

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator David Ige Chair

February 14 at 9:05 a.m.
Conference Room 211

Commenting in Support of SB 498 SD 1: Relating to Emergency Medical Services.

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 comment in support of SB 498 SD 1, which appropriates funds for a special emergency medical response vehicle unit based in Maalaea on Maui.

The population of Maui has grown rapidly in recent years, increasing at about 7% annually, with Maalaea, west Maui, and south Maui experiencing much of the growth. Only two ambulances serve the residents of these districts. The population increase has increased the call volume, which in turn has affected their timely response capabilities. A timely response to a 911 call is critical to ensure the best possible medical outcome.

The last time new emergency medical services ambulance units were added on Maui was in 2004. This bill would fund a special emergency medical response vehicle unit modeled after successful units on Oahu and the mainland. Although it would not be used for patient transport, it would provide advanced life support services to augment the basic services of fire department first responders. It is designed to stabilize patients in the crucial initial stage of injury, illness, or cardiac arrest, and ultimately save lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of SB 498 SD 1.