
SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WAHIAWA CENTER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH TO PROVIDE PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SERVICES TO THE MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATION OF WAHIAWA AND ITS SURROUNDING RURAL COMMUNITIES.

1 WHEREAS, the town of Wahiawa in central Oahu has a rich
2 history rooted in pineapple, tourism, and the military, but now
3 serves as a microcosm of Hawaii's challenges as it transitions
4 to a more diverse economy that can remain relevant on a global
5 stage; and

6
7 WHEREAS, approximately 43,000 individuals live in the
8 Wahiawa community, of which fifty-four percent are living in a
9 United States Department of Health and Human Services-designated
10 Medically Underserved Population; and

11
12 WHEREAS, the federal Medically Underserved Population
13 designation reflects the inadequate number of primary care
14 clinicians practicing in Wahiawa and the area's poor socio-
15 economic indicators, including that thirty-five percent of the
16 Medically Underserved Population are on Medicaid and forty-four
17 percent are at or below two hundred percent of the poverty
18 level, according to the 2010 United States Census; and

19
20 WHEREAS, the Wahiawa area includes the State's largest
21 population of active military and dependent family members, who
22 are covered by Tri-Care health insurance and must travel to
23 Tripler Army Medical Center for healthcare access, despite
24 military dependents' preference to access care in Wahiawa; and

25
26 WHEREAS, the Legislature and the Administration have
27 included Wahiawa as an area for economic growth through
28 revitalization and development of agriculture in Hawaii which
29 will increase job growth and generate more need for access to
30 healthcare; and

31



1 WHEREAS, the five elementary schools in Wahiawa are Title 1
2 schools and the percentage of students who qualify for free or
3 reduced cost lunch programs is greater than eighty-two percent
4 of the students; and

5
6 WHEREAS, in focus group discussions with the principals of
7 all Wahiawa schools, the principals have discussed substantial
8 behavioral issues and unnecessary absenteeism that could be
9 better managed if there were adequate primary and behavioral
10 healthcare access available; and

11
12 WHEREAS, the homeless population in Wahiawa continues to
13 increase due to the easy access to state benefit offices and the
14 free food services offered by area churches, but recent
15 community meetings also indicate that the homeless have an
16 increasing need for primary healthcare; and

17
18 WHEREAS, although no recent statistics exist, there is a
19 growing population of Micronesians moving into Wahiawa and like
20 other past immigrants, they are least integrated into the local
21 community and their perspective of health is intertwined with
22 beliefs and spirits that influence their state of being, making
23 the delivery of culturally competent healthcare services
24 essential for this population; and

25
26 WHEREAS, limited access and availability of healthcare
27 services in Wahiawa are increasing at a rapid pace, since the
28 scarce number of physicians available to the community are at
29 capacity, ready to retire, are not accepting new patients, limit
30 the type of insurance accepted, and cannot serve all of the
31 uninsured who are unable to pay in full; and

32
33 WHEREAS, a survey and report entitled "Wahiawa Community
34 Health Needs Assessment", by Nora Rodli, RN, a University of
35 Hawaii Manoa APHN practicum student, dated May 18, 2015,
36 describes how dire the situation has become with the following
37 data:

- 38
39 (1) Eighty-six percent of respondents seek medical care
40 outside of Wahiawa;
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- 1 (2) Only sixty-one percent have visited a doctor for a
2 routine physical examination within the past year,
3 twenty-two percent between one and two years ago, and
4 seven percent more than five years ago;
5
- 6 (3) Almost twenty percent needed to see a doctor within
7 the past year but did not do so due to cost;
8
- 9 (4) Forty-two percent reported that they delayed getting
10 needed medical care within the past year, with two of
11 the major reasons being an inability to get an
12 appointment soon enough and long wait times at the
13 clinic or doctor's office;
14
- 15 (5) While ninety-six percent have medical insurance, this
16 includes twenty-one percent on Med-QUEST, nineteen
17 percent on Medicare, and five percent on Medicaid; and
18
- 19 (6) Only fifty-six percent visited a dentist within the
20 past year, sixteen percent between one and two years
21 ago, fifteen percent between two and five years ago,
22 and four percent have never been to a dentist; and
23

24 WHEREAS, survey respondents in the same report also
25 indicated the top five chronic health diagnoses in the Wahiawa
26 community as high blood pressure or hypertension, at forty-one
27 percent; high cholesterol, at thirty-two percent; asthma, at
28 thirty-two percent; obesity, at twenty-eight percent; and
29 diabetes, at twenty-six percent; and
30

31 WHEREAS, as the only acute-care hospital serving central
32 Oahu and the North Shore, the Wahiawa General Hospital emergency
33 department often serves as the de facto primary care provider
34 for individuals in the Wahiawa population who have no other
35 access to a primary care provider; and
36

37 WHEREAS, emergency room visits for preventable and non-
38 emergency visits for chronic conditions that may be managed by
39 primary care providers expends the Wahiawa General Hospital's
40 limited resources; and
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1 WHEREAS, as reported in the July 6, 2015, Honolulu Star
 2 Advertiser, over the past year, the financially-strapped Wahiawa
 3 General Hospital was forced to restructure its Family Medicine
 4 Residency Program, cancel its Home Health and Physical Therapy
 5 outpatient programs, and reduce staffing; and

6
 7 WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii Department of Health is
 8 working with the United States Department of Health and Human
 9 Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau
 10 of Primary Health Care, to designate the Wahiawa and neighboring
 11 Waialua areas as Health Professional Shortage Areas, a
 12 designation that indicates individuals living in the area have
 13 increased over-utilization of costly emergency room services and
 14 are in greater need of multi-disciplinary care team based
 15 approaches, and a designation that may ultimately save third
 16 party payers hundreds of thousands of dollars through a decrease
 17 in use of unnecessary services; and

18
 19 WHEREAS, on behalf of and in coordination with the
 20 community of Wahiawa, in 2011, Faith Action for Community Equity
 21 launched a year-long planning effort, funded by the federal
 22 Health Resource and Services Administration, to bring community
 23 stakeholders together, assess health care and other service
 24 needs, and identify culturally competent strategies to identify
 25 if there was a healthcare access need; and

26
 27 WHEREAS, through this community organizing and outreach
 28 process, the definite need for a community health center was
 29 established and the Wahiawa Center for Community Health was
 30 born; and

31
 32 WHEREAS, the Wahiawa Center for Community Health was
 33 incorporated on January 25, 2012, and recognized by the Internal
 34 Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity with the express
 35 purpose of creating a federally qualified health center in
 36 Wahiawa to bring affordable, high quality, and accessible care
 37 to the people of Wahiawa, regardless of ability to pay and on a
 38 sliding discount scale; and

39
 40 WHEREAS, the mission of the Wahiawa Center for Community
 41 Health is: "In the spirit of Aloha and compassion, the Wahiawa
 42 Center for Community Health provides access to affordable,



1 quality health care and wellness services to promote a healthy
2 community"; and

3
4 WHEREAS, the inception of the Wahiawa Center for Community
5 Health is the direct result of a vision held by the late United
6 States Senator Daniel K. Inouye, who wanted to ensure that the
7 geographically isolated area of Wahiawa was adequately served;
8 and

9
10 WHEREAS, this vision is now considered a Senator Inouye
11 Legacy Project by the Hawaii congressional delegation; and

12
13 WHEREAS, the specific objectives of the Wahiawa Center for
14 Community Health include:

- 15
- 16 (1) Purchasing portions of the Wahiawa Medical Building,
17 which is a condominium medical building located on
18 California Avenue in the center of Wahiawa;
- 19
- 20 (2) Repurposing and renovating the initial two offices in
21 the building, which will be the Wahiawa Center for
22 Community Health initial medical clinic and
23 administrative offices; and
- 24
- 25 (3) Furnishing and equipping the renovated facility to
26 provide clinical, dental, and behavioral health
27 services and other community driven wellness and
28 health programs; and
- 29

30 WHEREAS, completion of the initial 5,700 square foot
31 facility will create the Wahiawa service area's first
32 comprehensive health care provider, and the only clinical
33 provider in the area that is truly accessible by all,
34 particularly individuals who are typically not welcomed by the
35 traditional health care system, including the uninsured or
36 underinsured, those at or below two hundred percent of the
37 federal poverty level, and others experiencing barriers to care
38 like geography and culture; and

39
40 WHEREAS, at full operational capacity, the Wahiawa Center
41 for Community Health's services will include a multi-
42 disciplinary team approach that includes primary care, including



1 pediatrics and obstetrics and gynecology, behavior health, oral
2 health care, care coordination, and on-site pharmacy services;
3 and
4

5 WHEREAS, at full operational capacity, and using standard
6 methodologies associated with federally qualified health centers
7 nationwide, Wahiawa Center for Community Health will directly
8 create about seventy full-time jobs and indirectly create about
9 another thirty nine full-time jobs, contributing about
10 \$11,000,000 annually to the local economy and about \$365,000 to
11 state and local tax coffers; and
12

13 WHEREAS, grassroots efforts over the past three years have
14 resulted in increased exposure and government support for the
15 Wahiawa Center for Community Health; and
16

17 WHEREAS, the Wahiawa Center for Community Health now has a
18 fully-functioning board of directors consisting of thirteen
19 individuals who are leaders in the community, residents,
20 volunteers, and individuals otherwise concerned about the
21 availability of primary healthcare services in Wahiawa and its
22 neighboring rural communities; and
23

24 WHEREAS, on March 10, 2014, the City and County of Honolulu
25 certified the Wahiawa Center for Community Health as a Community
26 Based Development Organization under title 24 Code of Federal
27 Regulations section 570.204(c)(1), thereby making the Wahiawa
28 Center for Community Health eligible for Community Based
29 Development Organization funding from the United States
30 Department of Housing and Urban Development, Disaster Recovery
31 Division, to carry out a neighborhood revitalization, community
32 economic development, or energy conservation project; and
33

34 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Housing and Urban
35 Development has designated Wahiawa as one of two areas on Oahu
36 that is a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area, a
37 designation given to an area where there is a demonstrated
38 commitment by residents, property owners, small businesses, and
39 other community stakeholders to forge partnerships that will
40 help revitalize their neighborhood by fostering the growth of
41 resident-based initiatives to identify and address the
42 community's housing, economic, and human services needs; and



1
 2 WHEREAS, on September 27, 2014, the United States
 3 Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, designated the
 4 Wahiawa Center for Community Health as a Rural Community
 5 Facilities Project and as such will enable Wahiawa Center for
 6 Community Health to qualify for and encumber federal Affordable
 7 Care Act funds for ongoing development and operation of a rural
 8 healthcare facility; and

9
 10 WHEREAS, in 2014, pursuant to Act 122, Session Laws of
 11 Hawaii 2014, the Legislature approved a grant pursuant to
 12 chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for the Wahiawa Center for
 13 Community Health, appropriating \$250,000 for the planning,
 14 design, and construction expenses for facility repairs,
 15 renovations, and other related improvements to the Wahiawa
 16 Medical Building; and

17
 18 WHEREAS, this body finds that establishing the Wahiawa
 19 Center for Community Health is in the public interest and for
 20 the public health, safety, and general welfare to assist in the
 21 improvement of the health care system for residents of the
 22 State; now, therefore,

23
 24 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth
 25 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2016,
 26 that this body strongly supports the establishment of the
 27 Wahiawa Center for Community Health to provide primary
 28 healthcare services to the medically underserved population of
 29 Wahiawa and the surrounding rural communities; and

30
 31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 32 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Director of Health;
 33 Director of Human Services; Director of Business, Economic
 34 Development, and Tourism; Chairperson of the Board of
 35 Agriculture; Superintendent of Education; United States Senator
 36 Mazie Hirono; United States Senator Brian Schatz; United States
 37 Representative Tulsi Gabbard; United States Representative Mark
 38 Takai; Board of Directors of the Wahiawa Center for Community
 39 Health; Board of Directors of Faith Action for Community Equity;
 40 and Chief Executive Officer of every hospital and health
 41 insurance company conducting business in Hawaii.

