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**Monday – January 27, 2014 – 1:30pm**  
**Conference Room 229**

**The House Committee on Health**

To: Senator Josh Green, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

From: George Greene  
President & CEO  
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: **Testimony in Support**  
**SB 2032 — Relating to Violence Against Healthcare Personnel**

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH) is a 116 member organization that includes all of the acute care hospitals in Hawaii, the majority of long term care facilities, all the Medicare-certified home health agencies, all hospice programs, as well as other healthcare organizations including durable medical equipment, air and ground ambulance, blood bank and respiratory therapy. In addition to providing quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing nearly 20,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2032, which increases penalties for violence against healthcare workers in hospitals, community health centers, and clinics. Healthcare workers are more than four times more likely to be victims of workplace violence than other private sector workers, and account for approximately 60% of all nonfatal workplace assaults occurring in private employment settings. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 2007.)

SB 2032 would make assaults against healthcare workers in hospitals, federally qualified health centers, and medical clinics—currently a misdemeanor—a felony with increased penalties. The legal protections currently afforded to healthcare workers in emergency departments should be extended to workers in hospitals, federally qualified health centers, and medical clinics, given the increased risk of serious assaults occurring in these healthcare settings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2032.

Testimony of  
John M. Kirimitsu  
Legal and Government Relations Consultant

Before:  
Senate Committee on Health  
The Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

January 27, 2014  
1:30 pm  
Conference Room 229

**Re: SB 2032 Relating to Violence Against Health Care Personnel**

Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this bill relating to violence against medical personnel.

**Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports this bill, but would like to offer an amendment.**

Violence against healthcare personnel appears to be on the rise. According to a U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, healthcare workers experience violent assaults at a rate four times higher than the national average. This type of violence, ranging from verbal to violent physical attacks, is becoming all too common, which negatively impacts medical personnel by reinforcing a common misconception that this type of violence is just part of the job.

Kaiser Permanente supports this bill to protect medical providers from unnecessary violence in the workplace, but asks that the scope of protection be expanded to also include unlicensed professionals, i.e. volunteers, health care assistants, medical interns/externs, who are often on the front lines providing necessary medical care and therefore, vulnerable to the same workplace violence. Therefore, we ask that the definition of “medical services provider” in paragraph (1)(f), Page 2, line 14, be amended to also include “or other licensed or unlicensed medical professional involved in the direct care of patients.”

Thank you for your consideration.