

**HTH HEARING**

**HB652**

**TESTIMONY**

**PRESENTATION OF THE  
BOARD OF PHARMACY**

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE  
Regular Session of 2013

Wednesday, March 20, 2013  
2:15 p.m.

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 652, RELATING TO REMOTE DISPENSING.**

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

My name is Mark Brown, Chair of the Board of Pharmacy ("Board"). I appreciate the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 652, Relating to Remote Dispensing, which would permanently allow remote dispensing by repealing the sunset date of January 2, 2014.

Act 212, SLH 2008, allowed the use of remote dispensing machines with requirements that would ensure the safe dispensation of prescription drugs by allowing a pharmacist to dispense prescription medications from a location away from the responsible pharmacy, via live computer, video and audio link with the responsible pharmacy and pharmacist-in-charge. This technology still provided pharmacist oversight of the dispensation of prescription drugs.

Act 212 made it clear that remote dispensing machines shall not be operated within a five-mile radius of any pharmacy and that remote dispensing pharmacies shall only provide medications to patients covered by QUEST. Act 96, SLH 2009, amended HRS Chapter 461 to allow health maintenance organizations to utilize the remote dispensing technology for the exclusive use of patients served at the facility and to allow

Testimony on House Bill No. 652  
Wednesday March 20, 2013  
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patients residing on an island without a pharmacy, or in remote areas without an existing pharmacy within a five-mile radius, to obtain their medications, including controlled substances, via a remote dispensing pharmacy.

The Board supports the repeal of the sunset date as this will allow the continued use of remote dispensing technology to allow pharmacies to provide service to patients in remote areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 652.

**Wednesday, March 20, 2013 – 2:15 pm**  
**Conference Room 229**

**The Senate Committee on Health**

To: Senator Josh Green, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson  
Executive Director of Government Relations

**Re: HB 652 Relating To Remote Dispensing  
Testimony in Support**

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My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Executive Director of Government Relations for Hawai'i Pacific Health (HPH). HPH is a nonprofit health care system and the state's largest health care provider anchored by its four nonprofit hospitals: Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children, Pali Momi Medical Center, Straub Clinic & Hospital and Wilcox Memorial Hospital on Kauai. HPH is committed to providing the highest quality medical care and service to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Region through its four affiliated hospitals, 49 outpatient clinics and service sites, more than 5,400 employees and 1,300 physicians on staff.

HPH writes in support of HB 652 which proposes to make remote dispensing machines by a licensed pharmacy or pharmacist and its operations permanent by removing the sunset date. Remote dispensing machines serve an important and necessary function in the community by providing access to needed prescription drugs in a timely manner. A common challenge faced by all healthcare providers is providing timely and quality healthcare to communities facing geographic barriers to access. One of the strategies to overcome the challenge of delivering pharmaceuticals to remote areas is to utilize existing technologies such as *remote dispensing*. Remote dispensing allows a licensed pharmacist from another location the ability to dispense pharmaceuticals prescribed by a physician at another location. This serves to make access to health care less problematic, especially in rural locations where healthcare providers as well as pharmacies are limited or nonexistent.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

March 18, 2013

To: **Senate Committee on Health**  
Senator Josh Green, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

RE: **TESTIMONY HB 652 RELATED TO REMOTE DISPENSING:**  
*Wednesday, March 20; 2:15PM in Conference Room 229*

Submitted by: Richard P. Bettini, MPH, MS, President and Chief Executive Officer  
Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center  
Contact: 697-3457 or wcchc@wcchc.com

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of** HB 652 Related to Remote Dispensing.

For the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, which provides over \$100,000 in free medicines to patients each year, remote (pharmacy) dispensing has provided an efficient and effective way to help provide much needed medicines to the homeless and those with limited transportation options, the majority who suffer from multiple chronic conditions. It is more effective than hiring additional pharmacists which are in seriously short supply in rural areas. Medical control is assured as our systems are integrated with electronic medical records and telemedicine links.

This vital healthcare service makes use of digital capability and reduces the cost of serving low income people while making low cost pharmaceuticals available to the vulnerable populations being served.

The Health Center, along with other rural healthcare sites in Hawaii, has been allowed to use remote dispensing since 2009. The Act that provided this option is slated to be repealed on January 2, 2014, which would have serious consequences to our patients who have greatly benefited from this service.

We urge you to support HB 652, which would strike this repeal date so that remote dispensing can be made permanently legal in Hawaii. Our patients and our communities depend on it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony of  
Barbara Kashiwabara

Before:  
Senate Committee on Health  
The Honorable Josh Green, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 20, 2013  
2:15 pm  
Conference Room 229

**HB652 RELATING TO REMOTE DISPENSING**

Chair Green, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB652 which would remove the sunset clause from the law concerning remote dispensing. This would make permanent the Hawaii Revised Statutes sections 461-10.5, 461-14 and the definitions in 461-1 related to remote dispensing.

**Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports this bill.**

We recommend that this law become permanent because there are already existing remote dispensing pharmacies in operation in the state that are providing access to medications for patients using this technology. If this sunsets, that access goes away for those patients, most of whom are in 340B federal and state assistance programs for the underserved. In addition, there are still opportunities to expand access in remote areas where there are NO pharmacies, such as on Lanai.

Remote dispensing remains an affordable option for patients to obtain their medications, using innovative technology. It does not replace "brick and mortar" pharmacies, but fulfills a need when traditional pharmacies are not available for immediate prescription needs, such as after hours, weekends, and holidays, in the emergency room, or with hospital discharges. It allows these patients to go home instead of searching for a 24-hour pharmacy, something that doesn't exist in remote areas, especially on the neighbor islands.

Created in 2008 and subsequently amended, this law lays out specific requirements for operations outlining where these machines may be installed and what is required to provide full protection for patients who receive their medications via remote dispensing. The Board of Pharmacy has permitting authority and responsibility for the installation of remote dispensing machines. This law is meeting its purpose of providing safe access and convenience to patients to encourage them to be compliant with their prescriptions from their providers.

Thank you for your consideration.

**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
**To:** [HTHTestimony](#)  
**Cc:** [rontthi@gmail.com](mailto:rontthi@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB652 on Mar 20, 2013 14:15PM  
**Date:** Sunday, March 17, 2013 4:30:00 PM

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HB652

Submitted on: 3/17/2013

Testimony for HTH on Mar 20, 2013 14:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ronald Taniguchi, Pharm.D.	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: One of the arguments to approve remote dispensing machine technology five years ago was a shortage of pharmacists. The State investment in a college of pharmacy at the UH Hilo will produce its third class of 80+ graduates in May. There is no longer a shortage of pharmacists in rural or urban areas of Hawaii. Before removing a sunset date, some documentation of accountability is desirable to affirm the presumed benefits to the public have been fully realized, and that the extensive legal requirements for operation of remote dispensing of prescription medications found in HRS Chapter 461 have been met by all responsible pharmacies authorized by the Board of Pharmacy. Mahalo

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