



SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator David Ige, Chair

Conference Room 211
February 29, 2012 at 9:15 a.m.

Supporting SB 2093 SD 1: Relating to Health

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 SB 2093 SD 1, which addresses the provider payment issue to ease the transition of patients from acute to long term care.

On any given day there are an average of 150 patients in Hawaii's hospitals who have been treated so that they are well enough to be transferred to long term care, but who are waitlisted because long term care is not available. Waitlisting is undesirable because it represents an inappropriate quality of care for the patient and creates a serious financial drain on hospitals. Waitlisted patients also unnecessarily occupy hospital beds that could otherwise be used by those who need acute care. Patients may be waitlisted for a matter of days, weeks, or months, and in some cases over a year.

The Healthcare Association has advocated for solutions to the waitlist problem since 2007, when it sponsored SCR 198, which directed the Association to study the problem and propose solutions. The Association subsequently created a task force for that purpose, which studied the problem, wrote a report, and submitted it to the Legislature. Since then the Association has sponsored two measures that have been designed to:

- (1) Promote the movement of waitlisted patients out of acute care;
- (2) Reduce unpaid costs incurred by hospitals and free up hospital resources so that they can be used to treat those who need that higher level of care; and
- (3) Enable long term care facilities to accept waitlisted Medicaid patients with complex medical conditions while addressing the additional costs related to their care.

The two waitlist bills sponsored by HAH have advanced further in the Legislature each year since they were first introduced, and last year they both went to conference. HAH is again sponsoring these bills in 2012. One bill addresses the Medicaid eligibility process, and this bill addresses Medicaid payments.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2093 SD 1.