



SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator David Ige, Chair

Conference Room 211

February 24, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

Commenting in support of SB 2958 SD1: 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 comment in support of SB 2958 SD 1, which appropriates funds to create a new bone marrow transplant program in Hawaii.

Bone marrow transplants are most often performed for people with diseases of the blood or bone marrow, or certain types of cancer, such as leukemia. Since Hawaii's first bone marrow transplant was performed in 1978, more than 250 men, women, and children have received a second chance in life. The recent closure of Hawaii Medical Center East resulted in the loss of Hawaii's only adult bone marrow transplant program. Pediatric transplants are being performed at the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children, which Hawaii Pacific Health has committed to continuing.

Many Hawaii residents cannot afford to travel to the mainland to get a transplant and to remain there for the needed post-transplant follow-up. Not only are medical costs incurred, but there are other costs as well, such as travel, housing and meals. The cost of housing alone can exceed \$6,000 for three months. In addition, when someone has leukemia and needs a transplant, time is of the essence.

During the past 10 years, Hawaii's bone marrow transplant program has shown overall results that are as good as or better than national averages. Hawaii deserves to have it retained.

For the foregoing reasons, the Healthcare Association of Hawaii expresses its support for SB 2958 SD 1.