



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

**SCR 0124, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE JOHN
A. BURNS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON STATES
WITH GOOD SAMARITAN LAWS AND THEIR IMPACT ON DECREASING
DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS.**

**Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Director of Health**

Wednesday, April 10, 2013, 10:00am

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health supports the intent of SCR124 but recommends
2 that efforts be directed to amending SB 394,SD1.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** None

4 **Purpose and Justification:** Poisoning is a serious public health problem across the nation and in
5 Hawaii. As noted in "Injuries in Hawai'i, 2007-2011," there has been an increasing trend in poisonings.
6 In 2011, there were 120 fatalities, 204 hospitalizations and 860 Emergency Department visits,
7 surpassing car crashes, drowning, pedestrian fatalities and homicides as a leading cause of injury
8 mortality. If all intents were considered for 2011, overdose was the leading cause of injury-related death
9 in Hawai'i with a total of 191 fatalities. It is clear that poisonings are a serious public health problem in
10 Hawai'i.

11 This measure seeks to study Good Samaritan laws from other states to determine whether there
12 were improved outcomes from poisoning episodes by encouraging those who may be affected by an
13 overdose, or those around the victim, to seek medical attention by calling 911. It has been noted that the
14 fear of arrest or prosecution may cause unnecessary deaths and bad outcomes that might have been

Promoting Lifelong Health & Wellness

1 avoided if appropriate help was sought sooner. Since Good Samaritan laws have been passed in twelve
2 other states as an effective harm reduction strategy, the Department recommends that efforts be directed
3 to addressing the amendments proposed in SB394, SD1 rather than the proposed study. A Good
4 Samaritan law that is appropriate to Hawaii's environment will help to ensure that medical amnesty is
5 effectively utilized as a lifesaving measure for individuals at risk for overdose.

6 We defer to other agencies in regards to the impact this might have on law enforcement.

7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair

Sen. Maile Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

10:00 a.m.

Room 016

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SCR 124/SR 87 - Study on States with Good Samaritan Laws

Aloha Chair Hee, Vice Chair Shimabukuro and Members of the Committees!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, community initiative promoting smart justice policies for more than a decade. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 5,800 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars, always mindful that approximately 1,500 individuals are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Native Hawaiians, far from their ancestral lands.

SCR 124/SR 87 requests the Department of Health and the John A. Burns School of Medicine to conduct a study on states with Good Samaritan laws and their impact on decreasing drug overdose deaths.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports this measure. As a coalition, we support policies that reduce harm and promote the aloha spirit. We are Hawai'i: we care for and about each other and policies that can save lives are important to all of us.

The statistics relating to overdose deaths in Hawai'i are alarming and studying states such as California, Colorado, Florida, New York, and Washington and how they addressed their problems with Good Samaritan laws will put many skeptical minds at rest. This is not a 'get out of jail free' card. It is about compassion. It is about encouraging people to do the right thing in emergency situations where time is of the essence.

We love the collaboration between DOH and JABSOM and look forward to reading the research that JABSOM has agreed to compile about this pressing issue.

Overdose deaths are preventable. The majority of drug-related overdoses occur in the presence of others and there is usually time to intervene by calling 911, performing CPR, or with an opiate blocker such as Naloxone.

Unintentional drug overdoses are on the rise¹. More than 100 people die of accidental drug overdose each day in the U.S. and drug overdose rates have more than tripled since 1990.

Fatal overdose was the leading cause of injury-related death in Hawai`i in 2011.

Overdose is on the rise in Hawaii with 183 deaths in 2011². The increase in unintentional drug poisonings has made this the third leading cause of fatal injuries among Hawai`i residents over the last five years

Hawaii's overdose rate in 2011 is much higher than national average - 13.3 per 100,000 persons. Half of the participants in Hawaii's syringe exchange program witnessed an overdose in the past two years³.

We are Hawai`i - we care for and about each other. SCR 124/SR 87 supports aloha and our way of life.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/rxbrief/>

² Hawaii State Department of Health, Injury Prevention and Control Program

³ CHOW Project 2011 Evaluation Report

hee2 - Kathleen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, April 08, 2013 3:10 AM
To: JDLTestimony
Cc: dmelloj@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SCR124 on Apr 10, 2013 10:00AM*

SCR124

Submitted on: 4/8/2013

Testimony for JDL on Apr 10, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jared Dmello	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR124 on Apr 10, 2013 10:00AM

SCR124

Submitted on: 4/6/2013

Testimony for JDL on Apr 10, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
james crowe	Individual	Support	No

Comments: SCR 124 will give us the opportunity to reach out to persons for whom just a little bit of help at the right time is life-saving, and likely life-redirecting.

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SCR124

Submitted on: 4/6/2013

Testimony for JDL on Apr 10, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Richard S. Miller	Individual	Support	No

Comments: It makes great sense to pass this resolution. Thank you! Richard S. Miller, Prof. of Law, Emeritus

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