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Friday, March 22, 2013 – 9:05 am
Conference Room 211

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means

To: Senator David Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

From: Virginia Pressler, MD, MBA

**Re: HB 914, HD 1, SD 1 Relating To Obesity Prevention
Comments in Support**

My name is Virginia Pressler, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategic Officer 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.

I am writing in support of HB 914, HD 1, SD 1 which establishes the Hawaii Interagency Obesity Prevention Council and appropriates funds from the Children's Health Promotion fund for programs related to obesity prevention and related chronic diseases. This bill is part of a comprehensive approach to obesity as recommended by ACT 269, The Childhood Obesity Prevention Task Force.

Testifying as both a health care provider and as an employer, Hawai'i Pacific Health believes this bill will reduce the approximately \$470M spent *annually* on obesity-related health problems in Hawai'i. Approximately 1 in 3 children entering kindergarten in Hawai'i are overweight or obese. Additionally, 23% of Hawai'i adults are obese and another 34% are overweight.

Given the recognition and growing awareness that health care providers must work as partners with our patients in order to manage health care costs, the time to act is now. This bill will be a win-win-win for Hawai'i as it will decrease consumption of sugar sweetened beverages, improve our residents health status, decrease health care spending, and provide revenue to enable additional health care education and awareness of this alarming trend. We owe it to our Keiki and our community. We ask that you pass this measure.

Thank you for considering this measure.

