jr  
Mokule'ia, Waialua

## Testimony Transmittal Cover

**Testifier's name:** Susan Emley

**Committee:** House Committee on Health

**Hearing date:** March 27, 2012 at 9:00 pm.

**Measure number:** HRC150 and HC 113 DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII.

**Number copies the Committee is requesting:** 1 copy (including original) to the committee clerk, Room 226, State Capitol

Susan Emley  
1449 Honokahua St.  
Honolulu, HI, 96825

March 26, 2012

The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
House Committee on Health  
Twenty-Seventh Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: HRC 150 AND HR 113  
DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS AUTISM AWARENESS  
MONTH IN HAWAII.

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Morikawa, and members of the Committee,

My name is Susan Emley and I am a master's degree candidate in Educational Psychology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am also a former Department of Education employee who worked with children enrolled in special education programs for many years. I am providing testimony in support of HCR150 and HR 113 declaring the month of April of each year as autism awareness month in Hawaii.

Autism is a complex neuro-developmental disability which is now recognized to affect as many as 1 in 110 children in Hawaii and across the nation, a number that has been dramatically on the rise. Children with autism may have a range of difficulties including those of basic communication, social interactions, and repetitive behaviors.

Improving the early identification of autism through screening programs such as "Learn the Signs, Act Early" is critical for the wellbeing of Hawaii's youngest and most vulnerable citizens. The design of the autism screening program is important as it aims to support families with young children at their 18 and 24 month well child visits to their pediatric health care provider. These visits are scheduled at times when important developmental milestones are expected to be seen and any delays may be first evident. By using the pro-active approach of universal screening, children who may potentially have autism can be referred for timely developmental assessments. Parents, family members, and care givers can then be given important information and referred to State and community resources and supports.

From my experiences working with children with special health and education needs I have seen firsthand how devastating the effects of autism spectrum disorders can be. However, when children are identified early, they can receive evaluations and appropriate intervention services to support their special needs during the critical phases of their development. Caring, supporting and educating these children across

their life-span who suffer from developmental and cognitive delays is a common goal for both health, and educational professionals, and the families who love them.

I strongly support HCR 150 and HR 113 and believe that improving awareness will result in the community's better understanding autism. These efforts to increase the understanding of children with autism will provide them acceptance, and expand their opportunities to become contributing members of society.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony in consideration of this resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Emley

To the HLT committee regarding HCR 150, hearing date 3/27/12 at 0900:

My name is Miki Wong, and I am a dietitian at Shriners' Hospital for Children. I am writing to support resolution HCR 150, to declare April as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii. I view this resolution as an opportunity/avenue to increase public awareness for autism in Hawaii, and promote the message of early screening. Early screening allows for early intervention which results in improved outcomes. Improved outcomes equates to improved quality of life, independence in children who develop autism.

Thank you for submitting this for consideration.



## **morikawa2 - Grant**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, March 26, 2012 10:15 PM  
**To:** HLTtestimony  
**Cc:** spin@doh.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for HCR150 on 3/27/2012 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for HLT 3/27/2012 9:00:00 AM HCR150

Conference room: 329  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Ivalee Sinclair  
Organization: Special Education Advisory Council  
E-mail: [spin@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:spin@doh.hawaii.gov)  
Submitted on: 3/26/2012

**Comments:**

SEAC supports HCR 150 as an important means to bring more media attention to the importance of diagnosing autism early and providing early intervention and educational services to allow students with disabilities to benefit from their education and live meaningful, productive lives as adults. Hawaii early intervention programs and public schools have seen the numbers of children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders rise significantly in the last ten years, and these students' complex needs require significant resources.