



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
HB2320, RELATING TO HEALTH.



Testimony of Gary Gill
Acting Director of Health

February 5, 2014
8:35 AM

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) strongly supports this Administration Bill.

2 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

3 **Purpose and Justification:** The purposes of this measure are to 1) establish health equity as a goal for
4 the Department of Health (DOH), and 2) to prioritize addressing social determinants of health as a key
5 strategy in public health policy.

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7 This proposal is both symbolic and substantive. The strength of its symbolism is in the recognition that
8 an individual's ZIP code is more influential than their genetic code in predicting individual and
9 population health status. As a policy statement, this is an acknowledgement that health policy must also
10 focus on resolving root causes of health disparities in addition to the burdens caused by them, such as
11 disease prevalence.

12

13 The practical implication of this measure will be to create an expanded framework for health planning
14 by granting to DOH the authority and obligation to address a range of issues that impact health
15 outcomes, such as policies related to transportation, agriculture, taxation, and education. Future

1 Department of Health strategic plans, and State Health Functional Plans (per section 226-20, Hawaii
2 Revised Statutes) will reflect "Health in All Policies," a collaborative approach to improve population
3 health by embedding health considerations into decision-making processes across a broad array of
4 sectors.

5

6 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

7



HPCCA

HAWAII PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

LATE

House Committee on Health

The Hon. Della Au Belatti, Chair

The Hon. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2320

Relating to Health

Submitted by Robert Hirokawa, Chief Executive Officer

February 5, 2014, 8:35 am, Room 329

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA), which represents the federally qualified community health centers in Hawaii, supports House Bill 2320, establishing health equity as a goal of the Department of Health.

The HPCA is a staunch believer in the social determinants of health, those economic and social conditions that influence an individual and a community's health status. These conditions serve as risk factors endemic to a person's living and working environment, rather than their behavioral or genetic histories. Factors such as income, education, access to recreation and healthy foods, housing, and employment, can and do have measurable impacts on a person and a community, both in health and financial outcomes.

An extension of the social determinants is the need for the various entities that embody them to embrace and support health equity. For that reason, we strongly support this measure and thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HB2320
RELATING TO HEALTH
House Committee on Health

February 5, 2014

8:35 a.m.

Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB2320, which would codify a commitment to achieving health equity as a policy goal of the Department of Health (DOH), which would also be directed to consider social determinants of health in its assessment of the state's health needs.

This bill's commitment to addressing health disparities and achieving health equity mirrors the direction of health planning on the federal and international levels. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) considers health equity as a key national priority, and continuously promotes policies and programs that focus on eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities. The World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control also recognize the social determinants of health as the single most influential factor in individual and population health outcomes, more so than genetic disposition or medical care. **Accordingly, addressing the social determinants of health and focusing on health equity is a research-based health planning approach embraced by most health organizations and governmental agencies.**

Mauli Ola (Health) is also one of OHA's strategic priorities and represents our commitment to improve the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians, and to reduce the occurrence of chronic diseases within the Native Hawaiian community. Data show that Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i continue to have disparate health outcomes compared to the rest of the state population. These health disparities are correlated with social determinants of health such as housing, education, social services, leisure, individual rights, culture, and public safety. **A commitment by DOH to achieving health equity through the consideration of social determinants of health is a good policy choice that would benefit Native Hawaiians, others impacted by similar social determinants of health, and our entire state population.**

Therefore, OHA urges the committee to **PASS** HB2320. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.