

# TESTIMONY

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# SCR101

Measure Title: DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII.

Report Title: Autism Awareness Month; April; Outreach and Awareness on Autism

Description:

Companion:

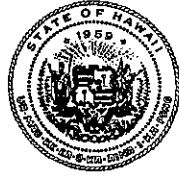
Package: None

Current Referral: HTH

Introducer(s): CHUN OAKLAND, KIDANI, RYAN, SHIMABUKURO, Baker, Fukunaga, Galuteria, Green, Nishihara, Solomon, Tokuda

HTH  
Committee Hearing  
03-27-2012

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



Written Only

LORETTA J. FUDDY, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.  
ACTING DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

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

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

**House Committee on Health**

**S.C.R. 101, DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS  
AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAI'I**

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

**March 27, 2012**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports S.C.R. 101 to designate April as  
2 Autism Awareness Month in Hawai'i. Early screening, evaluation, and intervention services for young  
3 children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can help to improve their development and ability to  
4 reach their full potential.

5 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

6 **Purpose and Justification:** This resolution designates the month of April of each year as Autism  
7 Awareness Month, to increase awareness of the importance of screening for ASD in young children.

8 Screening for autism using standardized screening tools is recommended for young children at  
9 18 and 24 months of age. Early screening and evaluation, followed by early intervention (EI) services,  
10 can support young children with ASD in their development of skills needed later in school and as they  
11 transition to adult life.

12 The importance and need for services for children with ASD is highlighted by data from the  
13 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) 2009-2010 which show  
14 disparities for children and youth with ASD age 0-17 years. In comparison to CSHCN who do not have

1 ASD, CSHCN with ASD are less likely to have families that partner in decision-making, receive care  
2 within a medical home, have adequate health insurance for needed services, have families that find the  
3 community-based services are easy to use, and receive needed services to transition to adult life  
4 (*CSHCN system of care core outcomes*).

5 The DOH Early Intervention Section (EIS) provides EI services for over 2,000 children age 0-3  
6 years with or at biological risk for developmental delays, including children with ASD. Intensive  
7 behavioral support services are provided for approximately 200 children with ASD each year.

8 The DOH Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD) provides a variety of individualized  
9 supports to over 3,500 individuals, of which many are children and adults with ASD. The DDD website  
10 includes information on national and local resources for individuals with ASD and their caregivers.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
919 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD, ROOM 113  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543  
March 27, 2012

The Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Chair  
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health  
Twenty-Sixth Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senators Green and Nishihara and Members of the Committee:

**SUBJECT: SCR 101/SR 89 – DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII.**

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS SCR 101 and SR 89**. The purpose of the resolutions is to declare the month of April of each year as autism awareness month.

Autism is included in a group of autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). There are three types of ASD, 1) autistic disorder, 2) asperger syndrome and 3) pervasive developmental disorder. ASDs are considered developmental disabilities that can have significant challenges on an individual's behavioral, communication and social skills.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is estimated that between 1 in 80 and 1 in 240 with an average of 1 in 110 children in the United States have autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). That rate is anticipated to increase in the next decade as noted in the fourth WHEREAS clause, autism is growing at a startling rate of ten to seventeen percent per year.

Education and awareness about autism is important to inform the public about ASDs and the emerging trends and services available for individuals and families. Several initiatives are underway such as Act Early and Learn the Signs that are supported by the Hawaii Maternal Child Health Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities program and various autism organizations in Hawaii. The Council believes that public awareness about ASD should be an

The Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Chair  
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Page 2  
March 27, 2012

ongoing activity throughout the year. However, designating the month of April as Autism Awareness Month would fall in line with National Autism Awareness Month, and would provide a wonderful opportunity for Hawaii's advocates and state and private agencies to work together to educate the community about ASDs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SCR 101 and SR 89.

Sincerely,

  
Liz Ann Salvador  
Chair

  
Waynette K.Y. Cabral, MSW  
Executive Administrator



March 26, 2012

*Via Email: HTHTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov*

Senator Josh Green, M.D.  
Chair, Committee on Health  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 222

**Re: SCR101/SR89 – Declaring the Month of April of Each Year as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii**  
**Hearing date & time: Tuesday, March 27, 2012 at 1:30 p.m.**  
**Conference Room 229**

Dear Chair Green and Members of the Committee on Health:

I am Lorri Unumb, Vice President, State Government Affairs, of Autism Speaks. Autism Speaks was founded in February 2005 and has grown into the nation's largest autism science and advocacy organization, dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a cure for autism; increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders; and advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families.

Autism Speaks submits testimony in **strong support** of SCR101/SR89, which declare the month of April of each year as autism awareness month in Hawaii.

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that inhibits a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships, and is often accompanied by behavioral challenges. Autism spectrum disorders are diagnosed in one in 110 children in the United States, affecting four times as many boys as girls. The prevalence of autism increased 57 percent from 2002 to 2006. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called autism an urgent public health concern for which the cause and cure remain unknown.

The U.S. Surgeon General has reported that treatment for autism can spare an individual from life-long dependency as a ward of the state. In the absence of health insurance coverage, families are often required to pay out-of-pocket for treatments that can cost upwards of \$50,000 per year. In the process, many risk their homes and the educations of their unaffected children – essentially mortgaging their entire futures. Worse yet, children born into families without means

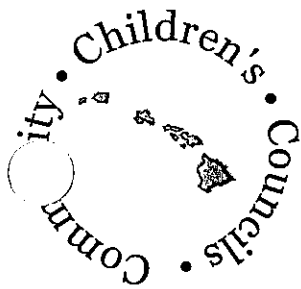
go untreated. Without treatment, these individuals become a significant financial burden on the state. According to a Harvard School of Public Health study, the lifetime societal cost of autism is estimated to be \$3.2 million per person. This cost can be reduced dramatically or eliminated with appropriate intervention.

Autism Speaks has advocated for the enactment of insurance legislation at the state level across the nation. So far, 29 states have adopted insurance coverage legislation: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. In the states where the laws are effective, individuals with autism are making remarkable progress, and the impact on premiums has been minimal. The average fiscal impact across five of the early-adopting states that have reported data is approximately 31 cents per month for each member of the plan as a result of the added autism benefit.

In Hawaii, a number of measures providing insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorder were considered before the Legislature this session. In particular, S.B. 2631, S.D. 2, passed this Committee and the Senate, and we are truly grateful for the Senate's support of this issue. While SB. 2631, S.D. 2 ultimately failed to move forward this session, we firmly believe that further education is necessary to bring awareness to the issues regarding autism spectrum disorder and its treatment, and to provide support for the Hawaii children and families who struggle with everyday impacts of not having adequate access to treatment.

We therefore respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of SCR101 and SR89.

Lorri Unumb, Esq., Vice President  
State Government Affairs  
Autism Speaks  
803-582-9905



COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S COUNCIL OF HAWAII  
1177 Alakea Street · B-100 · Honolulu · HI · 96813  
TEL: (808) 586-5363 · TOLL FREE: 1-800-437-8641 · FAX: (808) 586-5366

March 25, 2012

To: Senator Josh Green, Chair  
Senator Clarence Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

RE: SCR101/SR89 – Declaring April Autism Awareness Month

Dear Chairs Green & Nishihara, and Members of the Committee,

The 17 Community Children's Councils (CCCs) of Hawaii **strongly supports** this resolution declaring April Autism Awareness Month. As stated autism transcends culture and social economic status, impacting 1 in every 110 children. A recent Yale study in Korea found a prevalence of 1 in 48.

Declaring April Autism Awareness Month would help to highlight the disorder, recognize it statewide and collaborate with the national movements. Many activities are planned during this month for families on the spectrum as well as provide the general public with more information. This will help in the efforts to support these activities.

The CCCs are community-based bodies comprised of parents, professionals in both public and private agencies and other interested persons who are concerned with specialized services provided to Hawaii's students. Membership is diverse, voluntary and advisory in nature. The CCCs are in rural and urban communities organized around the Complexes in the DOE.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Community Children's Council Office (CCCO) at 586-5363.

Thank you for considering our testimony,

Tom Smith, Co-Chair

Jessica Wong-Sumida, Co-Chair

(Original signatures are on file with the CCCO)





# AUTISM SOCIETY

*Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism  
Hawaii*



1600 Kapiolani Blvd. #620 Honolulu, HI 96814  
[www.autismhi.org](http://www.autismhi.org) (808) 394-7320 [autismhi@gmail.com](mailto:autismhi@gmail.com)

March 25, 2012

To: Senator Josh Green, Chair  
Senator Clarence Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

RE: SCR101/SR89 – Declaring April Autism Awareness Month

Dear Chairs Green & Nishihara, and Members of the Committee,

The Autism Society of Hawaii (ASH) **strongly supports** this resolution declaring April Autism Awareness Month. As stated autism transcends culture and social economic status, impacting 1 in every 110 children. A recent Yale study in Korea found a prevalence of 1 in 48.

One mission of ASH is to provide education for parents and those on the spectrum, as well as the general public. Through education we can begin services earlier and there will be a better outcome for children on the spectrum. Without this intervention there can be severe, social economic consequences. A Harvard study estimated the cost over the lifetime for one person with autism to be \$3.2million. Provided with early intervention, they will be able to mainstream into classes and become productive members of society. Declaring April Autism Awareness Month would help to highlight the disorder, recognize it statewide and collaborate with the national movements. This will help support our mission for the benefit of the entire population, recognizing those that have the disorder and providing information for those who do not.

We respectfully request your support of SCR101/SR89. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact myself at (808) 223-6936 or Jessica Wong-Sumida (808) 368-1191.

Thank you for considering our testimony,

William Bolman  
President

**Carrie Myers, MSW Student  
Senate Committee on Health  
March 27, 2012, 1:30 pm  
SCR101**

**I am an MSW student at the University of Hawaii Manoa, as well as an Applied Behavior Analysis Therapist for children with Pervasive Developmental Disabilities, including Autism.**

**I strongly support this resolution on the basis that Autism, though widely known and heard of by most, is very little understood. Setting aside April as Autism Awareness month every year would hopefully aid in fostering more understanding that these children and adults are indeed children and adults and are not sick or lacking; they just need love, patience, and, of course, understanding. In addition to this, a greater awareness amongst people that it is treatable and best treated if discovered early will hopefully encourage parents to get their children screened.**

**I very much appreciate your time. Again, as a person very much invested in those with autism and their families, I wholeheartedly support this measure.**

**Most Sincerely,**

**Carrie Myers**

DATE: Saturday, March 24, 2012

ATTN: Senate Committee on Health

Senator Josh Green M. D., Chair  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker  
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland  
Senator Maile S. L. Shimabukuro  
Senator Glenn Wakai  
Senator Sam Slom

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, March 27, 2012

HEARING PLACE: Conference Room 229 – State Capitol – 415 South Beratania St.

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

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Dear Committee on Health,

Aloha,

My name is Andrea Long and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa Myron B Thompson School of Social Work. I am submitting testimony in **strong support of SCR 101/SR 89** which declares the month of April as “Autism Awareness Month.”

In the 1990s, scientists thought autism was a rare disorder that affected 1 in every 2,000 kids. Today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that autism affects 1 in every 110 children. The fact that the prevalence rate has dramatically increased is both alarming and a cause for concern.

According to the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, the cost of autism over the lifespan is 3.2 million dollars per person. However, the cost of lifelong care can be reduced by 2/3 with early diagnosis and intervention.

Early intervention can greatly improve a child’s development. The first three years of life are particularly critical. And that is why educating people to be able to recognize the signs of autism early are very important. So children can get treatment when it is most likely to be effective.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SCR 101/SR 89.

Sincerely,

Andrea Long

Alexa Fong  
621 11<sup>th</sup> Ave Unit A1  
Honolulu, HI 96816  
Afong9@hawaii.edu

March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Senator Josh Green, M.D. Chair &  
Senator Clarence Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
Twenty-Sixth Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SCR 101/SR 89 – DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS  
AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII.

Dear Senator Green and Nishihara, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alexa Fong and I am currently pursuing my Master's in Social Work at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. I **strongly support SCR 101 and SR 89** and urge the committee to pass this resolution to acknowledge April as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii. I have been working with children with autism spectrum disorders for many years and have seen the impact the diagnosis has on the child, the family, and the community. I currently work for Imua Family Services, a provider for Early Intervention on Maui.

Autism spectrum disorders are known to occur to all ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups and, according to the Centers on Disease Control, occur in 1 in 110 children. This number is staggering. The health community is working to identify children on the spectrum earlier, in order for therapy and interventions to be efficacious. Early identification and screening is important and should be emphasized to all parents and families in Hawaii. This resolution is significant in bringing awareness to an issue that, with early identification and intervention, may positively impact families for a lifetime.

Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to present my testimony. I ask for your full support of the passage of **SCR 101/SR 89**.

Thank you,  
Alexa Fong

Kalma K. Wong  
P.O. Box 240364  
Honolulu, HI 96824  
(808) 393-5218/ kalma.keiko@gmail.com

March 26, 2012

Senator Josh Green M.D.  
Chair, Cmte. on Health  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 222

Senator Clarence Nishihara  
Vice Chair, Cmte. on Health  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 204

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of SCR101, Declaring the month of April each year as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii, Committee on HTH, March 27, 2012, 1:30 p.m., Room 229

Dear Chair Green, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health:

I am writing to express my support for Senate Concurrent Resolution 101, which declares the month of April of each year as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii.

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that currently affects 1 in 110 children, according to the Centers for Disease Control. This disorder is four times more likely to affect boys than girls. Autism impairs a person's ability to communicate and relate to others, and is often associated with repetitive behaviors, poor eye contact, rigidity in routines, speech disorders, muscle or joint problems, ear infections, allergies, vision and hearing problems, and gut issues. The wide range of co-occurring problems leads to the need for services from trained medical professionals and for a full-range of therapies, including but not limited to speech therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral therapy, and biomedical interventions.

Early diagnosis and intervention are crucial to the success of the children reaching their full potential. However, early diagnosis is only possible if awareness of autism exists.

As the mother of two children affected by autism, I can personally attest to the need for autism awareness in Hawaii. Declaring the month of April each year as Autism Awareness Month will help to educate the public and increase understanding of autism spectrum disorders.

Please pass SCR101 and make autism awareness a priority in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Kalma K. Wong