



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

February 6, 2013 at 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329

Supporting HB 417: Relating to the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation

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 testify in support of HB 417, which appropriates funds for the Primary Care Training program at the Hilo Medical Center.

The unmet need for primary care practitioners in Hawaii has been well documented. For example, the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) issued a report in 2010 documenting a shortage of 600 physicians in Hawaii, particularly in the area of primary care. That shortage is expected to double if the current trend continues and no changes are made. The report responded to the Legislature's request for JABSOM to compile data about physicians and other health care practitioners and to develop projections on workforce supply and demand.

Primary care is the foundation of health care because it is where most of the prevention and early intervention occurs, which results in better health and lower costs. The Primary Care Training Program is an innovative, interdisciplinary program designed to train teams of primary care practitioners. Each team can care for up to 10,000 patients, whereas previously one physician could manage only 2,500 patients. This collaborative approach represents the future of health care. As the program is developed, it can be exported elsewhere in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 417.