



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

February 8, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329

Supporting HB 655: Relating to Medical Services Providers

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 655, which increases penalties for violence against health care workers in hospitals, community health centers, and clinics.

Health care workers are victims of 59% of nonfatal workplace assaults in the private sector (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Violence affects all categories of health care workers.

Generally, a person is guilty of assault in the third degree, a misdemeanor, if the person intentionally causes bodily injury (but not serious bodily injury) to another person. However, victims in high risk classes are treated differently. The offense is raised to assault in the second degree, a felony, and the penalty is increased, if the other person is in one of the specified classes, such as firefighters, lifeguards, teachers, and health care workers in emergency departments (Sec. 707-711, HRS).

The added protection afforded currently to health care workers in emergency departments should be extended to those in hospitals, health centers, and clinics because they are also at risk of increased violence.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 655.

Testimony of
John M. Kirimitsu
Legal and Government Relations Consultant

Before:
House Committee on Health
The Honorable Della Au Belatti, M.D., Chair
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

February 8, 2013
8:00 am
Conference Room 329

Re: HB 655 Relating to Medical Services Providers

Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this bill relating to violence against medical personnel.

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports this bill, but would like to offer an amendment.

Kaiser Permanente supports this bill to protect medical providers from unnecessary violence in the workplace, but asks that the scope of protection be expanded to also include unlicensed professionals, i.e. health care assistants, medical interns/externs, who are often on the front lines providing necessary medical care and therefore, and vulnerable to the same workplace violence. Therefore, we ask that the definition of “medical services provider” be amended to also include “unlicensed medical professionals” personnel.

Thank you for your consideration.