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TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2011

Wednesday, February 9, 2011
2:45 p.m.

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 941 – RELATING TO PALLIATIVE CARE.

TO THE HONORABLE JOSH GREEN, M.D., CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE
COMMITTEE:

My name is Gordon Ito, State Insurance Commissioner, testifying on behalf of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs ("Department"). The Department takes no position on this bill which creates a mandated benefit requiring policies of accident and health or sickness insurance to provide coverage for palliative care. Mandated benefits help some people, but impose costs on other people. We believe this trade off is best left to the wisdom of the Legislature, following the review by the Legislative Auditor required under HRS section 23-51.

We thank this Committee for the opportunity to present testimony on this matter.



HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
6301 Pali Highway
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224

Email to: HTHTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Hearing on: Wednesday, February 9, 2011 @ 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room # 229

DATE: February 7, 2011

TO: **Senate Health Committee**
Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Clarence Nishihara, Vice Chair

FROM: Walter Yoshimitsu, Executive Director

RE: Support for SB 941 Relating to Palliative Care

Honorable Chairs and members of the Senate Health Committee, I am Walter Yoshimitsu, **representing the Hawaii Catholic Conference**. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii, which under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents over 200,000 Catholics in Hawaii.

The Hawaii Catholic Conference strongly supports increasing public access to the life-affirming services of hospice and effective palliative care. While we leave to the bills' sponsors the technical explanations as to why this bill is needed, we would like to provide this committee with three reasons why hospice and palliative care must be at the forefront of our State's health care policy agenda.

First, hospice and palliative care respond effectively and compassionately to the very real needs of the seriously ill. They do so in a manner that affirms the value of the lives at stake, unlike proposals to legalize assisted suicide, which treat the dying as burdensome candidates for killing rather than as fellow human beings deserving of our care.

Second, hospice and palliative care are the preferred means for addressing the needs of persons living with terminal conditions and of their caregivers. Opinion surveys show that when asked, members of the public agree that hospice and palliative care should take priority as the best approaches to accomplishing good end of life care.

Third, improving access to hospice and palliative care has become a goal around which substantial organizational consensus is forming in Hawaii. We have a unique opportunity to put our efforts into better care at the end of life.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Senator Josh Green, M.D., Chair

Conference Room 229
Feb. 9, 2011 at 2:45 p.m.

Supporting the intent of SB 941.

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. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the intent of SB 941, which requires health plans to provide coverage for palliative care.

The Healthcare Association fully recognizes the benefits of palliative care and encourages its expansion throughout the state. In recent years, insurers, providers, and palliative care advocates such as St. Francis Health Systems and Kokua Mau have been working together to improve access to palliative care. Today, palliative care is available in many more health care settings, and there is much more insurance coverage for it.

It is estimated that hospice usage has doubled in 10 years, and today nearly one-third of all people who die have received hospice care before their deaths. The John A. Burns School of Medicine now requires its students to take a course in palliative care, and student nurses routinely do community rotations through hospice providers.

The Healthcare Association supports the continued collaboration to expand palliative care. However, we feel that a law that mandates insurance coverage is not needed at this time. Rather than a mandate, we would suggest a resolution that recognizes progress that has been made in recent years and encourages continued collaboration and the continued expansion of palliative care.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 941.

hawaii family forum

Email to: HTHTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Hearing on: Wednesday, February 9, 2011 @ 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room # 229

DATE: February 8, 2011

TO: **Senate Health Committee**
Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Clarence Nishihara, Vice Chair

FROM: Allen Cardines, Jr., Executive Director

RE: Support for SB 941 Relating to Palliative Care

Honorable Chairs and members of the Senate Committee on Health, I am Allen Cardines, **representing the Hawaii Family Forum**. Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii, representing a network of various Christian Churches and denominations. We support the intent of this bill, but leave the mechanics and implementation to the experts.

In 1998, Hawaii Family Forum and the Hawaii Medical Association formed a coalition of medical, disability rights and faith organizations called Hawaii's Partnership for Appropriate and Compassionate Care (HPACC).

One of the primary purposes of HPACC is to support improved end-of-life care for Hawaii residents. We have been pleased to see the significant progress in end-of-life care, including palliative care, since 1998. But, as always, more work remains. We commend our community leaders in the hospice and palliative care communities for their ongoing commitment and desire for continuous quality improvement in this important area.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

green1 - Karen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 07, 2011 4:20 PM
To: HTHTestimony
Cc: manis1350@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB941 on 2/9/2011 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for HTH 2/9/2011 2:45:00 PM SB941

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: comments only
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: LAURA MANIS
Organization: Individual
Address: 1350 Ala Moana Blvd Honolulu, HI 96814
Phone: 597-8838
E-mail: manis1350@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/7/2011

Comments:

I am commenting as a caregiver caring for my 93 year old Husband showing signs of dementia and caught in the morass of decisions I am making for our future. We have supplemental insurance, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan which does not cover the kind of service we need, that is provided now by St. Francis Hospice. I understand that St. Francis is now absorbing the cost, but also realize that this wont continue forever. I believe this help will delay having to use higher cost treatment and facilities at a savings both to me and eventually the state. Please pass this bill