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HPCA

HAWAII PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

Senate Committee on Human Services
The Hon. Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
The Hon. Josh Green, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of SB 2525
Relating to Persons with Disabilities
Submitted by Robert Hirokawa, Chief Executive Officer
January 25, 2014, 10:00 am, Room 229

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA), which represents the federally qualified community health centers in Hawaii, supports Senate Bill 2525, which seeks to establish and appropriate funds for a state Medicaid buy-in program. The HPCA is a strong supporter of this program, as it enables individuals with disabilities to become or further pursue employment opportunities while at the same time ensuring those individuals retain full access to needed benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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SB2525

Submitted on: 1/25/2014

Testimony for HMS on Jan 25, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Scott Wall	Community Alliance for Mental Health	Support	No

Comments: To: The Senate Committee on Human Services Aloha Sen. Chun-Oakland and members of the Committee, On behalf of the Community Alliance for Mental Health along with United Self Help we would like to lend our strong support for SB2525, the Medicaid Buy In. Not only is the Medicaid Buy In a crucial link in Hawaii's Health Care Transformation it's an important piece in the recovery of Hawaii's most vulnerable population. The Medicaid Buy In is a crucial tool in allowing the disabled to attempt to return to the work force. If we want to give them a fair chance then SB2525 is critical. Scott Wall VP/Legislative Advocate Community Alliance for Mental Health



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HAWAII DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER

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THE SENATE THE TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2014

Committee on Human Services Testimony in of Support of S.B. 2525 Relating to Persons With Disabilities

**Saturday, January 25, 2014, 10:00 A.M.
Conference Room 229**

Chair Chun-Oakland and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Disability Rights Center testifies in support of this bill. While much progress has been made in the past few decades to promote the rights of individuals with disabilities, one area that has lagged behind has been the competitive, integrated employment of individuals with disabilities. While there are many factors accounting for this, one clear barrier is the loss or fear of loss of Medicaid benefits, be it the health care coverage or the home and community waiver benefits which accompany the receipt of Medicaid.

For that reason, the Medicaid Buy In Program has long appeared to be a viable option and one we very much support. This would encourage individuals with disabilities to seek gainful employment and enjoy more fulfilling, productive lives. It would also ensure that they would maintain the services that they need to successfully live in the community. We served as a member of the Medicaid Buy In Task Force that has been convened in the interim since the last legislative session. We are in general support of the efforts of the Task Force and the most recent draft that was agreed upon at the last meeting.

We would however like to state that we do feel that the current Task Force draft does not go sufficiently far with enough speed to accomplish what is needed. There is a delayed implementation date of three years and we feel that is much too long a period of time to be meaningful. Further, there is an appropriation to conduct outreach and training for the program. Frankly, we do not consider this to be the best use of state funds. We are of the view that that money should be appropriated to actually provide



the services sooner in the most cost effective, efficient way. Delaying the program for three years and spending money on outreach and training seems to miss the more essential reasons for creating this program in the first place. Nonetheless, we do continue to support the efforts of the Task Force and recognize that further discussions will occur during the legislative session, such that the bill will likely be refined as the process moves along .

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

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SB2525

Submitted on: 1/25/2014

Testimony for HMS on Jan 25, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
William Mihalke	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments: Aloha Senators, I am writing in support of the Medicaid Buy-in provision. Nearly 1,000 persons have submitted testimony in support of this measure in previous sessions. The Medicaid Buy-in allows persons with disabilities to go back to work, and to keep their needed healthcare supports, so that they remain healthy. This is ultimately a cost savings to the state, at little cost to the Mediquest Division, as a vast majority of those on the Medicaid Buy-in are already receiving Medicaid, and the State is already paying for their QExA. Furthermore, the cost of working persons with disabilities is less because their health improves by working, particularly those with psychiatric disabilities. For example, other states have documented that the smoking rate for those on the buy-in is lower when people go to work. Hawaii is one of only five states remaining in the Union that have not yet formed a Medicaid Buy-in so persons with disabilities can work, get out of poverty and have a chance to get off benefits. Mahalo for your consideration, William Mihalke

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NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



GARY L. GILL
ACTING DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

Senate Committee on Human Services
SB 2525, Relating to Persons with Disabilities

Testimony of Gary L. Gill
Acting Director of Health

January 25, 2014

- 1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health strongly supports this measure to develop a
2 Medicaid Buy-in option for persons with disabilities.
- 3 **Fiscal Implications:** The fiscal implications to the Department of Health are lowered costs for Home
4 and Community Based Services for persons already receiving services within the developmental
5 disabilities program as persons are able to be employed and less dependent upon day services. The
6 Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division may experience some increase in eligible
7 participants in this same program as the income limit is raised. However, the overall cost to the Division
8 is not anticipated to increase. The Department of Health defers to the Department of Human Services on
9 the total costs of the bill upon the Medicaid program.
- 10 **Purpose and Justification:** Employment is a key determinant of self determination and quality of life
11 for persons with developmental disabilities and a priority goal for the Department. This measure will
12 increase opportunity for persons being served by the Developmental Disabilities Division to sustain
13 employment without losing their other supports in the Medicaid Home and Community Based Services
14 program.
- 15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Promoting Lifelong Health & Wellness

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January 25, 2014

Ellen K. Awai
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TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair of the Human Services Committee & Members
Hearing on Saturday, January 25, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. Room #229

SUBJECT: Additional Testimony SB2525 with 1/23/14 Taskforce Revisions - Please support!

I am a member of Senator Chun Oakland's Medicaid Buy-In Taskforce, with a master of science in Criminal Justice Administration (MSCJA) and a bachelor in Business Administration (BBA). I am a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) with the U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, which has gone international as Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (PRA) training individuals on the integrated, person-centered recovery model. I have been a mental health advocate for over a decade, fighting for bills that are important for the disability community. But being an advocate is not helpful when you represent groups that the state agencies serve.

I heard about the Medicaid Buy-In program over 10 years ago, but Hawaii is still only one of five states that do not have this program. This was prior to becoming a member of Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services, National Advisory Council's Subcommittee on Consumer Survivor Issues. It was also before getting a job with the state's Adult Mental Health Division training people with mental illnesses to become Certified Peer Specialists for jobs in the field because of their lived experiences.

I am one of a few, who have a mental health disability, a stigmatizing label, yet testifies on bills that I strongly believe in. I risk my own personal future in finding a career because I do not want others to go through the same barriers that I have faced. I don't want to just collect benefits because of my disability, but I have experienced a lot of challenges when losing any of these benefits. Just the recent raise in the cost of living for 2014 has kicked me off of the MedQuest Quest Expanded Access (QExA) program, which assisted in paying medical bills after Medicare.

President Obama's Affordable Care Act was important for the middle class to get insurance, but many have no clue of the impact of not having health insurance on our community, where hospitals closed; homelessness increased; and emergency rooms, hospitals, jails, and prisons are so overcrowded. Instead the Medicaid enrollment for the poor increased significantly. Please support this bill, SB2525 with the changes made by the Taskforce on January 23, 2014!

Mahalo and Aloha!

Ellen K. Awai, MSCJA, BBA, CPRP, HCPS
Behavioral Health Advocate

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The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair;
The Honorable Josh Green, Vice Chair;
And
Members of Senate Committee on Human Services;

Tarama M. Fuatagavi,
Voter and Graduate Student,
University of Hawaii, Manoa
Myron B. Thompson
School of Social Work

Date of Hearing: 1/25/2014

RE: Senate Bill 2525

Position: In Support of SB 2525.

To the Chair Mrs. Chun Oakland, Vice-Chair Mr. Green and the Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to give my testimony in support of SB 2525.

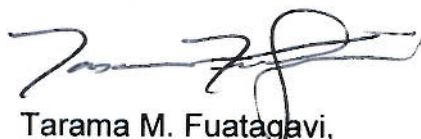
I support this bill for the following reasons:

1. ^{believe that the measure} I will help to remove the barriers to self-improvement for those suffering from disabilities, while helping to ensure that they have a means to maintain their health insurance.
2. I agree with the Legislature's finding that "a significant portion of the population in Hawaii receives federal and state benefits because of disabling conditions." and that "current programs and policies create disincentives for persons with disabilities to become employed, maintain employment, or increase their employment income."
3. I believe that the measure may empower motivated consumers by providing them with a means to improve their quality of life without fear of losing the medical insurance they need.

I agree with the purpose and intent of SB 2525. I also find that through its implementation, the Legislature will be able to determine whether to expand or amend the measure in the future. This would only benefit the people of the State of Hawaii.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,



Tarama M. Fuatagavi,
Voter and MSW Student