



HPCA

HAWAII PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION



Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Testimony on Senate Bill 2531

Relating to Childhood Obesity

Submitted by Robert Hirokawa, Chief Executive Officer

February 19, 2014, 9:15 am, Room 211

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association, which represents community health centers in Hawai'i, **supports** Senate Bill 2351, requiring primary care physicians and pediatricians to provide an annual body mass index (BMI) measurement to patients from age two to eighteen years, an anonymous reporting of age and BMI statistics to the Department of Health, in addition to requiring health plans to cover expenses related to BMI measurement.

The HPCA believes in leading a shift from a sickness based form of medicine currently practiced in Hawaii to one of wellness. A key part of this is by instituting wellness and prevention measures into health care practice, including steps which will provide needed data to assist in developing informed public health policy.

Further, obesity is becoming more of an issue each year. In recent years, as many as one in four children in Hawaii are already considered overweight or obese, contributing to medical expenditures that totaled more than \$470 million in 2009 alone, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, body mass index is a reliable indicator of body fat.

For these reasons, and the continued physical and financial health of Hawaii, the HPCA supports Senate Bill 2351. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.