

# HMSA



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

February 13, 2013

The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair  
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

House Committee on Health

**Re: HB 914 – Relating to Obesity Prevention**

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB 914 which would establish an interagency council to coordinate State government strategies and activities to prevent obesity. HMSA supports this Bill.

The Hawaii Childhood Obesity Task Force convened during the 2012 legislative Interim found that childhood obesity in Hawaii increased 38 percent from 1999 to 2009. The Hawaii Initiative for Childhood Obesity Research and Education, which our HMSA Foundation is a sponsor, reported that the consequences of childhood obesity are well known and include type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension, cardiovascular and liver disease as well as social and psychological consequences such as discrimination, stigmatization and low self-esteem. Concurrent with the rising prevalence and severity of childhood obesity have been reports of a rise in the prevalence of high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes mellitus in children, diseases once thought to be seen only in adults. These trends underscore the urgency of addressing the obesity epidemic.

One of the goals of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was to ensure that individuals with health care coverage were able to access preventive services with no co-payments. The list of ACA mandated preventive services included screening and treatment for obesity, for children and adults. As of September 2010, the majority of HMSA's members who are children six years of age and older can receive screening and assessments for obesity.

Beyond this, the State must ensure programs and efforts to address obesity in the various agencies are coordinated. This would ensure there is a planned, targeted program to address the obesity epidemic, and also ensure that valuable resources are not misused or underutilized. Having an interagency council certainly will help to accomplish this.

Thank you for allowing us to testify in support of this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark K. Oto".

Mark K. Oto  
Director  
Government Relations