

SB 2531

Measure Title:	RELATING TO AGING.
Report Title:	Kupuna Caucus; Fall Prevention and Early Detection Coordinator; Appropriation
Description:	Establishes a fall prevention and early detection coordinator within the Department of Health's Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch. Appropriates \$78,555 for FY 2014-2015.
Companion:	<u>HB2053</u>
Package:	Kupuna Caucus
Current Referral:	HMS/HTH, WAM
Introducer(s):	CHUN OAKLAND, IHARA, Espero



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

Senate Committee on Health

SB 2531, RELATING TO AGING

**Testimony of Gary L. Gill
Acting Director of Health**

Tuesday, January 28, 2014, 1:15pm

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health supports SB2531, provided that its passage does
2 not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget, and offers comments.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates \$78,555 for use by DOH.

4 **Purpose and Justification:** This measure is significant as falls and fall related injuries among older
5 adults impose an enormous burden on individuals, society, and Hawaii's health care system. Among
6 adults 65 years of age and older, falls are by far the leading cause of injury-related deaths (45% of the
7 total), hospitalizations (83%), and EMS attended injuries among older adults (82%). Direct medical
8 charges for fall and fall-related injuries among older adults amount to nearly \$95 million annually, an
9 amount that could be doubled if you were to include the costs of rehabilitation and long term care. Falls
10 impact the quality of life and independence of older adults. Over half of those hospitalized from a fall
11 are discharged to a nursing facility or rehabilitation center and many never regain full independence.

12 However, falls are not an inevitable part of aging and can be prevented. The Department is
13 committed to addressing this critical public health issue and has already taken some steps to address fall
14 injuries among older adults in Hawaii. These efforts include coordinating the implementation and

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1 evaluation of the “Hawai`i Falls Prevention State Plan, 2013-2018” to prevent falls and reduce the
2 severity of fall-related injuries in collaboration with the Hawai`i Fall Prevention Consortium.

3 Considering the magnitude of falls among older adults and the anticipated increase in this age
4 group in the next 20 years to over 18% of Hawaii’s population, the current level of dedicated resources
5 for fall prevention are insufficient. The fall prevention and early detection position proposed in this bill
6 will enable the Department of Health to support a coordinated state-wide approach that is needed to
7 prevent and reduce the impact of falls among older adults. The Department requests that the \$78,555 in
8 funding allocated for the position be increased to \$81,985 to include the recently adjusted salary rate for
9 state employees. The Department is prepared to carry out the duties as described in the bill in
10 collaboration with community partners.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

GARY L. GILL
ACTING DIRECTOR OF HEALTH



WESLEY LUM, PH.D., MPH
DIRECTOR

Telephone
(808) 586-0100

Fax
(808) 586-0185

STATE OF HAWAII
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

Joint Committee on Human Service and Health

SB2531, RELATING TO AGING

Testimony of Wes Lum
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Tuesday, January 28, 2014; Conference Room 016

1:15 p.m.

EOA's Position: The Executive Office on Aging (EOA) supports this measure, provided that its enactment does not reduce or replace priorities within the Administration's supplemental budget request.

Purpose and Justification: This measure appropriates \$78,555 to the Department of Health's (DOH) Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch to establish and fill a Fall Prevention and Early Detection Coordinator position. The source of funding for this position is the Trauma System Special Fund.

The position will work closely with EOA, the Falls Prevention Consortium, and other key stakeholders to implement a comprehensive statewide program to reduce falls and their consequences. While the DOH has recognized the seriousness of the problem of falls in older adults for some time, and has implemented strategies to date, much more needs to be done. Establishing this position will assure a continued focus on prevention of falls in our community and ultimately result in longer, healthier lives for our aging population. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.