



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

In reply, please refer to:
File:

House Committee on Health

SB 2825, SD 1 RELATING TO THE HAWAII IMMUNIZATION REGISTRY

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

March 13, 2012, 9:00 a.m.

- 1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health strongly supports this administration bill.
- 2 **Fiscal Implications:** None. No state funds are required to implement this proposal. The Hawai'i
- 3 Immunization Registry (HIR) is supported by a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- 4 Immunizations and Vaccines for Children grant.
- 5 **Purpose and Justification:** HIR is a secure, confidential, computerized system that has the capability
- 6 to store immunization information for individuals of all ages in the State of Hawai'i. HIR benefits
- 7 individuals and families by consolidating immunization records. In the event that persons move or
- 8 change health care providers, HIR allows new providers to access an individual's immunization history,
- 9 ensuring that patients receive the immunizations that they need while preventing the receipt of
- 10 unnecessary doses of vaccines. HIR benefits public health by providing the Department with the ability
- 11 to monitor the uptake of new vaccines, identify under-immunized populations, and evaluate targeted
- 12 immunization-related programs and interventions.
- 13 The intent of this proposal is to enable health insurer access to their member or subscriber data in
- 14 HIR for the limited purpose of producing immunization assessment reports. The ability to efficiently
- 15 share the immunization data of respective members or subscribers with insurers could potentially assist

1 insurers in formulating strategies to improve immunization rates in their member populations, and
2 ultimately aid in the prevention of vaccine-preventable diseases in Hawai'i.

3 The additional statutory change requested would allow for the inclusion of minimal patient
4 demographic information in HIR to enable the system to automatically identify patients that have elected
5 to refuse participation in HIR ("opt-out"). Currently, individuals and parents/guardians indicate their
6 refusal to participate by completing a Hawaii Immunization Registry Opt-Out Form, which requests the
7 provision of the patient first, middle, and last names, date of birth, as well as other information such as
8 patient address, phone number and parent/guardian name, used for patient identification purposes.
9 Minimally, required demographic information consists of the person's first, middle, and last names, and
10 date of birth. Social Security numbers are not stored in HIR. Because the Department is currently
11 unable to store this minimal information in HIR, individuals and parents/guardians are responsible for
12 notifying all subsequent immunization providers of their decision to opt-out of participation in HIR.
13 Should individuals neglect to convey this information, the statutory change requested would enable the
14 Department to develop the technical safeguards necessary to prevent the inadvertent data entry or data
15 transfer of restricted information into HIR. The minimal demographic information stored in HIR is for
16 Department use only and would be non-displaying to HIR authorized users. The Department respects
17 the rights of individuals to refuse participation in HIR and supports this legislative proposal as a means
18 to ensure more thorough privacy protection for those that have elected to opt-out.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



Hawaii Association of Health Plans

March 13, 2012

The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

House Committee on Health

Re: SB 2825 SD1 – Relating to the Hawaii Immunization Registry

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

My name is Richard Jackson and I am chair of the Public Policy Committee of the Hawaii Association of Health Plans (HAHP). HAHP is a non-profit organization consisting of eight (8) member organizations: AlohaCare, HMAA, HMSA, HWMG, Kaiser Permanente, MDX Hawai'i, UHA, and UnitedHealthcare. Our mission is to promote initiatives aimed at improving the overall health of Hawaii. HAHP is also active participants in the legislative process. Before providing any testimony, all HAHP member organizations must be in unanimous agreement of the statement or position.

HAHP appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2825 SD1 which will allow health plans to access the immunization registry in order to generate immunization assessment reports. These reports will provide information on which vaccines a member has received or are overdue, as well as allow the plans to monitor and improve the health of its members.

As the Committee may already know, the Department of Health's Stop Flu at School program is a vaccination program that supplies the influenza vaccine at participating schools statewide. This \$1 million plus annual program lost Federal support this year. HAHP's financial support of Stop Flu at School will permit this program to continue, and HAHP feels that it is imperative that health plans have access to the immunization registry so that we have an accurate medical record for each of our insured keiki, as well as for our adult members. In order to comply with the program's vaccine ordering and accountability procedures, it is important that our member organizations are able to see how many of our members participate in the program so that we can better prepare for the future.

HAHP believes that by giving health plans access to the immunization registry, we will better be able to advocate for preventative care and the health of our members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2825 SD1 today.

Sincerely,

Richard Jackson
Chair, Public Policy Committee



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Tuesday, March 13, 2012

To: The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane
Chair, House Committee on Health

From: 'Ohana Health Plan

Re: Senate Bill 2825, Senate Draft 1-Relating to the Hawai'i Immunization Registry

Hearing: Tuesday, March 13, 2012, 9:00 a.m.
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 329

'Ohana Health Plan is managed by a local team of experienced health care professionals who embrace cultural diversity, advocate preventative care and facilitate communications between members and providers. Our philosophy is to place members and their families at the center of the health care continuum.

'Ohana Health Plan is offered by WellCare Health Insurance of Arizona, Inc. WellCare provides managed care services exclusively for government-sponsored health care programs serving approximately 2.6 million Medicaid and Medicare members nationwide. 'Ohana has been able to take WellCare's national experience and that of our local team to develop an 'Ohana care model that addresses local members' health care, long-term care and care coordination needs.

We appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 2825, Senate Draft 1-Relating to the Hawai'i Immunization Registry.

The purpose of this bill is to authorize the Department of Health to allow limited health insurer access to the Hawai'i immunization registry, as well as authorizes the Hawai'i immunization registry to store minimal demographic information for individuals who have elected to refuse inclusion in the Hawai'i immunization registry.

Providing health plans limited access to the registry for the purpose of producing immunization assessment reports will assist in our ability to formulate strategies to assess and improve access to immunizations for our members, a key component in our efforts to promote and increase preventive health strategies.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 2825, Senate Draft 1-Relating to the Hawai'i Immunization Registry.



AlohaCare

For a healthy Hawaii.

March 13, 2012
9:00am
Conference Room 329

To: The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health

From: Paula Arcena, Director of Public Policy
Robert Toyofuku, Government Affairs

Re: SB2825, SD1 Relating to the Hawaii Immunization Registry

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

AlohaCare **supports** SB2825, SD1 which would allow health insurers to access immunization data of our health plan members from the Hawaii Immunization Registry. Currently, health plans are not allowed access to the registry.

As you are aware, immunizations are an important preventive health measure and have been made more accessible outside the confines of a provider's clinic. The Department of Health's Stop Flu in School program is an example of significantly increasing access to childhood immunization by bringing flu shots to school campuses during school hours to provide easy access.

As a Medicaid health plan, AlohaCare is judged for its ability to make health care services, such as immunizations, available to its members. Allowing health plan to have access to the Immunization Registry will allow us to better assess the needs of our members and how we can best meet them.

AlohaCare is a non-profit, Hawaii based health plan founded in 1994 by Hawaii's community health centers to serve low-income families and medically vulnerable members of our community through government sponsored health insurance programs. We serve beneficiaries of Medicaid and Medicare on all islands.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



Committee: Committee on Health
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, March 13, 2012, 9:00 a.m.
Place: Room 329
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Opposition to S.B. 2825, S.D.1, Relating to Immunization

Dear Chair Yamane and Members of the Committee on Health:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii (“ACLU of Hawaii”) writes in opposition to S.B. 2825, S.D. 1. Medical information is arguably the most personal and private source of data about us and privacy protections are of paramount importance. When the Immunization Registry was first established, the ACLU of Hawaii was repeatedly assured that stringent regulations would be in place to protect registrants’ privacy. S.B. 2825, S.D.1 would erode those protections by allowing health insurers access to specific individuals’ medical information without consent.

Rigorous safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of the information must be in place so that immunization information cannot be used improperly to harass and/or discriminate against individuals who have not received immunizations. Some privacy concerns could be allayed by amending this bill to make the database an opt-in system, which requires individuals to act affirmatively, *e.g.*, sign a consent form, in order to be included in the program.

Immunizations are an area of medicine that is fraught with controversy. Some may choose not to follow the recommendations of the relevant medical body, *e.g.*, the American Academy of Pediatrics. Others may decline immunizations on religious grounds. In either case, an individual exercises his or her fundamental rights when declining immunizations personally or for his or her children. S.B. 2825, S.D.1 must contain proper safeguards to ensure that the state does not unduly interfere with registrants’ fundamental rights, including freedom of religion, the right to personal autonomy and the right to rear one’s children.

The ACLU of Hawaii’s mission is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions through legislation, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii, a non-partisan and private non-profit organization, has provided its services at no cost to the public and without the use of government funds for over 45 years,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Laurie A. Temple
Staff Attorney

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