

# S .B. NO. 2870

JAN 23 2014

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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to establish health  
2 equity as a goal of the department of health.

3           Disparities in health outcomes between populations are  
4 increasingly costly to the State, financially and socially, but  
5 are in large part preventable. These disparities often have  
6 less to do with family medical history, for example, a cancer  
7 gene passed on through generations, than to the social  
8 determinants of health, or the conditions in the environments in  
9 which people are born, live, learn, work, play, and age. These  
10 circumstances are in turn shaped by a wider set of forces:  
11 economics, social policies, and politics.

12           Social determinants of health are created and influenced by  
13 fields such as education, childcare, housing, healthcare access,  
14 law, justice, media, community planning, transportation, and  
15 agriculture. Addressing these determinants is key to achieving  
16 greater equity of opportunity for Hawaii's residents, and thus  
17 codifying health equity as a goal is a first step towards a more  
18 unified and comprehensive approach to public health policy.

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1 SECTION 2. Section 321-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 "(a) The department of health shall have general charge,  
4 oversight, and care of the health and lives of the people of the  
5 State, and shall pursue as a goal the achievement of health  
6 equity. The department shall consider social determinants of  
7 health in the assessment of state needs for health. "Health  
8 equity" means assuring equal opportunity for all people in the  
9 State to attain their full health potential. "Social  
10 determinants of health" are the complex, integrated, and  
11 overlapping social structures and economic systems that  
12 contribute to health inequities. These social structures and  
13 economic systems include the social environment, physical  
14 environment, health services, and structural and societal  
15 factors."

16 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed.  
17 New statutory material is underscored.

18 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:   
BY REQUEST

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**Report Title:**

Department of Health Goals; Health Equity; Social Determinants  
of Health

**Description:**

Establishes health equity as a goal for the Department of  
Health.

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## JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Health

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH.

PURPOSE: To establish health equity as a goal of the Department of Health.

MEANS: Amend chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS).

JUSTIFICATION: Evolution of the discipline and practice of public health encourages the Department of Health to amend the department's enabling statutes to include as part of its core mission the goal of achieving health equity, or equal opportunity for Hawaii's people to achieve their health potentials.

Health equity is the primary goal of contemporary public health strategy, known as "Health in All Policies," acknowledged by national and international public health organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This amendment compels the Department of Health to more fully address the drivers of health disparities, including the social determinants of health. These determinants consist of complex, integrated, and overlapping social structures and economic systems that are responsible for most health inequities. These social structures and economic systems include the social environment, physical environment, health services, and structural and societal factors. Social determinants of health are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources throughout local communities, nations, and the world.

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Impact on the public: More beneficial and comprehensive and multidisciplinary planning and policy-making.

Impact on the department and other agencies: Potential for better coordination of planning and resource allocation.

GENERAL FUND: None.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM DESIGNATION: HTH-907.

OTHER AFFECTED AGENCIES: None.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon approval.