



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

SB2235 SD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION

**Comments of David Sakamoto, M.D., M.B.A.
Deputy Director, Health Resource Administration**

February 19, 2014

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) would like to provide the following
2 comments on Senate Bill 2235 SD1.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** None

4 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of Senate Bill 2235 SD1 is to connect adolescents
5 back to their healthcare provider by expanding the school physical examination requirement. Currently,
6 physical examinations are only conducted upon entry into the school system in kindergarten. SB2235
7 SD1 expands the physical examination requirement to also include entry into seventh grade. This bill
8 follows the lead of other states and Hawaii private schools who have multiple physical examination
9 requirements throughout a child's educational journey.

10 The Department offers comments in the interest of the health of our students because increasing
11 the physical exam requirement for school attendance provides a broader, systematic approach to
12 connecting children back to their primary care physicians. The policy also promotes utilization of the
13 covered preventive health benefits established by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Due to the ACA,
14 annual well child examinations are a required covered benefit in all health plans.

1 The proposed increase in the physical exam requirements is congruent with the policy priority set
2 forth by the Obesity Prevention Task Force. The Task Force, co-chaired by our late Director Loretta
3 Fuddy developed and recommended legislation pursuant to Act 269 (SB2778 CD1), Session Laws of
4 Hawaii 2012. The policy to expand physical examination requirements for public school students was
5 proposed to reinforce a culture of wellness and preventive health care.

6 Currently, the state expends \$470 million a year on obesity-related, and \$770 million on
7 diabetes- related medical costs. In 2012 13.2% of high public school students in Hawaii (2012, Youth
8 Risk Behavior Survey), and 23.6% of adults were obese (2012, Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance
9 Study). By 2030 half of adults in Hawaii are projected to be obese without effective interventions
10 (2013, Trust for America's Health). According to the Trust for America's Health, "Keeping people
11 healthier is one of the most effective ways to reduce health care costs (July 2008)."

12 The adoption of this measure entails parental and community engagement. The additional
13 physical exam requirements offer physicians and healthcare providers together with parents and
14 adolescents the opportunity to address developmentally relevant physical and mental health issues.
15 Regular visits are preventive, so health needs can be assessed and addressed early. The requirements of
16 SB2235 SD1 embraces the whole child to assure they are healthy and ready to learn.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.