

Hawaii State Legislature
Senate Ways and Means Committee

LATE

S.B. 240 RELATING TO PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT

Testimony of Kelley Withy, MD, PhD and David Sakamoto, MD, MBA

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As physicians, educators, workforce researchers and patients, we are writing to offer our strongest support for SB 240. The State of Hawaii has the equivalent of 2,860 full time physicians caring for the civilian population. We need 3,500 (determined by the organization that analyzes physician demand for the US government). Thus, we have 600 fewer physicians than are needed. This is compounded by the fact that we are significantly short of nurse practitioners and physician assistants. If we do not take action now, by 2020 we may be 1,600 physicians short of what is needed and we will ALL find it very difficult to receive appropriate medical care.

In order to mitigate the shortage problem, ten interventions have been prioritized by Hawaii healthcare experts and stakeholders at the Hawaii Physician Workforce Summit organized by the physician workforce research team on June 29, 2010. These solutions include investing in pipeline activities that get more local students into healthcare careers, expanding medical training particularly in areas and specialties of need, improving incentives for physicians to practice on the neighbor islands, involving communities in the recruitment and retention of physicians, creating a more favorable physician practice environment (tort reform and reimbursement reform) and changing the model of care toward a team-based "patient-centered medical home" that, in time, can become an

integrated delivery system using electronic health records that will increase physician productivity, improve quality and patient safety, lower cost, and produce greater patient and provider satisfaction.

The Physician Workforce Assessment team has created a database of all practicing non-military physicians working in Hawaii and can now track changes in the physician workforce. In addition, we established a summary of resources for students interested in careers in medicine; are partnering with Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to strengthen pipeline training; created a working group of physicians and trial attorneys to address medical malpractice reform; are working with insurance companies to develop a partnership for administrative simplification; are supporting a conference to alert communities to resources to help them recruit and retain providers (4/5/2011 Hawaii State Rural Health Association Annual Conference); are partnering to support increased rural training opportunities for health professions students and residents; are researching patient centered medical home practice in Hawaii and planning a conference on this topic for late 2011; are contacting Hawaii born physicians working on the mainland to see what would interest them in jobs in Hawaii; and, of course, continue to track the changes Hawaii physician workforce.

We believe that the physician workforce assessment project is essential to the State of Hawaii and recommend its continuation. Thank you for allowing us to provide testimony.

In compliance with UH policy, we are submitting this testimony as private citizens.