



LATE

PROTECTING HAWAII'S OHANA, CHILDREN, UNDER SERVED, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

Board of Directors

*Howard Garval, Chair
Nanci Kreidman, Vice Chair
Joanne Lundstrom, Vice Chair
Jerry Rauckhorst, Treasurer
Liz Chun, Secretary
Susan Chandler
Jan Dill
Victor Geminiani
Auli'i George
Marya Grambs
John McComas
Robert Naniole
Ruthann Quitiquit
Darcie Scharfenstein
Alan Shinn
Laura Smith*

TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Josh Green, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Human Services

FROM: Scott Morishige, Executive Director, PHOCUSED

HEARING: Senate Committee on Human Services
Tuesday, March 11, 2014 at 1:15 p.m. in Conf. Rm. 016

Comments on HB1841 HD1, Relating to Homelessness

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding HB1841 HD1, which would establish the Hale Kokua program under the Housing First program within the Department of Human Services (DHS). PHOCUSED is a statewide coalition of health, housing, and human services organizations committed to strengthening policies and programs that benefit the marginalized and underserved in Hawaii. PHOCUSED supports the intent of this bill, but would like to provide additional comments for your consideration.

While both Hale Kokua and Housing First share the common goal of reducing homelessness in Hawaii, these two programs appear to have separate and distinct target populations. Hale Kokua appears to be focused at families and the working homeless, whereas Housing First appears to be targeted at chronically homeless households who often are disabled, medically vulnerable, and unable to maintain employment. We have some concerns that combining these two programs with such different target populations may hinder Hawaii's efforts to implement Housing First with fidelity to national best practice.

In addition, we are also concerned regarding the Department of Human Services' (DHS) capacity to implement and administer Hale Kokua with only one additional staff person provided through this bill. The various duties necessary to fully establish Hale Kokua may require additional staffing capacity that exceeds the current resources of DHS and its Homeless Programs Office.

Once again, PHOCUSED respectfully offers our comments regarding HB1841 HD1, and we appreciate the opportunity to testify on this important issue. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact PHOCUSED at 521-7462 or by e-mail at admin@phocused-hawaii.org.