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TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2015

Wednesday, February 11, 2015
8:35 a.m.

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1108 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

TO THE HONORABLE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE
COMMITTEE:

My name is Gordon Ito, State Insurance Commissioner, testifying on behalf of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (“Department”). The Department takes no position on this bill, and submits the following comments.

This bill adds a new mandated health insurance benefit requiring insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to cover the treatment of autism spectrum disorders.

Adding a new mandated coverage may trigger section 1311(d)(3) of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act which requires states to defray the additional cost of benefits that exceed the essential health benefits in the state's qualified health plan.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to present testimony on this matter.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRESSLER, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony COMMENTING on HB 1108
RELATING TO HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 2-11-15

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Deferred to legislative audit, DHS and others.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health appreciates the intent of H.B. 1108 to
3 improve the access of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) to appropriate services.

4 H.B. 1108 amends Chapter 431, Hawaii Revised Statutes to provide coverage for the
5 treatment of ASD in children, and with maximum benefits stipulated in the bill. One of the most
6 important sections on the bill is (h) "This section shall not be construed as reducing any
7 obligation to provide services to an individual under any publicly funded program, an
8 individualized family service plan, an individualized education program, or an individualized
9 service plan." This is essential as many families receive access treatment through the
10 Department of Health Early Intervention Section and school programs. These programs should
11 not stop and actually should be bolstered in many cases. This insurance benefit could help
12 families obtain enhanced services in school settings or in homes, which are important placed to
13 provide these services for many children.

14 This bill will also allow best practice, evidence-based treatments such as Applied
15 Behavioral Analysis (ABA) that have been shown to improve socialization and language of
16 individuals especially children with ASD. Treatment of ASD at an early age using ABA and/or
17 other treatments will increase the opportunity for children to develop the skills and functioning
18 needed for adult life. Improved outcomes may lessen the need for long-term supports when
19 children with autism become adults.

1 The Developmental Disabilities Division serves many adults with autism spectrum
2 disorders who have significant socialization, and language problems as well as significant
3 service needs. Most of these individuals did not have the opportunity to receive intensive
4 treatments as children. Addressing insurance coverage for children at the earliest possible age
5 will make a large impact on programs, and more importantly on the well-being of families.



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
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February 11, 2015

The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health
Twenty-Eighth Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Belatti and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: HB 1108 - Health

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD) **SUPPORTS THE INTENT OF HB 1108**. The bill requires health insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for autism spectrum disorder treatments.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (2010), about 1 in 68 children have been identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). That rate is anticipated to significantly increase within the next decade.

HB 1108 proposes to provide coverage for individuals 18 years of age and under with coverage for behavioral health treatment to a maximum benefit of \$50,000 per year and a maximum lifetime benefit of \$300,000, but shall not be subject to any limits on the number of visits to an autism service provider.

The Council believes that individuals over the age of 18 years definitely continue to progress and benefit from evidenced-based treatment and therapy. Whereas, children with ASD provided with early treatment and therapy, such as "applied behavior analysis," learn meaningful skills of interacting and coping essentially increasing their independence and preparing them for adulthood. Moreover, services provided early on may decrease or minimize long-term services and supports needed as the child becomes an adult and through the individual's lifetime. Individuals with ASD may require treatment early on and taper off as they get older into adulthood. The amount of treatment can vary according to the severity of the person's ASD.

The Honorable Della Au Belatti

Page 2

February 11, 2015

We appreciate the bill's initiative to provide coverage to individuals 18 years of age and under. Recognizing that ASD is a lifelong condition that may require lifelong services, the Council respectfully asks for your consideration to amend the bill to delete the age limit. However, should your Committee decide to set an age limit, we recommend two options for your consideration:

1. Age 26 years, which would be consistent with what children are now covered under the Affordable Care Act.
2. Age 21 years, which would be consistent with Medicaid coverage.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **supporting the intent of HB 1108 and offer an amendment** for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Waynette K.Y. Cabral, M.S.W.
Executive Administrator



Rosie Rowe
Chair

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

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Position : BCBA

Tell us where you stand on the bill : I support autism insurance.

Testimony of Phyllis Dendle
Director, Government Relations

Before:
The House Committee on Health
The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair

February 11, 2015
8:35 am
Conference Room 329

HB1108 RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Belatti and committee members thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill to mandate coverage of treatment for autism spectrum disorders.

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports the intent of this bill.

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports passage of legislation to mandate insurance coverage for individuals with an autism spectrum disorder that is evidence based and focused on the care and treatment of the patient. We believe that patients should be tested and diagnosed in accordance with the guidelines provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics. We believe that the mandate should provide coverage when it is most likely to provide the maximum benefit for the individual. In addition, we want to assure that the providers of the treatment for these individuals are appropriately credentialed and regulated because of the vulnerability of the individuals they are serving.

Kaiser Permanente has testified in favor of a mandate as described above and has sought to amend legislation which did not meet these standards without much success for the last two legislative sessions. This bill is very similar to bills heard before and still has troublesome language.

We urge this committee to defer this measure in favor of SB 791 which has received widespread support and better manages the issues related to providing insurance coverage for this mandate.

Thank you for your consideration.



February 10, 2015

House Committee on Health
Representative Della Belatti, Chair
Rep. Richard Creagan, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania St
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: In Support of HB1108

Relating to Health. Requires health insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for autism spectrum disorder treatments.

Dear Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee:

I am Lorri Unumb, Vice President for State Government Affairs at Autism Speaks and the parent of a child with autism. Autism Speaks is the world's leading autism science and advocacy organization, dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a cure for autism; increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders; and advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. Our state government affairs team has played a role in most of the now 38 states that require health insurance coverage for autism treatments. Autism Speaks is pleased to submit testimony in strong support of HB1108.

In previous sessions, Autism Speaks has testified to this committee in support of mandatory health insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorder including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). We have shared an overview of autism spectrum disorders and our national experience with autism insurance legislation. Our testimony has included a discussion of the epidemic increase in prevalence of autism (now 1 in 68); research documenting the efficacy of ABA therapy; actual claims data from states which were among the first to enact autism insurance reform laws; and the long-term cost savings and fiscal imperative of autism insurance reform.

Autism Speaks strongly supports HB1108 and makes note of the following items for consideration during the committees' deliberations:

Page 1, line 10: “issued or renewed **in this State**”

According to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, Hawaii applies mandated coverage for the benefit of its residents if the residents work for (and receive insurance from) an employer who has a branch office or principal place of business in Hawaii, regardless of whether the policy was written in Hawaii, so long as the language of the mandate supports such application. (See attached.) To prevent Hawaii residents whose policies happen to be written elsewhere from losing the benefit of this mandate, Autism Speaks recommends striking “in this State” from line 10.

Page 1, line 11: “after December 31, **2016**”

Autism Speaks recommends that the date 2016 be changed to 2015. As currently written, the bill would make coverage unavailable in the private insurance market until 2017 – nearly two years from now. Other states have implemented their autism insurance mandates in considerably less time (typically at the start of the year following enactment).

Also, Medicaid-eligible children with autism in Hawaii have access to ABA coverage now. Delaying implementation of the autism insurance mandate until 2017 will cause Hawaii families to flock to Medicaid for coverage, thereby ensuring that taxpayers are footing the bill for families who are willing and able to pay premiums every month for private coverage.

Page 2, paragraph (c):

Autism Speaks opposes artificially-drawn dollar limits (and age caps) on treatment and believes such limits violate federal law. (See Interim Final Rules Under Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, 75 Fed. Reg. 5410, 5413.)

Such limits also ensure that children whose parents pay for private health insurance receive inferior coverage to children on Medicaid, since Medicaid coverage under the Early and Periodic Screening Diagnostic and Treatment program is limited only by medical necessity and not by random dollar limits.

With regard to the age restrictions, note that autism is a lifelong condition. While more intense “comprehensive” ABA therapy to address multiple treatment goals is most commonly prescribed at a younger age, “focused” ABA therapy to address isolated maladaptive behaviors may be required at times throughout the lifespan. If the legislature decides to include an age cap, Autism Speaks recommends that the cap be set either at age 21, to be consistent with Medicaid coverage for ABA, or age 26, the age at which children are no longer dependents under the Affordable Care Act.

Page 4, line 1: “Except for inpatient services”

Autism Speaks questions whether the sentence permitting insurers to review treatment plans is meant to exclude inpatient services. (This paragraph formerly limited an insurer’s ability to review treatment plans to once a year; an annual review was felt to be insufficient for inpatient services, and that is why the introductory clause “except for inpatient services” was included. Now that the sentence no longer limits an insurer’s ability to review treatment plans, the introductory clause no longer makes sense.)

Thank you for considering my comments. We encourage the committee to pass HB1108 and look forward to working with you and the health plans to reach consensus on acceptable terms of coverage.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorri Shealy Unumb". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Lorri Shealy Unumb
Vice President, State Government Affairs
Autism Speaks

1 East 33rd Street
New York, NY
803-582-9905

Lorri.unumb@autismspeaks.org

6. MANDATED BENEFITS— States that consider other factors

STATE	Policy Issued	Certificate Issued	Insured Resides	Principal Place of Bus.	Branch Office	Other
ALASKA+	X	X				
ARKANSAS**	X		X		X	
CALIFORNIA	X			X		Majority of employees
COLORADO	X			X		
DELAWARE+	X	X	X			
KENTUCKY+*	X	X				
FLORIDA*	X	X				
HAWAII* **	X		N/A	X	X	
IDAHO+**	X	X				
LOUISIANA**	X		X	X	X	
MAINE+*	X	X	X	X	X	
MARYLAND+*	X	X	X	X	X	
MASSACHUSETTS						
MINNESOTA*	X	X	X	X	X	% of employees
MISSISSIPPI*	X	X	X	X	X	
MISSOURI+*	X	X	X	X	X	
MONTANA	X		X			
NEW HAMPSHIRE+*	X	X	X	X	X	
NEW MEXICO	X	X				
OKLAHOMA	X	X	X	X	X	
PENNSYLVANIA+* **	X					
TEXAS+ * **	X		X			
UTAH	X	X	X	X	X	% of employees
WISCONSIN+	X	X	X		X	25% certificate holders
WYOMING	X	X				
25 (11+) (11*)	25	15	13	11	11	5

+Apply different standard than applied to COA

*State reported that the application of benefit mandates would be mandate-specific.

**State filled out original survey which did not include a question about certificates and state did not otherwise indicate the application of the state law with respect to certificates issued in the state.

14 States consider issue state of the policy only: Alabama, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, West Virginia and Virginia.

1. Yes _____
2. No _____

- c. Does your state have a different rule when the insurer is insuring a plan sponsored by an association, MEWA or trust? If so, Please explain:
- d. Please provide relevant statutory and/or regulatory citation(s) for your responses:

6. Mandated Benefits

- a. In the case of an employer-sponsored group health insurance policy that is issued to a single employer that is legally domiciled in another state, would your state require an insurer to comply with your state's mandated benefits laws:

1. If the insurance policy was issued or delivered in your state?
2. If the certificate of insurance was issued or delivered in your state?

Assume the same scenario but that the policy or certificate was not issued in your state. Would you nevertheless require that the insurer provide your state's mandated benefits to its insured:

3. If the insured resides in your state?
4. If the employer's principal place of business is in your state?
5. If the employer has a branch office in your state that is the principal work location of residents in your state?
6. For other reasons not listed above? If so, please explain:

- b. Is the requirement the same as when you require an insurer to have a COA?

1. Yes _____
2. No _____

- c. Does your state have a different rule when the insurer is insuring a plan sponsored by an association, MEWA or trust? If so, Please explain:
- d. Please provide relevant statutory and/or regulatory citation(s) for your responses:

7. Forms

- a. Would your state require an insurer that was not required to have a COA in your state, but that had issued an employer-sponsored group health insurance policy to a single employer that is legally domiciled in another state to file form(s) in your state:

1. If an insured resides in your state?
2. If the employer's principal place of business is in your state?
3. If the employer has a branch office in your state that is the principal work location of residents in your state?
4. For other reasons not listed above? If so, please explain:

- c. Does your state have a different rule when the insurer is insuring a plan sponsored by an association, MEWA or trust? If so, Please explain:

- d. Please provide relevant statutory and/or regulatory citation(s) for your responses:



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February 10, 2015

Representative Della Au Belatti
Chair House Committee on Health – Hawaii State Capitol

RE: HB1108 - RELATING TO HEALTH

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Creagan, and Members of the Committee,

The 17 Community Children's Councils (CCCs) of Hawaii **strongly support HB1108** which requires health insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for autism diagnosis and treatment.

Current statistics show that about 1 in 68 children have been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) according to estimates from CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network. ASD is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups and is almost 5 times more common among boys (1 in 42) than among girls (1 in 189). Harvard did a study in 2006 that shows it cost \$3.2 million dollars to take care of one autistic individual over their lifetime, estimating costs at least \$17,000 more per year to care for a child with ASD compared to a child without ASD. Costs include health care, education, ASD-related therapy, family-coordinated services, and caregiver time. For a child with more severe ASD, costs per year increase to over \$21,000, these costs put a tremendous burden on the families with children who have ASD. The actuarial report required by Act 185, Hawaii Sessions Law 2014, estimates the cost to policy holders of providing for treatment of autism spectrum disorder through applied behavior analysis would be \$24.00 per year in 2015, or \$2 per month. This cost can be significantly lowered with early identification and treatment which allows the child to reach their maximum potential in college or in their career path and hopefully independent or assisted living.

The CCCs **supports and is thankful for the inclusion of the well-baby and well-child screenings**. This will lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment for autism thereby increasing the quality of life for those diagnosed with autism and their families, and additionally lowering the long term cost of the state. We respectfully suggest the following recommendations:

- 1) Increasing the age of intensive behavioral therapy treatment to individuals up to age 26. Young adults, including those with autism, may remain on their parents' insurance up to age 26. (42 U.S.C. § 300gg-14). However, we support the comments issued by Department of Human Services (DHS) on January 2015 that recognizes intensive behavioral therapy be provided to individuals younger than 21 years when determined to be medically necessary.
- 2) Removal of the Annual Dollar Caps. Plans may not place lifetime or annual limits for essential benefits you receive. (42 U.S.C. § 300gg-11)
- 3) Clarifying the term "autism service provider" to section (m) by adding the following:
 - a. A person licensed as a physician and surgeon, physical therapist, occupational therapist, psychologist, marriage and family therapist, educational psychologist, clinical social worker, professional clinical counselor, speech-language pathologist, or audiologist, who designs, supervises, or provides treatment for pervasive developmental disorder or autism, provided the services are within the experience and competence of the licensee. (California Health and Safety Code Section 1796.14-1796.17)
- 4) Clarifying the term "autism service provider" to the definition section (n) by adding the following:
 - a. A person, entity, or group that is certified by a national entity, such as the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, that is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, and

who designs, supervises, or provides treatment for pervasive developmental disorder or autism, provided the services are within the experience and competence of the person, entity, or group that is nationally certified. (California Health and Safety Code Section 1796.14-1796.17)

- 5) Adding in an “unlicensed level similar” to the following in California. Section ‘iii’ is particularly important because it allows the department to adopt emergency regulations for the immediate implementation of practice so services will not be delayed and 24 months for a certification of completion:
- a. "Qualified autism service paraprofessional" means an unlicensed and uncertified individual who meets all of the following criteria:
 - i. Is employed and supervised by a qualified autism service provider.
 - ii. Provides treatment and implements services pursuant to a treatment plan developed and approved by the qualified autism service provider.
 - iii. Meets the criteria set forth in the regulations adopted pursuant to Section 4686.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.
 1. The department shall adopt emergency regulations to address the use of paraprofessionals in group practice provider behavioral intervention services and establish a rate. The regulations shall also establish a rate and the educational or experiential qualifications and professional supervision requirements necessary for the paraprofessional to provide behavioral intervention services. The adoption, amendment, repeal, or re-adoption of a regulation authorized by this section is deemed to be necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, or general welfare, for purposes of Sections 11346.1 and 11349.6 of the Government Code, and the department is hereby exempted from the requirement that it describe specific facts showing the need for immediate action. A certificate of compliance for these implementing regulations shall be filed within 24 months following the adoption of the first emergency regulations filed pursuant to this section.
 - iv. Has adequate education, training, and experience, as certified by a qualified autism service provider. (California Health and Safety Code Section 1796.14-1796.17)
- This further definition is necessary because otherwise it will limit who can provide services to children with Autism. Many of the direct service providers do not have reimbursable licenses and are not “autism service providers” under the definition. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board has created a certification for this level this year in 2015.
- 6) A timeframe for the establishment of a certification program, which includes the above recommendations, should be completed with input from pertinent community stakeholders by the next session. This should be done in collaboration with the multiple state agencies impacted by this bill i.e. DHS, DOE, DOH etc. in order to meet the needs of this population in the most effective and seamless way possible.

The CCCs are community-based bodies comprised of parents, professionals in both public and private agencies and other interested persons who are concerned with specialized services provided to Hawaii's students. Membership is diverse, voluntary and advisory in nature. The CCCs are in rural and urban communities organized around the Complexes in the Department of Education.

We respectfully request your support of HB1108. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Community Children's Council Office (CCCO) at 586-5363. Thank you for considering our testimony,

Tom Smith, Co-Chair

Jessica Wong-Sumida, Co-Chair

(Original signatures are on file with the CCCO)

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Message to legislators : My name is Carla Schmidt, I am an assistant professor at the University of Hawaii-Manoa in the Departments of Special Education and the Center on Disability Studies. I am also a board certified behavior analyst (BCBA-D) and Past-President of the Hawaii Association of Applied Behavior Analysis (HABA). I am also an aunt to three children on the autism spectrum. My work and research focuses on the use of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. I am writing to you because I want to talk about autism insurance for the State of Hawaii and how it will benefit children and families with autism.

The field of ABA has over 40 years of research to support its use and is now considered the gold standard of treatment for the autism population so much so it is the only suggested form of treatment by the United States Surgeon General. ABA not only has years of research to support its use it is also a field that requires rigorous qualification regulated by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB). In order to practice as a BCBA, certifiants must possess a Masters degree, complete 270 hours of graduate level course content in behavior analysis and complete 1500 supervised experience hours under the tutelage of a seasoned BCBA.

I have worked with families of children with Autism for the past ten years and have seen first hand the benefits of providing treatment based on ABA. One family in particular sticks out in my mind. When I was working in a behavior support clinic during my doctoral program a family came to the clinic as a last resort before removing their child from their home for safety reasons. Their child was completely non-verbal and exhibited extremely aggressive behavior. Using principles of applied behavior analysis, we were able to reduce the aggressive behavior and provide the client with functional communication. These changes enabled this family a quality of life they had never experienced and allowed them to keep the child in their home.

For families of children with Autism, ABA treatment is essential and as indicated above and has the potential to change lives. The recommended dosage of ABA treatment is between 20-40 hours per week, depending on the severity of the Autism diagnosis. If paid out of pocket this treatment is extremely expensive (and financially impossible) for families. However, what is even more expensive is NOT paying for ABA treatment. We know that early intervention for a young child with autism can mitigate the need for intervention later in life. In contrast a child with autism who did not receive ABA services to accommodate his or her disability may cost taxpayers millions. In fact, cost benefit studies have shown the estimated savings per child to age 22 are about \$200,000 and to 55, \$1,000,000.

No child with Autism in the State of Hawaii should go without proper treatment due to the cost of

services. Each child with Autism should have the opportunity to excel to his or her full potential, in order to ensure this; access to ABA treatment is imperative. Autism insurance coverage can help facilitate this. I thank you for your time and for hearing my point of view on why we should have Autism insurance coverage in the State of Hawaii.

Respectfully,

Carla Schmidt, Ph.D., BCBA-D

University of Hawaii-Manoa

carlats@hawaii.edu



2/11/2015

The Honorable Representative Della Au Bellati, Chair
Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

My name is Anne Lau and I am the Clinical Director of the Autism Behavior Consulting Group clinic. I am writing to show my **SUPPORT** for **HB 1108**.

I have been working in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) here in Hawai'i for over 10 years. I have seen the difficulties that parents have had in trying to secure the services that their doctors were recommending. I have seen families cash in their life savings, sell their house, and go into nasty battles with school districts.

The scientific research is very clear (Eldevik, et.al. 2010, Rogers & Vismara, 2008, Cohen, Amerine-Dickens, & Smith, 2006, Sallows & Graupner, 2005, Howard, et. al. 2005, Eikeseth, et. al. 2002, Smith, Green, & Wynn, 2000, McEachin, Smith, & Lovaas, 1993, Lovaas, 1987) that children with autism can make substantial gains with ABA, and those that are receiving intensive treatment, defined as 30-40 hours of treatment per week for several years, can in fact lose the symptoms of autism that would have prevented them from benefiting from a general education placement, gaining employment, and living as an independent adult. Autism is treatable and families should be able to rely on their health insurance to cover standard treatments that are recommended by their doctors.

This particular bill will help so many children. The only children it will not help are the most severely impacted by an Autism Spectrum Disorder. The \$50,000 annual cap will cover less than 20 hours per week of service, which is not what a doctor would recommend for every child. Removing the annual coverage limitation would allow access to the entire lifetime limit at whatever intensity is required for each patient. This would allow treatment to be based on medical necessity.

Thank you for your time and for hearing my point of view of why you should pass HB 1108.
Respectfully,

Anne Lau, M.Ed. NCC, BCBA
Board Certified Behavior Analyst
Autism Behavior Consulting Group, Inc.



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2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear Legislators,

Ladies and Gentlemen of the House Committee on Health,
RE Bill - HB 1108

I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) since 2004 and possess Master's and Bachelor's Degrees in Special Education, and hold a PhD from University of Hawaii in Exceptionalities/Special Education with an emphasis in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

ABA is defined as the process of systematically applying interventions based upon the principles of learning theory to improve socially significant behaviors to a meaningful degree, and to demonstrate that the interventions employed are responsible for the improvements in behavior (Baer, Wolf & Risley, 1968).

There is an effective and medically necessary treatment for Autism and it is ABA, which is the only intervention for ASD recommended by the Surgeon General. When Autism is identified early and with early ABA treatment the symptoms and deficits of autism can be ameliorated and in many cases reversed. The research states that behavioral programs specifically for children with Autism should be comprised of 25-40 hours per week of individualized instruction using **ONLY** evidence-based teaching procedures and behavior reduction procedures. **The only available evidence-based teaching procedures are derived from the ABA literature (National Standards Report, 2009).**

In 2009, the National Autism Center (NAC) recommended that behavioral treatment services begin as soon as a child is suspected of having an autistic spectrum disorder. Such services should include a minimum of 25 hours a week, 12 months a year, in which the child is engaged in systematically planned, and developmentally appropriate activity toward identified objectives. What specifically constitutes these hours, however, will vary according to a child's chronological age, developmental level, specific strengths and weaknesses, and family needs. The priorities of focus should include increasing functional spontaneous communication, social instruction delivered throughout the day in various settings, cognitive development and play skills, and proactive approaches to reducing behavior problems.

ABA can be used to target teaching a variety of skills or reduction of socially significant problem behaviors:

- o to increase behaviors (eg reinforcement procedures increase on-task behavior, or social interactions);



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vs: 03/01/07



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- o to teach new skills (eg, systematic instruction and reinforcement procedures teach functional life skills, communication skills, or social skills);
- o to maintain behaviors (eg, teaching self control and self-monitoring procedures to maintain and generalize job-related social skills);
- o to generalize or to transfer well in the mainstream classroom);
- o to restrict or narrow conditions under which interfering behaviors occur (eg, modifying the learning environment); and
- o to reduce interfering behaviors and barriers to learning (eg, self injury or stereotypy).
- o Can be used with young children as well as adolescents, and young adults, as well as adult populations.

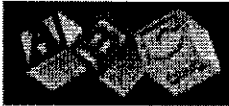
If Hawaii were to have an insurance mandate pass, this would give families the option to obtain ABA treatment for their child via their health insurer. These families would have the ability to access scientifically supported ABA services in order to make socially significant changes in their child's behavior, communication and functional skills. The progress given an intensive and well designed ABA program are astounding and life changing! And surprisingly, many children here in Hawaii have never received ABA treatment before. Especially our keiki of Hawaiian ancestry! **The cost of ABA is minimal compared to the estimated \$3.2 million over the cost of a lifetime, which is ultimately passed on to society and the tax payers who flip the bill to place these adults in residential settings that cost a fortune. That puts a dollar figure on it, but there is no way to measure the lost contributions to society of afflicted individuals if untreated.**

Many families who have children with autism are not able to live a "normal" life, because of their child's significant behavior problems. The activities they can participate in as a family are limited, which is so unfortunate to hear when families tell us they can't go to church, or to the beach, or the movies as a family, for fear that their child will have a huge tantrum or engage in life threatening self injurious behaviors in public.

There is currently no cure for autism, however disruptive behaviors and symptoms, are treatable, much like any chronic disease or disorder are treatable. Without treatment, there is little chance for leading a "normal" life. With intensive ABA treatment, some individuals with ASD actually are able to lose their diagnosis, as they may learn skills, and reduce behaviors to the extent of not meeting the criteria for ASD any longer.

Numerous scientists have reviewed the complete corpus of scientific research and have concluded that competently delivered ABA interventions are evidence-based, effective, and safe for improving functioning, preventing deterioration, and ameliorating symptoms in people with ASD. **Therefore, ABA is a medically necessary behavioral health treatment for those spectrum of disorders.**

Although I am recommending that a bill be passed, I believe it needs to be amended. Behavior analysis is a distinct discipline. **The practice of ABA is a distinct profession.** It is not the same as psychiatry, clinical psychology, psychiatric nursing, or social work. The competencies and training required to practice ABA have been identified by the profession of behavior analysis through extensive job analyses spanning more than a decade. Those requirements are contained in the standards for obtaining the professional credentials in ABA that are issued by the Behavior Analyst



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 vs: 03/01/07



Certification Board (BACB), a nonprofit organization that is accredited by the National Commission on Certifying Agencies of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. Part of the rationale for establishing the BACB credentialing programs in 1999 was to provide consumers, funding agencies (such as insurers), and governments a means to identify practitioners who have demonstrated that they meet the standards which were established by the profession for practicing ABA. To illustrate the value of this credential, the Department of Defense and Tricare recognized the value of the BACB credentials in its 2007 report on ASD, and adopted them as the principal requirements for ABA supervisors in the provider standards ABA services. Many other health insurers recognize the value of the BACB credentialing for the provision of ABA for their members, such as Cigna, Aetna, and United Behavioral Health.

Please **strongly consider** passing this bill for the sake of our keiki in Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,
Mahalo palena 'ole (for life's blessings),
Amy Smith Wiech, PhD., BCBA
Autism Behavior Consulting Group
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ABC Group
808-637-7736 (cell)
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vs: 03/01/07

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Benjamin
Last Name : Pulsifer
Affiliation (optional) : Bayada
and Street Address : 92-701 Makakilo Dr.#59
City/Town : Kapolei
Island : O'ahu
Email : bphawaii10@hotmail.com

Message to legislators: This bill would be great for many reasons. There have been many instances over the past few years where services have been reduced for financial reasons. We at Bayada are professionals who have been doing this work for years. The students that we service depend on our professionalism and continuing education to service them properly. This bill would help ensure that we would be able to continue servicing them, providing them with the consistency and expertise that they need and deserve. It would also alleviate the DOE from having to find ways to provide for these services. This could lead to them being able to provide us with more resources to do our jobs even better. Also, Autism and other physical or mental disabilities relate to the overall health and well-being of the students that we service. I believe that this is a health issue and should be covered under health insurance..

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear Legislators,

My name is Charlye Ramsey. I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and my life has been directly impacted by autism. I have a personal connection with autism in my family and I have witnessed the struggle of services not covered by insurance. I am writing in support of autism insurance reform and to share my recent experiences of receiving my Board Certification as a Behavior Analyst.

I have over 12 years experience working directly with children of all ages with autism and other disabilities. I completed my behavior analytic coursework while pursuing my Master's Degree in School Psychology. After years working as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist on both Molokai and Oahu, I witnessed the need for experienced professionals to provide applied behavior analysis (ABA) services to children across the islands. In 2012, I decided to pursue my certification as a BCBA.

The BCBA certification process is rigorous and follows high standards set by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). These eligibility standards include degree, coursework, experience, supervisor and exam requirements. To be eligible to apply to sit for the BCBA exam, applicants must hold a Master's Degree and complete approved university training. According to the BACB guidelines, "The applicant must complete 225 classroom hours of graduate level instruction in the following content areas and for the number of hours specified:

- 1 Ethical considerations - 15 hours
- 2 Definition & characteristics and Principles, processes & concepts - 45 hours
- 3 Behavioral assessment and Selecting intervention outcomes & strategies – 35 hours
- 4 Experimental evaluation of interventions - 20 hours
- 5 Measurement of behavior and Displaying & interpreting behavioral data – 20 hours
- 6 Behavior change procedures and Systems support - 45 hours
- 7 Discretionary behavior-analytic content - 45 hours."

Applicants must also receive 1500 hours of supervised independent fieldwork in behavior analysis. Applications must receive direct supervision from a BCBA in good standing with the BACB. Once these requirements are met, the applicant is eligible to apply and sit for

the exam. As you can see, not just anyone can provide ABA services. BCBA's are highly trained professionals who provide quality ABA services including assessments, programming and data-based decision making.

Please vote in support of autism insurance reform to allow access to research proven, effective ABA services for all of Hawaii's Keiki and Ohana. All our children and families deserve the right to receive ABA services.

Thank you for reading. It is my hope you have a greater understanding of the BCBA certification process.

Mahalo,

Charlye Ramsey, Ed.S., NCSP, BCBA
Secretary, Hawaii Association of Behavior Analysis

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Cherlyn
Last Name : Tamura
Affiliation (optional) : Bayada
and Street Address : 91-1029 Kama'aha Ave. #1203
City/Town : Kapolei
Island : Oahu
Email : ctamura@bayada.com

Message to legislators : My name is Cherlyn Tamura. I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst in the state of Hawaii. I support the autism insurance bill and I am ready to service those in need if this bill is passed.

I have been in this field since 2003 and have worked with over 100 of our youth and adults. Through ABA, many of the clients I have worked with have shown progress. I have many success stories to share which include taking a child who could not even nod yes or no to communicating full sentences with attributes indicating wants/needs and even commenting on what he sees through the use of an augmented device. I have seen a child who did not understand social principals who was extremely aggressive go from 2:1 (former football players) staffing down to working with just about anyone. When I released him from my service he was working with a 65 year old grandmother figure. Another child I worked with used to put his head through the drywall at school. His mother would have never imagined watching him walk the line at his graduation. He did! He even sang with his peers, looked up at his mother, smiled and waved. As I sat four rows above his mother at the Aloha Stadium I watched as she completely started tearing up.

ABA if effective and works well! Please hear our voices! Pass this bill!

Thank you!

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Chelbie'Rene
Last Name : Castro
Affiliation (optional) : Bayada Habilitation
and Street Address : 86-020 Pokaibay Bay St
City/Town : Waianae
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Email : Chelbierenecastro@yahoo.com

Message to legislators : Please pass a bill. Families of autistic children and adults deserve all the help they can get!

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting HB1108 which would mandate health insurers to fund services for individuals on the autism spectrum. I am a Clinical Psychologist and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) with more than 20 years of experience working with individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. I am currently the President and Clinical Director of Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc., a clinic that primarily serves children on the autism spectrum.

I was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii and moved to California in order to complete my undergraduate degree in Psychology. As a college freshman looking for a part time job, I responded to a parent's ad to work with a "6 year old nonverbal boy with autism." When I first met this boy, he engaged in aggressive behaviors, needed help with most of his self-help skills such as brushing his teeth and toileting, and could not communicate verbally. The parents paid privately for a consultant who taught me behavioral principles. Approximately a year later, this boy dressed, toileted, and brushed his teeth independently, learned to do his homework on the computer, and used pictures to communicate. Because of this experience, I became very passionate about learning how to effectively teach individuals with autism. I quickly realized that this 6 year old child taught me more about understanding behavior than any professor had in my psychology classes.

After graduating with my bachelor's degree, I called the President of the Hawaii Autism Society inquiring about jobs in the field of autism. He informed me that there were very few people in Hawaii with expertise in the area of autism and that if I really wanted to learn more about effective treatments in autism that it was best that I stay on the mainland. I took his advice, researched and discovered that Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) was the only evidenced-based intervention in the field of autism. I decided to pursue my doctorate in Psychology with an emphasis in Behavior Analysis at West Virginia University.

While attending graduate school, I was given the opportunity to observe first-hand how applied behavior analysis had impacted the lives of children and adults on the autism spectrum. Nonverbal children were able to develop language and sustain friendships with peers. Adults living in institutions were given opportunities to reside independently and work competitive jobs.

After approximately 10 years of schooling and training on the mainland, I moved back home to Hawaii to fulfill my dream of opening up a clinic to teach local families the power of applied behavior analysis and the impact it would have on children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. I was discouraged that the Hawaii insurance carriers did not

provide coverage of treatments for individuals with an autism spectrum disorder. One prominent insurance carrier informed me that they only provide treatment for the families to "cope" with the diagnosis.

Currently, my clinic primarily works with military families, since Tricare is the only Hawaii insurance carrier that provides treatment for ABA services. We also work with several local families who pay privately to ensure their child receive ABA services. I know of several families who have had to mortgage their homes or relocate to the mainland just to receive ABA, highlighting the social injustice in the denial of services for those on the autism spectrum.

As a behavior analyst, I was trained as a scientist to objectively collect and use data to guide treatment decisions. I urge you to do the same. Specifically, I ask that you look at the Actuarial Cost Estimate by Autism Speaks and the data on how much the state is currently spending on services supporting individuals on the autism spectrum.

Hawaii has already been fiscally impacted by Autism. Back in the 1990s, the state was hit with a \$1.4 billion dollar lawsuit. We cannot simply look at the short term costs and respond to lawsuits. The time is now to start building system wide infrastructure to ensure that people on the autism spectrum are supported both clinically and economically. The data from the 34 other states who passed similar bills should guide your decision making.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB1108 until age 21. This bill provides access to quality health care for those on the autism spectrum without forcing families to decide to relocate to the mainland, mortgage their homes or forego crucial services.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this very important bill.

Christine Kim Walton, Ph.D., BCBA-D
President/Clinical Director, Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Dallas
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Company : BAYADA
Position : Director

Tell us where you stand on the bill : I support the autism insurance bill

Is there anything else you would like to share? : I support Autism Insurance reform. I encourage all representatives of Hawaii to experience first-hand, the impact Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) can have not only on children and adults with autism, but on families, schools and communities. I'd like to address some important points that have caused this reform to fail in previous years. In the process of considering bills our legislators are often bombarded with facts, analysis and figures that may muddy the big picture. I'd like to take a moment to consider some basic approaches to the issues at hand:

1. There aren't enough qualified providers: Would we not provide chemotherapy because there weren't enough oncologists? If we pass reform, not only will we ensure we keep our current qualified providers, but will encourage our Hawaii students to stay in Hawaii and provide a service to our community. UH just began a Master's program in ABA, a majority of those graduating students will have to seek mainland employment without passage of Autism Insurance Reform in Hawaii, and our children will continue to be left behind.

2. ABA is not researched enough and BCBA's are not qualified enough: The American Medical Association has assigned CPT codes to ABA recognizing it as a Medical Treatment for Autism. The Federal Office of Personnel Management has recognized ABA as a medical treatment for Autism. TriCare our military insurance provides ABA programs as a treatment for autism to our active duty and retired military families. All of these are provided by Masters or Doctorate level Board Certified Behavior Analysts.

3. It will cost too much: 30 other states have successfully enacted insurance reform. If we refer to the actuarial study conducted by Wakely, and then note that of the 5 other states that completed fiscal studies, every fiscal projection overestimated the actual cost of autism insurance reform by 293% to 1,261%. Costs were at \$0.15 per month per member in their first year. Additionally consider the cost of not providing these services, and creating generations of Hawaii residents whom are reliant on government aid for the rest of their lives.

4. This is an educational service that should be provided by the Department of Education: Without ABA at home and in the community, it will be an educational service until the student is 22, then it will turn into a Department of Health service that turns into lifelong government support for individuals who could have been assisted and functioning independently if they received insurance based ABA services to support behavioral change.

5. Autism treatments are ineffective after childhood: Early intervention for any treatment is optimal. Applied Behavioral Analysis is a behavioral treatment, and behavior can be influenced at any age. Just as you would learn a language faster at 5 than 45, does not mean that a person is no longer

capable of learning. While early intervention is preferred, even those that are not diagnosed until their late teens and twenties have shown progress. With ABA at any age we provide individuals with autism the opportunity to become mainstreamed high school students, college students, and employable adults.

6. If we require commercial insurance to provide ABA, Medicaid will also have to cover it and the state cannot afford it. CMS has already mandated that Medicaid cover autism treatments including ABA. Our families on Medicaid will receive services while our families with employer based insurance will be left without if we do not pass reform now.

Insurances should be required to cover ABA as they would with any medical treatment, without age limits and without financial or service caps.

Thank you for your consideration and please continue to fight for the rights of Hawaii families to receive these much needed services.

Dallas Hernandez

BAYADA Home Health Care | Associate Director, Hawaii Habilitation

615 Piikoi St. Ste 602 | Honolulu, HI 96814

Cell 408-590-4268 | Office 808-597-1711 | www.bayada.com

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Derek
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City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email Address : derekp.vista@gmail.com
Company : Bayada
Position : BISS

Tell us where you stand on the bill : I support the autism insurance bill

My name is Derek Pratt I strongly support passage of Bill HB1108 which will provide insurance coverage for services for children on the autism spectrum which are not currently covered.

My life has deeply moved and affected by Autism. I have been working in the field of Special Needs since 2001 and as a BISS since 2007. I also have a Masters in Psychology and I am on track to complete classes for a (BCBA) Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

I was first introduced to Autism as a teenager during a high school community service project.

During this time, I learned basic ABA principles and assisted with the one to one duties with several students with Autism. I immediately became enamored with the Autistic population and learned first hand the power that ABA had to improve their lives.

From that experience, I continued to volunteer with special needs through Special Olympics, Big Brother, or tutoring. After receiving my Masters degree in Psychology, I began working professionally with the Autistic community using Applied Behavior Analysis. During this time, I have worked with over 100 autistic clients and their families. I have witnessed profound transformations and seen families go from hopelessness and despair to joy and connection with their Autistic children. I recall one particular case that was determine to be "high risk". This particular client had a history of intense excessive tantrums, which included biting, punching, kicking, screaming, throwing items, and destruction of property. In addition, the family reported he was unable to play games with his siblings, eat meals with the family, go out into the community, or stay with a baby sitter. His behaviors completely dominated every aspect of his family members lives. After a year of ABA services, the client was able to sit calmly through meals, play board games with his siblings, go out of town on vacation, and join social clubs. The services not only changed the quality of his life, but the quality of life for his entire family.

This is just one of a multitude of success stories I have personally participated that involved the use ABA. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to you for introducing and supporting HB1108. I appreciate your time and thank you and the committee for hearing my point of view of why you, and all of Hawaii's legislators should vote to pass HB1108.

Sincerely,
Derek A. Pratt, MA
BISS, Bayada



HAWAII DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER

1132 Bishop Street, Suite 2102, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone/TTY: (808) 949-2922 Toll Free: 1-800-882-1057 Fax: (808) 949-2928

E-mail: info@hawaiidisabilityrights.org Website: www.hawaiidisabilityrights.org

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2015

Committee on Health Testimony on H.B. 1108 Relating to Health

Wednesday, February 11, 2015, 8:35 A.M.
Conference Room 329

Chair Belatti and Members of the Committees

The purpose of the bill is to require health insurance plans to provide coverage for autism spectrum disorders. This is a very significant problem and this coverage seems appropriate for insurance policies. The whole point of insurance is to spread risk and cost among an entire population, so that disproportionate, catastrophic expenses are not heaped upon specific individuals or groups.

With that in mind, we need to realize that autism is occurring among children in epidemic proportions. According to current statistics, **one out of 110 children (1 out of 85 boys) are born with autism.** That is a staggering, alarming figure, as is the cost to those families and to society to care for these individuals over the course of their lives. **It is estimated that the cost of caring for a single individual with autism for a lifetime is \$3 million.** Evidence suggests that techniques such as applied behavioral analysis have been effective in mitigating or reducing or eliminating the effects of autism if used at an early age. While the treatments may seem costly in the short run, hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, are saved over the course of a lifetime by the early utilization of treatments.

Further, while some services are supposed to be provided via the DOE under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, in reality, the DOE has done a very poor job

of either educating or providing needed services to children with autism. Therefore, other means of providing coverage and services need to be addressed.

Inasmuch as autism is unfortunately becoming common and the costs are so high, insurance coverage is appropriate as a mechanism to spread the risk and cost amongst all of us. We note that an increasing number of states in the country currently mandate some insurance coverage for autism. Hawaii in fact is now in a smaller minority. Therefore, this would seem to be an approach to addressing this problem which has received broad support.

Moreover, we recently filed a class action lawsuit in Federal Court against the Department of Human Services to require them to cover applied behavioral analysis under the Medicaid EPSDT program. It now appears that in response to the Court case the Department has announced that it will begin to cover applied behavioral analysis services. In light of that it would seem anomalous to provide these services to our children on Medicaid and not require their provision to the children of families who are working and paying into their system of private health plan coverage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



#MALAMAOURKEIKI

I am a concerned citizen in Hawai'i and I support Autism insurance. Hawai'i is 1 of 12 states that does not provide meaningful Autism insurance coverage. This needs to change! I support Autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

By signing below, I consent for my name and opinions to be submitted as public testimony.

Name	Signature	Date
Sandi Takayama	<i>Sandi Takayama</i>	2/2/15
Patricia Kido	<i>Patricia Kido</i>	2/2/15
Jan Ohta	<i>Jan Ohta</i>	2/2/15
Patricia Inuhimura	<i>Patricia Inuhimura</i>	2/2/15
Jenna Hall	<i>Jenna Hall</i>	2/2/15
CANDI POWELL	<i>Candi Powell</i>	2/3/15
Christine Hanchano	<i>Christine Hanchano</i>	2/3/15
Deborah Carter	<i>Deborah E Carter</i>	2/3/15
Verna Ling-Roché	<i>Verna Ling-Roché</i>	2/3/15
Mandakini Goode	<i>Mandakini Goode</i>	2/3/15
Jodi Stein	<i>Jodi Stein</i>	2/2/15
Michelle Moncada	<i>Michelle Moncada</i>	2/3/15
Corinne K. Thompson	<i>Corinne K. Thompson</i>	2/3/15
Tatiana Masuda	<i>Tatiana Masuda</i>	2/3/15
Melany Savord	<i>Melany Savord</i>	2/3/15
Kimberly Nakahashi	<i>Kimberly Nakahashi</i>	2-3-15
Jay Paulowski	<i>Jay Paulowski</i>	2-4-15
Tara Sesepasa-Williams	<i>Tara Sesepasa-Williams</i>	2-3-15
MIKE GREGG	<i>Mike Gregg</i>	2-3-15



#MALAMAOURKEIKI

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Name	Signature	Date
Tiffany Masato	Tiffany Masato	2/3/15
Kapiolani Kaawaloa	Kapiolani Kaawaloa	2/3/15
Alison Hiza	Alison Hiza	02/03/15
Paula Beachia	Paula Beachia	2/3/15
Bridget Reynolds	Bridget Reynolds	2/03/15
Adria Matsumura	Adria Matsumura	2-3-15
Paul Wooda	Paul Wooda	2-3-15
Sheri Fujii	Sheri Fujii	2-3-15
Jessica Thadall	Jessica Thadall	2/3/15
Ronnelle Nijy	Ronnelle Nijy	2/3/15
Ryan Gonzales	Ryan Gonzales	2/3/15
Jeanne Fukuoka	Jeanne Fukuoka	2/3/15
Laurie Soyann	Laurie Soyann	2/3/15
Virginia D'Amato	Virginia D'Amato	2/3/15
Karen Yamamoto	Karen Yamamoto	2/3/15
Carolyn Taguchi	Carolyn Taguchi	2/3/15
GERIE NAKAMURA	Gerie Nakamura	2/3/2015
Albert Grande	Albert Grande	2/3/2015
Gina Antonic	Gina Antonic	2/3/2015



#MALAMAOURKEIKI

I am a concerned citizen in Hawai'i and I support Autism insurance. Hawai'i is 1 of 12 states that does not provide meaningful Autism insurance coverage. This needs to change! I support Autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

By signing below, I consent for my name and opinions to be submitted as public testimony.

Name	Signature	Date
Sharon Quitevis		2/3/15
Lois Soto		2/3/15
Arlene Sato		2/3/15
Geoffrey Soto		2/3/15
Sara Sato		2/3/15
Stephanie DeVries		5 Feb 2015
JEREMIAH DEVRIES		5 FEB 2015
Shannon Ching		2/5/15
Lindsay Jones		2/5/15
Joni Wong		2/5/15

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear Senators, Representatives, and Committee Members,

I am the owner of KJN Corporation, a small business in Hawaii, and I am writing to ask you to support autism insurance coverage, HB1108. Currently in Hawaii, children with autism are not covered under medical insurance therefore families are forced to incur the cost of expensive treatments.

I have been a small business owner for over 20 years, and I have been faced with incurring increasing insurance premiums through the years. While every business owner does not like to see premiums increase, I understand the increase is small and I also understand the impact this bill will have on the state and will likely reduce costs long term. In addition, working parents are often forced to leave their jobs or take time off in order to support their children at home. I believe that as the prevalence of autism increases, more and more employees will need to make difficult choices about remaining employed or taking time off to care for their children. The disruption in business operations because of employee turnover, low morale and repeated leaves is unquantifiably high.

Studies show that, with proper intervention such as Applied Behavior Analysis, almost 50% of children with autism make substantive gains and may enter first grade indistinguishable from their peers.

As a business owner, I support HB1108. At some point we need to balance what is right to simply looking at the costs.

Sincerely,

Jeong Nam Kim
President KJN Corporation

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health
HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Liane
Last Name : Chu
Affiliation (optional) : Bayada
and Street Address : 45-357 Nakuluai St.
City/Town : Kaneohe
Island : Oahu
Email : liane_chu@yahoo.com

Message to legislators : I have been working with children, adolescents, and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders for 10 years. In that short amount of time, I have seen first-hand how much the treatment of Autism has changed, and improved, as the practice of ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) has become more wide-spread in Hawaii.

Research shows that ABA is a scientifically proven method of treating people with Autism. It does not cure Autism, as there is no cure for Autism, but ABA therapy improves the quality of life of people with Autism by teaching them how to replace inappropriate behaviors with functionally-equivalent appropriate behaviors and by teaching them communication, social, and functional skills in a systematic way.

I work in various settings as a BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst). I work in several public schools under a DOE contract, and I also work in home and community settings under Tricare contracts. While the value of ABA in schools is tremendous, every child with Autism within the DOE system does not receive ABA therapy. As a parent of two children who have received special education services through the state, I can honestly say that acquiring and maintaining appropriate services for special needs children is often a difficult and sometimes heart-breaking task. What I have experienced through my work with Tricare contracts is access to ABA therapy for all children with Autism. Parents do not have to fight for services for their children; they receive what they need. Imagine how much better life would be for families if all children simply were given the services that they needed...

Even when ABA is provided in a public school setting, it is important to remember that the environment is so constrained that programs that are truly ABA-based are difficult and almost impossible to create and sustain. Teachers need to integrate common core curriculum, GLOs, state assessments, and alternate assessments into a daily schedule, leaving far too many ways for providers to have to stray from a true ABA-based program. What I have experienced under Tricare contracts are faster rates of acquisition and faster generalization of skills, often due to the ability of therapists to implement true ABA programs. Imagine how much faster and quicker children with Autism would progress if they all received ABA therapy through private insurance.

How can you deny children and their families the right to receive a scientifically proven method of treating Autism? How do you say "no" to a better quality of life to children who already have the odds stacked against them?

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Bernadine
Last Name : Ranger
Affiliation (optional) : Horizons Academy
and Street Address : Paia
City/Town : Paia
Island : Maui
Email : branger64@gmail.com

I am a support worker at Horizon's academy on Maui. I support autism insurance and am ready and willing to help.

Committee on Health
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI

Dear Representatives:

My name is Sheena Garganian, and I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and have been in this field for the past 5 years. I am writing to you to discuss my support for HB 1108, which will propose coverage of applied behavior analytic (ABA) services for individuals with autism. I am a provider at Malama Pono Autism Center (aka Family Support Center of Hawaii), in Mililani. I work with individuals with Autism and witness the challenges these individuals, and their families, face everyday. My role is to provide them with the supports by teaching them functional and meaningful skills to improve their quality of life.

One (out of many) significant goal for the individuals impacted by Autism is for them to be able to demonstrate and maintain these skills across all areas of their life (school, home, community), including any transitions such as from special education classroom to mainstream setting, elementary into middle school, moving into a new home/state, from middle school to high school, changes in family dynamic, changes that come with age/maturity or transition into adulthood. The transition in any individual's life is ever changing. Imagine what it would be like for someone impacted with Autism? For them to be able to achieve this requires ongoing support of behavior analytic services. ABA does not stop at an age cap. There are new challenges that any individual faces as they get older.

The research is clear and evident, as has been thoroughly discussed and evaluated in prior sessions. And still, applied behavior analysis is the most effective treatment for individuals with autism. With ABA, it's not just subjective, we have the data to prove and measure progress. Being in this field, I witness the growth and progress everyday. Waiting is only affecting our families and the future of Hawaii. Now is the time to make the change to do what's right for the children and families impacted by Autism in the state of Hawaii.

Respectfully yours,

Sheena Garganian, M.S., BCBA
Clinical Supervisor
Malama Pono Autism Center
Family Support Center of Hawaii



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
919 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 101
Honolulu, HI 96814
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

February 11, 2015

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Ivalee Sinclair, *Chair*
Ms. Martha Guinan, *Vice
Chair*

Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta
Dr. Tammy Bopp
Dr. Robert Campbell
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Ms. Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen,
liaison to the Superintendent
Ms. M.J. Dorsey
Ms. Gabriele Finn
Ms. Jenny Gong
Ms. Natalie Haggerty
Ms. Barbara Ioli
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Ms. Deborah Kobayakawa
Ms. Bernadette Lane
Ms. Dale Matsuura
Ms. Stacey Oshio
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Ms. Barbara Pretty
Ms. Kau'i Rezentes
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. Patricia Sheehey
Mr. Tom Smith
Ms. Lani Solomona
Dr. Daniel Ulrich
Dr. Amy Wiech
Ms. Jasmine Williams
Ms. Susan Wood

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Committee on Health
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 1108 - RELATING TO HEALTH

Dear Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **strongly supports** the intent of HB 1108 that mandates health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

SEAC finds the coverage in the bill congruent with current best practice in treating children and adolescents on the autism spectrum including:

- ✓ well-baby and well-child screening to identify children with autism at the earliest opportunity;
- ✓ extending eligibility to children through high school, and
- ✓ establishing an annual cap that allows for the intensity of behavioral services found to provide the best evidence of support in treating the symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

SEAC's one concern is that this bill appears not to provide coverage of services until January 1, 2017. We ask that consideration be given to implementing coverage by January 1, 2016 to offer children and families access to the services that are crucial to their progress toward academic, social and behavioral goals.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Ivalee Sinclair, Chair



AUTISM SOCIETY

Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism

Hawaii



COMMENTS ON H.B. 1108, RELATING TO HEALTH

Wednesday, February 11, 2015, 8:35 a.m., Conference Room 329

February 10, 2015

The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committees:

This Bill purports to enact cost-sharing legislation similar to laws enacted in more than thirty States to require health insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for autism diagnosis and treatment. In fact, **Sections 2(i) and 3(i) defeat that purpose and would make the Bill inapplicable to autism.**

I. Actuarial Report - Cost of Autism Insurance Coverage

The actuarial report required by Act 185, Hawaii Session Laws 2014, estimates that the cost to policyholders of providing for treatment of autism spectrum disorder through applied behavior analysis would be \$24.00 per year in 2015, or \$2 per month. The total cost to 362,000 policyholders (specified in Appendix D, page 2, of Wakely's actuarial report) would be, therefore, \$8,688,000 per year.

The entire cost should be passed on to policyholders, but as explained in Section III below, Sections 2(i) and 3(i) of this Bill provide that the mandate of autism treatment would not apply to any insurance issued in this State. The Bill, therefore, would accomplish nothing.

II. Need for Additional Funding of Autism Treatment

1. In the past 20 years, the prevalence of autism has increased dramatically from 1 or 2 in 10,000 to a current estimate from the Centers for Disease Control of 1 in 68 (Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (2010)). The reasons for the increase are unknown, since the underlying causes are mostly unknown and appear to be multiple in nature. We know that increased awareness accounts for about one-third of the increase, but the remaining two-thirds is genuine. One of the problems in determining the actual increase is we have tended to rely on routine data from physicians and educators which will give us an underestimate of the issue.

2. In addition to the dramatic increase in cases, combined with our ignorance of the causes and the degree of impairment autism causes, we are looking at a dramatic rise in the costs of life-long care for those affected by autism. The best estimate of the lifetime costs of autism (done by the Harvard School of Public Health) is \$3.2 million per person, or \$320 million for every 100 young people who are likely to meet this cost due to the inadequacy of treatment. These costs are shared by parents and state agencies, but the majority of the costs are state based, as they arise between the years after the completion of schooling at age 22 and 50+ years of dependent care.

3. This worrisome increase in autism is mostly a new social condition - what we know about the symptoms and causes show that society has not faced this condition before, which is why we are so unprepared. Because of this there has been a dramatic increase in research by the federal government and many private groups such as Autism Speaks. However promising this sounds, we are still stuck with an unknown number of years of an extremely expensive condition.

4. What we do know about causes and treatment is that autism is a neurologic condition in which the inner connections in the brain are mis-wired. This is a physical fact, so it does not respond to the usual medical treatments like medications and surgery. The reason for this is that the brain is a different organ than the heart, lungs, kidneys, etc. Brain function is based on our experience with the environment. Thus, correction of mis-wiring requires corrective changes in the child's life experience. These changes require intensive exposure to positive, corrective social behavior and language experience. This is why medical insurance has previously not covered these social and language treatments, seeing them as 'habilitative'. However, current neuroscience, genetics and brain imaging all point to the benefits of the kind of behavioral and social-language treatments that this Bill is proposing. There is also abundant evidence-based data showing that these treatments are effective and do reduce long-term impairment. What's important is that the earlier autism is diagnosed and given effective treatment, the better is the outcome and the less the financial impact on families and the state.

5. The reason that universal insurance coverage for autism treatments is so important is the fact that it involves all social and ethnic groups. Thus, insurance needs to be broad-based. Fortunately, the experience of 30+ other states shows that autism insurance causes a very small increase in insurance costs given the broad base of the condition.

III. No Appropriation of State Funds Required

In a message transmitting the actuarial analysis by Wakely Consulting Group, the Insurance Commissioner stated that Section 1311(d)(3) of the Patient Protection and

Affordable Care Act of 2010 (“PPACA”), 42 U.S.C. § 18031(d)(3), would require the State to fund the cost of any autism treatment mandate if it is in addition to the ten “essential health benefits” specified in PPACA Section 1302(b), 42 U.S.C. § 18022(b). That is not the case with the insurance coverage mandated by this Bill.

This bill would mandate insurance coverage for (1) behavioral health treatment; (2) pharmacy care; (3) psychiatric care; (4) psychological care; and (5) therapeutic care. Section 2(n) (“treatment for autism”).

- Items (1), (3), and (4) are not in addition to the PPACA’s “essential health benefits” because they are included in “Mental health ... services, including behavioral health treatment.” 42 U.S.C. § 18022(b)(1)(E).
- Item (2) is included in “Prescription drugs,” also an essential health benefit. 42 U.S.C. § 18022(b)(1)(F).
- Item (5) includes speech pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and social worker care. Those are “Rehabilitative and habilitative services,” also essential health benefits required by the PPACA. 42 U.S.C. § 18022(b)(1)(G).

The Insurance Division says that the State would be responsible for the cost of autism treatment because it is not provided by Hawaii’s “benchmark plan” (HMSA’s Preferred Provider Plan), but the PPACA allows the State to pass on to policyholders the cost of services that exceed the ten “essential health benefit” categories specified in the ACA, “*and the items and services covered within the categories.*” 42 U.S.C. §18022(b)(1). The ACA does *not* require the State to pay for services in addition to the benchmark plan if they are within the essential health benefit categories. The State should not be required, therefore, to defray the cost of services mandated by this bill.

Sections 2(i) and 3(i) of this Bill provide that the Bill does not apply to “non-grandfathered plans” that are required to include “essential health benefits.” All health insurance must include essential benefits, however, and autism treatment is not included in the benchmark plan. The Bill would not apply, therefore, to autism treatment, which defeats its purpose. **Sections 2(i) and 3(i) should be omitted.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Deller, J.D.
Legislative Committee



National Association of Social Workers Hawai'i Chapter

Date: February 10, 2015

To: House Committee on Health
Chair Representative Della Au Belatti
Vice Chair Representative Richard P. Creagan

From: Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LSW-Executive Director NASW-Hawai'i

The National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter (NASW) strongly supports House Bill 1108 WITH AMMENDMENTS, relating to Mandatory Health Insurance Coverage; Autism Spectrum Disorders

We strongly support the requirement for coverage for treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorder Requires health insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for autism spectrum disorder treatments.

We would like the bill as currently stands to include treatment by Licensee Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) and the bill to read as follows:

"Behavioral health treatment" means evidence-based counseling and treatment programs, including applied behavior analysis, that are: (1) Necessary to develop, maintain, or restore, to the maximum extent practicable, the functioning of an individual; and (2) Provided or supervised by a board certified behavior analyst or by a licensed psychologist or *clinical social worker* so long as the services performed are commensurate with the psychologist's or social worker's formal university training and supervised experience."

LCSW level Social Workers are providers of behavioral health and should be included in the language of this bill.

Sincerely,

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LSW
Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair and Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
The House Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Autism Spectrum Disorders

Committee Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Sara Sato. I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA™). I have been certified as a behavior analyst from the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB™) for the past 4 years, and have been working with keiki with autism for the past 16 years.

Currently, I work as a Consulting Behavior Analyst for Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc. (BANKO) and as Legislative Co-Chair for the Hawai'i Association for Behavior Analysis (HABA). On behalf of HABA, we support HB 1108 with slight revisions.

First, thank you for introducing this bill and continuing the conversation on autism insurance reform here in Hawai'i.

Secondly, I would like to review a few facts for the committee(s).

- 1) Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) affects 1 in 68 children in the US, 1 in 52 boys
- 2) The only evidenced-based effective treatment is applied behavior analysis (ABA)
 - a. ABA is endorsed by the US Surgeon General, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and many other reputable agencies and experts.
 - b. ABA is recognized by the American Medical Association (AMA)
- 3) 38 States in the United States have passed meaningful Autism Insurance Mandates.
 - a. 12 States remain.
 - b. Hawai'i is the last democratic state remaining.
- 4) Behavior analysts are being reimbursed for their services as CERTIFIED professionals
 - a. Request or "requirements" for licensure have been used as stall tactics in other states
 - b. The process for developing state licensure will require several years
 - c. 18 states license behavior analysts and 1 state, Ohio, credentials behavior analysts at the state level.
 - d. All states that require licensure, accept the BACB credentials (BCBA-D™, BCBA™, BCaBA™)
- 5) Imposing an age cap conflicts with the mental health-parity law
 - a. Imposing dollar caps may conflict with intention of the affordable care act (ACA)
 - b. Medicaid (the state of Hawai'i) has released a memo extending services through age 21.
 - c. If Medicaid provides more comprehensive coverage than the private insurance plans, what is to stop families from quitting their jobs so their children will qualify for services under Medicaid?

The question no longer remains "**will** Hawai'i pass an autism insurance mandate" but "**when** will

we pass meaningful autism insurance reform". We know it's the right thing to do, from a humanistic as well as a financial perspective. Waiting does damage to individuals affected with autism, their families, schools, and communities. Waiting misses valuable teaching opportunities. Waiting is something our keiki simply can't afford to do. We are asking you to do what's right and #MalamaOurKeiki.

Mahalo for the discussion on autism insurance reform in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara Sato".

Sara Sato, M.Ed., BCBA
Legislative Co-Chair, Hawai'i Association for Behavior Analysis

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
REP DELLA AU BELLATI, CHAIR
REP. RICHARD P. CREAGAN, VICE CHAIR

Jeffrey D. Stern, Ph.D.
Licensed Clinical Psychologist
1833 Kalakaua Ave. Suite 908
Honolulu, HI 96815

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Chair Bellati, Vice Chair Creagan, and esteemed members of the House Committee on Health, in regards to HB 1108 that require health insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to provide health care coverage and benefits for autism spectrum disorders, Hawaii Psychological Association is in support of this bill as it addresses a serious need for coverage that insurers in the State of Hawai'i should bear. There are, however, several components of the proposed legislation that warrant further consideration and (perhaps) revision.

It is not necessary to review facts and opinions as this legislation has been proposed in previous sessions and ample testimony has been submitted. Concerns regarding the increasing prevalence rate of ASD, similar laws passed in most other states, costs to society for covering and for not covering these services, arbitrary age restrictions not supported by research evidence, potential legal challenges associated with mental health parity law requirements, reevaluation requirements every time the DSM is updated, the need for and type of background checks providers should be subject to, have been delineated in testimony provided in previous years and this year by other testifying organizations and individuals. Hawaii Psychological Association echoes these concerns.

Therefore, Hawaii Psychological Association offers what it hopes will be complementary testimony for consideration.

First, we have noticed that definitions for what constitutes treatment for Autism and what should not be considered autism treatment under this legislation are not clearly delineated. Hawaii Psychological Association therefore recommends the following language. Please note the A(1) is currently the language in the proposed legislation while sections A(2), A(3) and B(1) are proposed additions:

A. Practice of "Applied Behavior Analysis" means:

(1) The design, implementation, and evaluation of instructional and environmental modifications based on scientific research and the direct observation and measurement of behavior and the environment to produce socially and clinically significant improvements in human behavior; (currently in the legislation)

(2) Empirical identification of functional relations between behavior and environmental factors known as function assessment and analysis; and

(3) Utilization of contextual factors, motivating operations, antecedent stimuli, positive reinforcement, and other consequences to assist individuals in developing new behaviors, increasing or decreasing existing behaviors, and emitting behaviors under specific environmental conditions.

B. Practice of "Applied Behavior Analysis" does not include:

(1) Psychological testing, diagnosis of a mental or physical disorder, neuropsychology, psychotherapy, cognitive therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, sex therapy, psychoanalysis, hypnotherapy, or counseling as treatment modalities.

Second, although Board Certified Behavior Analysts are recognized experts in Applied Behavior Analysis, the vast majority of research that has been and is being conducted and reported in the scientific literature has been directed and conducted by psychologists, not doctors of Board Certified Behavior Analysis. Not to seek the input of the Hawaii Psychological Association in the development of this proposed legislation seems to suggest an attempt by some organizations to promote divisiveness where none should exist. Licensed BCBAs and appropriately trained and licensed ABA providers including psychologists, psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, clinical social workers, etc. stand to benefit from collaboration and inclusion in this legislation in that it will promote interdisciplinary exchange as well as a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the inextricable nature of the disciplines in the care of children with ASD and their families.

Third, it seems that the licensure requirement currently in the proposed legislation, which BCBA organizations oppose, is both unavoidable and justified. BCBAs should be held to the same level of accountability as all of the other properly trained and credentialed professionals listed as prospective providers in this legislation. Insurance companies have the right to expect this and organizations opposing this requirement do so for reasons not supported by evidence.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my mana'o.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey D. Stern, Ph.D.

HMSA



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

February 9, 2015

The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Richard P. Creagan, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Health

Re: HB 1108 – Relating to Health

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Creagan and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB 1108 which provides for coverage for autism spectrum disorder services. HMSA opposes this Bill, but we offer comments.

HMSA is empathic to the concerns that this Bill seeks to address. That is why we were most appreciative of the 2014 Legislature authorizing the Insurance Commissioner to commission an actuarial study of this coverage mandate. The Commissioner's "Report of the Actuarial Analysis of the Projected Costs of Providing Insurance Coverage for the Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders" attempts to get a grasp on the financial impact of this mandate. The actuary estimated that, if such a mandate were to be in place in 2015, the financial impact would be between \$17 to \$31 per member per year, or \$1.44 to \$2.56 per member per month.

We are concerned that the current draft of HB 1108 does not address many of the concerns we raised in similar legislation considered by prior Committees. That said, we suggest the Committee may consider reviewing SB 791, should it ultimately be referred to the Committee. It addresses many, but not all, of the concerns we raised in the past.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this Bill, and we ask that you consider our suggestion in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JD", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jennifer Diesman
Vice President
Government Relations



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the House Committee on Health
Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at 8:35 A.M.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol**

RE: HOUSE BILL 1108 RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Creagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber") would like to **express concerns** regarding HB 1108, which requires health insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for autism spectrum disorder treatments.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing over 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

We understand and support the intent to help those with autism spectrum disorders. We also appreciate the advocates of this legislation fine tuning the bill from issues raised in prior hearings.

At the same time we have some concerns. First, is the varied projected cost. While we recognize there were some different actuarial assumptions the projected cost between the projections by Wakely and the projections by Oliver Wyman was over 50% more. This concerns us as no one has a clear idea of the true cost of this mandate.

Second, is the timing of the mandate. It is our understanding that filings for the following year rates are submitted to Commissioner the prior spring. While the start date is blank, other dates suggest a timetable of next year. How will this work and how will employers see the increase in their premiums? In addition, what is the mechanism – both in process and appropriation – for the state's share to be paid under ACA, as this is a new mandate?

Third, is the issue of licensure. The bill states that licensure will be handled by Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc. We have some concerns that the state would allow an outside non-profit to designate approval for reimbursement. Also, this provision is at odds with the usual requirement of the Auditor to conduct a sunrise review of new licensed professions.

Lastly – as always, we have concerns on mandating new benefits. On average, ninety percent of the cost of an employee's health care premium is paid for by the employer. Many employers would be unable to pass this new cost onto the consumer. For those that will pass it on in their prices, it will affect their business, their employees and their customers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the House Committee on Health
Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at 8:35 A.M.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol**

RE: HOUSE BILL 1108 RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Creagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber") **cannot support** HB 1108, which requires health insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for autism spectrum disorder treatments.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing over 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

We understand and support the intent to help those with autism spectrum disorders. We also appreciate the advocates of this legislation fine tuning the bill from issues raised in prior hearings.

At the same time we have some concerns. First, is the varied projected cost. While we recognize there were some different actuarial assumptions the projected cost between the projections by Wakely and the projections by Oliver Wyman was over 50% more. This concerns us as no one has a clear idea of the true cost of this mandate.

We do appreciate the timing of the mandate as it will give some time for both the plans to file their projected increase and employers to prepare for this new cost. We do have concerns on what will be the mechanism – both in process and appropriation – for the state's share to be paid under ACA, as this is a new mandate.

Lastly – as always, we have concerns on mandating new benefits. On average, ninety percent of the cost of an employee's health care premium is paid for by the employer. Many employers would be unable to pass this new cost onto the consumer. For those that will pass it on in their prices, it will affect their business, their employees and their customers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



February 5, 2015

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Richard Creagan, Vice Chair

Fr: Ron Brandvold, CEO

Re: Support the Intent of HB 1108, RELATING TO HEALTH

For over 60 years, Easter Seals Hawaii has provided exceptional, individualized, family-centered services to empower infants, children, youth and adults with disabilities or special needs to achieve their goals and live independent fulfilling lives. Easter Seals Hawaii is a statewide CARF accredited organization with 15 facilities from Waimea, Kauai to Hilo, Hawaii providing a variety of programs including Autism Services. These services include Applied Behavior Analysis /Verbal Behavior-Based Therapy, Speech/Language Pathology, Assessment, Training, Education and Consultation.

Easter Seals Hawaii strongly supports mandated coverage for services to individuals within the Autism Spectrum and therefore supports the intent of HB 1108 and offers the following recommendations:

1. Amend the Age Limitation
To adequately address the needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum, amend the mandated benefit age cap to provide medically necessary services through age 21 to encompass the EPSDT as well as the IDEA eligibility range.
2. Address the Issue of Licensure
Without the provisions for licensure, access to BCBAs and therefore services will continue to be severely constricted. Easter Seals Hawaii welcomes the opportunity to work with this Committee and other community stakeholders to address this issue.

Thank you for your leadership and willingness to collaborate to address this urgent need. Lastly, thank you for your time and consideration.

Committee on Health
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
02/11/2015
Conference room 329
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Berentania St

HB1108 Relating to Health (Autism Spectrum Disorders)

February 11, 2015

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee on Health:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB1108 for **strongly support with revisions**. My name is Kristen Koba-Burdt and I am Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). For several years, I have worked with individuals with autism on Maui, Oahu, and the Big Island. Similarly, I have submitted testimony and supported efforts to pass meaningful autism insurance reform in Hawaii, for several years. Each year, I've watched as more and more children receive insufficient or no early intervention services and enter the DOE far behind their peers. Sadly, this trend continues and children with autism slip farther and farther away from their neurotypical peers. As of today, 38 states, the District of Columbia, and the US Virgin Islands have all passed autism insurance reform and have helped the children of their area **gain access to medically necessary treatment. It's time to do the right Hawai'i.**

While I appreciate the intent of HB1108, **limiting services to age 18 does not meet the needs of our state**. As evidenced in the actuarial study commissioned from last year's bill, SB2054, children in Hawai'i are diagnosed on average after their 4th birthday. In my experiences, neighbor island children receive even later diagnosing and a significant delay, or no access to services. I have worked with numerous children in intermediate and high school that have not yet acquired a functional way to communicate, are not able to perform activities of daily living independently, and need assistance round the clock for safety. These 18, 19, 20 and 21 year old individuals with autism can, and do, benefit from Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services. I have seen first-hand, clients make significant progress in their adolescent and young adult years. This progress not only improves the quality of life for the child, but also for their ohana. All families deserve access to medically necessary treatment. I encourage you to **match Medicaid and increase the age to 21**.

There are numerous service providers in this state that are ready and willing to provide medically necessary ABA services. With over 100 BCBA's, BCBA-Ds, and BCaBA's and a newly established program at the University of Hawai'i, the state is ready now, more than ever to help Hawai'i's keiki.

Autism rates have continued to soar. Currently 1 in 68 children are diagnosed with autism. The need for treatment has never been greater. Children with autism can make significant gains, when allowed access to the appropriate level of treatment. **Please allow Hawai'i children their right to effective treatment by passing this bill.**

Malama our keiki,



Kristen Koba-Burd, M.S., BCBA
Vice-President, Hawaii Association for Behavior Analysis (HABA)
Behavioral Services Manager, BAYADA Habilitation—Maui
kkoba-burd@BAYADA.com

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2015 10:55 AM
To: HLTtestimony
Cc: Awai76@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1108 on Feb 11, 2015 08:35AM

HB1108

Submitted on: 2/9/2015

Testimony for HLT on Feb 11, 2015 08:35AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha Representatives! Please support HB1108 for the Autism spectrum. Although autism seemed to be in the news in the last few years, a close friend I've known for over 15 years from the Diamond Head Life Skills program recently shared her story. Although she had the symptoms of other serious mental illnesses, she was never able to stay in treatment and was labeled non-compliant to treatment and "released" from several programs. She has since moved to Seattle, WA and has finally diagnosed correctly with autism after 25 years. She could verify this with state Department of Education records and family accounts. She should have been diagnosed with Developmental Disability in elementary school, but no one caught it. Sadly I have met many individuals in Hawaii "fall through the cracks" and could not get the correct treatment. Previously, I have testified before many of you. I'm a former state employee whose responsibility was to train people with mental illnesses for jobs. I was a participant of SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services subcommittee on consumer/survivor issues since 2005 in Washington DC. I'm a certified psychiatric rehabilitation practitioner, an advocate for mental health and cultural issues, a behavioral health consultant, and hold certifications in various evidence-based practices and a masters in criminal justice administration. Please support this bill. I apologize that I will be unable to testify in person, I am attending a conference on the Mainland. Mahalo! Ellen Kekipi Awai

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov



2/11/2015

The Honorable Representative Della Au Bellati, Chair
Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

Children with Autism have been a part of my life for the past 15 years. I worked as a Skills Trainer for a little boy with Autism and never looked back. I have worked in several disciplines as a Special Education Teaching Assistant to Developmental Specialist to a Behavior Analyst. I have always been passionate about improving the lives of children, particularly those with disabilities but it wasn't until I studied Behavior Analysis that I had the skills to help make significant and long lasting changes in children's lives. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) has given me the skills to teach children to become part of the world around them, to find the joy and happiness they deserve, and allow them to be live a life with as much independence as they can.

Now that myself, and a lot of other talented Behavior Analysts, have the skills and knowledge to teach children who are difficult to teach, not having the resources to do so is devastating. Insurance companies not covering effective treatment is detrimental to children's quality of life but also drastically affects the amount of resources that will be required to care for these children in the future without independent skills. HB 1108 will give my children the chance to get evidence based treatment that is effective. Children with Autism deserve the chance to succeed and in my experience they need Applied Behavior Analysis to do so.

Sincerely,

Kelly Deacon, BCaBA



Autism Behavior Consulting Group, Inc. / ABC Group
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Lauren Wilson, MSW,
RDI Program Certified Consultant
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February 10, 2015

Honorable Representative Belatti, Chair
Honorable Representative Creagan, Vice Chair

RE: HB 1108: Mandatory Health Coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorders
SUPPORT WITH REVISIONS

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Creagan and members of the Committee on Health:

With revisions I look forward to supporting HB 1108. Mandated insurance coverage for autism treatment in Hawai'i is crucial. Equally crucial is that the legislation ensure access to the widest array evidenced based treatments and qualified professionals with expertise in Autism Spectrum Disorders and supports established practices.

As a provider with over ten years of experience treating individuals with autism I have seen families lose precious time searching and on waiting lists for a professional with expertise to provide treatment for their child. This is especially true on neighbor islands where experienced professionals are limited.

I am concerned with the unnecessary omission of licensed clinical social workers, which is out of step with the current delivery of treatment as well as other state mandates. So that families may have the greatest access to qualified and experienced professionals I respectfully submit that **licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs) be included to the following areas:**

“Behavioral health treatment” means evidence-based counseling and treatment programs, including applied behavior analysis, that are....

(3) Provided or supervised by a board certified behavior analyst or by a licensed psychologist or ***clinical social worker*** so long as the services performed are commensurate with the psychologist's or social worker's formal university training and supervised experience.” (page 6, lines 8 – 21)

These inclusions do not add new responsibilities to LCSWs in Hawai'i, but rather bring this important legislation inline with practice capabilities set forth by HRS 476E. There are well over 800 licensed clinical social workers across the state, many already credentialed with Hawai'i based medical insurance companies ready to provide services for individuals on the autism spectrum.

The omission of licensed clinical social workers, one of the largest providers of behavioral health treatment, unnecessarily limits families' access to qualified, experienced and licensed professionals. **Including LCSWs ensures that families – especially those on the neighbor islands - have the ability to choose from the broadest array of qualified, experienced and licensed professionals in the state.**

Sincerely,



Lauren Wilson, MSW
Autism Service Provider

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Blake
Last Name : Lanoza
Affiliation (optional) : Paraprofessional
and Street Address : 45-350 Nakuluai St.
City/Town : Kaneohe
Island : Oahu
Email : lanoza.blake@gmail.com

Message to legislators: I am on support of children and young adults with Autism being funded by insurance. These children and their parents need all the help they can get to help these amazing young adults on the right track before they don't qualify for DOE supports. Please kokua and help us continue as behavioral health professionals to make these young smile everyday and not just live, thrive.

Is there anything else you would like to share? : I am a paraprofessional with three years of experience working with children with Autism and other special needs. I've realized more and more the special role the state has helping take care of these children and providing with quality education. Please continue to help us improve the behaviors and quality of life of these great kids. Mahalo.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Blake McMillen

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Anna
Last Name : Straka
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Kihei
Island : Maui
Email : annastraka@gmail.com

I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Anna
Last Name : Fielding
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Kahului
City/Town : Kahului
Island : Maui
Email : annamarie.fielding@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Anastasia Keller-Collins
91-129 Nohoihoewa Way
Ewa Beach
Oahu, Hawaii (HI)
anastasiakellercollins@gmail.com

Thank you for your support as we move toward Autism Reform in Hawaii. Behavior Analysis is the number one treatment for Autism and it has proven effects to increase development in the areas of social and life skills and communication, decrease behavioral challenges that leads to people living comfortable all the while ensuring people can live a life with independence and dignity.

With a birthrate of 1 in 68 individuals, it seems clear that all of us will benefit when people are more independent. As a Behavior Analyst, I see these changes each day with more than one client. It is powerful and forever life changing. Clearly, there is a huge need for change to assist people with Autism...this is widely known. What is unknown is the far reaching effects all of us, as a community, will need sacrifice later when we have neglected to take care of individuals and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration toward this effort and support for making a change.

Anastasia Keller-Collins, MED, BCBA, CTRS

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Atrian Dorres

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I support meaningful autism insurance reform, and HB1108 WITH REVISIONS.

Children have such a difficult time with their preteen and teen years. Why would you discontinue services right when a child may need it even more? Please change this bill to provide services for children at least until they're 21, although no age cap would be best.

Thank you for your time,

Bonnie Koba

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear Representatives Belatti and Creagan,

I am a licensed psychologist specializing in working with children with autism spectrum disorders and I am writing to show my support for HB1108.

I lived and practiced in Hawaii for 5 years before relocating to Seattle, WA. In the state of Washington numerous insurance companies, including Medicaid and Microsoft Premera, provide coverage for ABA services. I have seen firsthand the positive impact this has on children's developmental trajectories and on parenting stress. Too many parents spend excessive amounts of time worrying about how they will pay for a treatment that research has consistently shown to be the gold standard for autism spectrum disorders. The Kaiser Permanente ACES study is one of many that have shown the deleterious effects of chronic stress on overall health and well-being and the positive correlation between chronic stress and increased utilization of healthcare services. Research has also shown that children who receive ABA services and resultantly exhibit significant developmental progress are less likely to require higher levels of care in the long-term. In addition, when those gains allow them to participate in a general education setting, it lessens the burden on the Department of Education's already limited special education resources and funding. Hence, ABA coverage is not only the most ethical thing to do – it is also highly economical in the long-term.

I am looking forward to seeing Hawaii provide insurance coverage for families impacted by autism. I have seen the outcome when these services are provided. It is almost unbelievable that the discussion of whether or not ABA should be covered is still one we are having when everything we know, empirically and anecdotally, sends a message that is difficult to ignore and in bright neon lights simply states, "YES".

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Brandi Chew, PhD
Licensed Psychologist (Hawaii, California, & Washington)
7104 Woodlawn Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98115
Branch80@gmail.com

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Brenda

Last Name : Cameron

Affiliation (optional) : Paraprofessional/Habilitation Technician

and Street Address : 222 Andrews Ave

City/Town : Hilo

Island : Big Island

Email : bcameron808@yahoo.com

Message to legislators : I support the autism insurance bill.

Is there anything else you would like to share? : Two words.....Perspective Thinking!

How would feel being a parent with a child who has ASD?

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear legislators,

Thank you for addressing this extremely important issue. Hawaii has fought this battle for too long and it is time to do the right thing.

I **support** the intent of HB1108, **with revisions**.

- Increase the age to at least 21
 - As a former service provider, I have worked with numerous young adults that continue to need services.
- Remove the dollar caps
- Include language on services provided by behavior technicians

Mahalo,

Brian J. Burdt
Paia, Maui

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Bridget
Last Name : DeGuzman
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Wailuku
City/Town : Wailuku
Island : Maui
Email : bdeguzman@gmail.com

I am a PAB service worker working with individuals with special needs. I support the autism insurance bill and am ready to help on Maui. Malama our Keiki!

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Waioni
Last Name : Dickison
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Kihei
Island : Maui
Email : waionidickson@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Violeta Romero

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Alan Monnow

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Tyler
Last Name : Thomsen
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Kihei
Island : Maui
Email : tthomsen808@gmail.com

I support autism insurance. Malama our keiki!

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : AmberRae
Last Name : Shotkoski
Affiliation (optional) : ABC GRoup
and Street Address : 808-226-6347 3115 La'I Road A
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : HI
Email : amberrae33@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support the intent of house bill 1108 because I know the importance of ABA therapy for children with ASD. I have worked with children with ASD for over 7 years and I have witnessed first hand the importance of early intervention and effective ABA therapy. Many children require 25-40 hours per week of intensive therapy. I have seen children become independent, join their peers in school and tell their parents they "love them", all thanks to educated BCBA providers and ABA therapy. You have an amazing opportunity to protect our keiki and the future generations of this island.
Mahalo

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Tracy
Last Name : Ruggiero
Affiliation (optional) : Bayada Habilitation
and Street Address : 2200 Main Street Suite 650
City/Town : Wailuku, HI
Island : Maui

My name is Tracy Ruggiero and I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst who has been working in the field of Autism for the past 13 years, 7 of which have been in Hawaii. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to submit testimony in support of Hawaii Autism Insurance Reform.

I stumbled into the field of helping children with Autism during an undergraduate internship, learning basic principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) without even knowing it. Over the course of a semester, I worked with professionals to develop and carry out treatment plans for children with a variety of eating disorders. I observed their treatment progress from requiring in-patient services, to out-patient services, to training their family members to implement services at home for long-term maintenance and success, all utilizing scientifically founded principles of behavior analysis. Being an intern in this setting sparked my interest in learning more about the science of ABA, and I pursued a job working with families and their children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders in both a clinic and home based setting. Starting as an entry level skills trainer, eventually moving up to a case manager, I wanted to become a program supervisor, to learn how to assess children and plan for their education and treatment goals. After receiving guidance from my directors, it was revealed that the only way to move forward and advance my career in this field was to obtain a Master's Degree and pursue additional coursework in Applied Behavior Analysis. My interest in being able to provide treatment for children and families using a scientifically proven methodology led me to complete an 18 month, full time graduate program in Early Intervention, with a Specialization in Autism, and required ABA coursework. Additionally, I accrued 1500 practicum hours under the supervision of an already certified Behavior Analyst and was then accepted to sit for the certification exam, governed by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board.

Since passing that exam, and working in the field as a consultant, I have been able to touch the lives of many families here in Hawaii over the past 7 years. However, there are countless families that have fallen outside of the federally mandated free Early Intervention services that I provided for the first 5 years and the military families that I worked with for another year and a half, who are fortunate enough to have their ABA services covered under Tri Care. There are close to 100 individuals that have met the same requirements in order to become Board Certified and currently

reside in the state of Hawaii, hoping to be given the opportunity to reach and serve more families, children and adults. They are trained in the most recognized and scientifically founded methodology that has been shown to be effective from birth to death for individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

I am asking for your support in passing the Hawaii Autism Insurance Reform Bill so that providers can help to make a difference in the lives of so many of our Hawaii families in need, without having to sacrifice to find a way to pay for these much needed services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tracy Ruggiero, M.Ed., BCBA
BAYADA Home Health Care | Behavioral Services Manager HAB
2200 Main Street, Suite 650 | Wailuku, HI 96793
Office 808-244-6879 | Fax 808-244-7575 | www.bayada.com

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Tiana
Last Name : Alconcel
and Street Address : Waiehu
City/Town : Waiehu
Island : Maui
Email : laanahe@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support autism insurance reform.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Tanja
Last Name : Nikolic
Street Address : 4510 Salt Lake Blvd D8
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email Address : tanjacro@yahoo.com
Company : Bayada
Position : Behavior Consultant

I support autism insurance reform. Please pass the bill!!

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Amy Iriarte

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Sheryl
Last Name : Raclies
and Street Address : Kahului
City/Town : Kahului
Island : Maui
Email : mkaauwa@hawaii.edu

I support autism insurance reform.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I am a provider for ABA services and I support the autism insurance reform. I believe having access to early intervention will decrease the cost of care for people with autism in a long run.

Sincerely,

Yuri Lee

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Celestina
Last Name : Molina
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Lahaina
City/Town : Lahaina
Island : Maui
Email : celeymolina00@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Chaelynn
Last Name : Tan
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : 91-1046 Papaa st
City/Town : Kapolei
Island : Oahu
Email : chaelynn_tan@yahoo.com

Message to legislators : I support the intent of HB 1108 because ABA early intervention is important in helping our youth diagnosed with autism to integrate into society. ABA therapy gives kids with autism the opportunity to self provide in the future.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written in strong support of the Autism Bill. As a licensed psychologist in Hawaii, I have had many years of experience with Autism Spectrum Disorders and have seen, first-hand, the positive impact that Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) treatment can have on the hallmark symptoms of Autism across a client's lifetime.

My first experience with Autism Spectrum Disorders occurred after my completion of my Bachelor's degree in Psychology. I was employed as an Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapist in the homes and schools of Hawaii's keiki. As a new practitioner of the ABA method, I appreciated the rigorous and complex training that I was provided with as well as the supervision I received by my Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) supervisor. With a background in engineering, I also related to the linear, objective progression of this approach and the ability to see, first-hand the child's therapeutic gains/symptom reduction via the data collection methods associated with ABA. I remained interested in Autism Spectrum Disorders as I continued my graduate school studies. What was most gratifying was the manner in which key issues (i.e., symptoms of autism) were addressed via real-life activities that engage the child; with appropriate levels of prompting and fading - yet another empirically supported method utilized in this model - generalization of skills learned in therapy into real world situations was accomplished.

As with any ingrained behavior, problematic behaviors are best ameliorated when addressed early. This speaks to the importance of identifying Autism Spectrum Disorders early, ideally during the first months of life, and beginning intensive behavioral treatment to address the symptoms. As a pre-doctoral assessor at an Autism Spectrum Disorders clinic in the mainland, I saw the benefits of early intervention, partnered with consistent Applied Behavior Analysis over several years - RECOVERY! With consistent ABA therapy, the cost-saving benefits of this approach via recovery and/or assimilation into regular education classes and the world around the client cannot be stressed enough. Nonetheless, even when ABA treatment begins later in a child, adolescent, or adult client's life, the positive impact on all aspects of functioning cannot be ignored. This includes improvements in social skills, executive and adaptive functioning, interpersonal skills, independent living abilities, and vocational/academic skills, to name a few. This allows a client to function more independently in the world in which they live, allowing for less reliance on state assistance, family members, and the community at large, resulting in significant financial benefits.

I appreciate your time and sincere consideration of the Autism Bill.

Sincerely,

Chanel E. Kealoha, PsyD

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Philip
Last Name : Bocher
Affiliation (optional) : Horizon's Academy
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Kihei
Island : Maui
Email : phil_bocher@hotmail.com

I am a service worker with individuals with special needs. I am ready to help and I support autism insurance reform.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Chantel
Last Name : Pacheco-teeter
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Kihei
Island : Maui
Email : leiteeter@hotmail.com

Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Charmaine Molina
Lahaina (Maui), Hawaii
charm_232001@yahoo.com

I support autism insurance reform.

Charmaine Molina

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Christina Gobert

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Christina Leos

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Christine
Last Name : Asuncion
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Miliani
City/Town : Miliani
Island : Maui
Email : casuncion00@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/1
5

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Christina Domingo

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Christy

Last Name : Torres

Affiliation (optional) :

and Street Address : 974 Ala Kapua Street

City/Town : Honolulu

Island : Oahu

Email : christy@autismbehaviorconsulting.com

Message to legislators : I am a resident of Hawaii and I support children with autism. I support House Bill 1108 which provides autism insurance coverage for children in Hawaii. I've seen personally how ABA can improve the lives of these children and their families. Let's make this the year we give our children a better chance at learning and leading successful lives.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

My name is Nicole A. Herber and I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) who primarily works with children on the autism spectrum. I am submitting testimony in support of autism insurance reform, specifically HB1108.

Since beginning my career as a BCBA two short years ago, I've seen children and families with autism overcome challenges that the families never thought possible. I've seen children on the autism spectrum, who were unable to perform basic self-help skills such as teeth brushing or dressing themselves, be able to independently get ready school. I've taught toddlers to communicate using words or pictures to tell their parent that he wants a drink instead of biting or pinching because he didn't know any other way to get his parents attention. I've had the pleasure of listening to a mother share the heartwarming recount of all the words her child said the night before.

Being able to communicate, care for yourself, and socialize with peers are just a few skills that ABA treatment can teach a child with autism. These skills are things that many people take for granted, skills that are thought to come naturally over time. However, if one is on the autism spectrum, these skills are very complex and difficult to learn. It is through the ABA intervention and ABA programs tailored to the individual by a BCBA, who has completed rigorous training, that these skills are taught.

ABA is effective and an empirically validated treatment for individuals on the autism spectrum. Even if you haven't read the ABA scientific journals and articles, you can listen to the countless stories of families that been positively impacted by ABA therapy. Their stories are proof that ABA changes lives, and all individuals and families with autism should have the choice to access ABA therapy. Access to ABA treatment should not be limited to families that can afford it.

I appreciate your time and thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony on this very important piece of legislation.

Respectfully,

Nicole A. Herber, M.A., BCBA

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

CJ Paet

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Clair Shiffer

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I am writing to you today to voice my strong support for HB1108, which would extend insurance benefits to the thousand of families in Hawaii that are affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder. As a father with a 9 year old girl with ASD, my wife and I have first hand experience with the day to day challenges of raising and supporting a child with this disorder. The good news for families like us is that there have been tremendous scientific advances in the last 15 years in the areas of Speech Pathology, Applied Behavioral Analysis and Early Childhood Intervention that have had dramatically improved the outcomes of children with ASD. These medical breakthroughs have changed our lives and have given us hope that our daughter will someday be able to be an independent, happy and productive member of the community. The problem is that these therapies are prohibitively expensive for the average family.

In the case of my daughter Lily, who was diagnosed with ASD at age 6 but began childhood intervention at age 2, we have been paying out of pocket medical expenses averaging over \$20,000 a year for ABA services, speech therapy, and extra tutoring on top of regular medical bills. The insurance plans for military families cover ABA and the clinics in Hawaii seem to cater cater exclusively to them and the wealthy people that can afford them. We know firsthand that the financial burden is tough to bear, but we do it because we have hope for a brighter future for our daughter. But we are at our limits financially and there are many other families who can't afford basic services at all. This bill would give our children at very least, access to the same services that other insurers are offering in Hawaii.

My family and I urge you to pass this bill. The difference that these services make in a child's life is remarkable. If you have any doubt, I urge you to come visit us and meet our daughter Lily. She will change your mind.

Thank you,

Michael D. Saines

133 Lumahai Street

Honolulu, HI 96825

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Michael Kormanik

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Melissa
Last Name : Kamber
Street Address : 600 queen st. apt. 3408
City/Town : honolulu
Island : oahu
Email Address : misty23m@yahoo.com
Company : Bayada
Position : substitute skills trainer/ supervisor

I support autism insurance. I have been working with children with special needs since 2008. I knew I would like this field when i volunteered in college for a program we had. It was nice bringing the kids together and watching them explore and grow their talents. Creating this environment for children brought so much growth in different areas. Over the years I have seen kids who were given little hope of speaking into having full conversations. I had worked with a girl for five years when i first met her everyone just felt sorry for her. Over the years she grew to be the first in her class in spelling. I didn't even have to give her spelling tests because she memorized her entire spelling list in order! Being able to help children has blessed my life in so many ways and I know that being able to give someone with special needs that one to one attention they need makes a huge lifelong impact on their lives.

creagan3 - Karina

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2015 8:58 AM
To: HLTtestimony
Cc: president@hawaiiaba.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1108 on Feb 11, 2015 08:35AM

HB1108

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for HLT on Feb 11, 2015 08:35AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Amanda N Kelly	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: It is time to do what's right and #malamaourkeiki. I am asking that you match Medicaid coverage (age 21), or prepare for families to flock to Medicaid plans. Respectfully, Amanda N. Kelly, PhD, BCBA-D

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Coren
Last Name : Kajioka
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : 638 9th Avenue
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email : corenkajioka.psyd@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I fully support the Autism Insurance Bill as it will provide much needed services to a wider scope of children and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder. In addition, I believe that bringing Autism to the forefront of people's awareness is vital in obtaining a proper diagnosis, adequate psychoeducation, and resources for early intervention. Please support this bill for the betterment of all those affected by Autism.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : David
Last Name : Hooper
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : 1303 Dominis st. Apt 2
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email : imunown@hotmail.com

Message to legislators : I support expanding the ability of individuals with autism receiving care through their insurers and not just through the Department of Education. It's important that we open up as many avenues to resources as possible.

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Denise Matsude

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Desiree
Last Name : Villec
Street Address : 4501 Salt Lake Blvd Suite D8
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email Address : desiree.villec@gmail.com
Company : Bayada
Position : Behavior Analyst

Tell us where you stand on the bill : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Erick Galvan

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Legislators:

We strongly support the passage of HB1108, which will provide insurance coverage for services for children on the autism spectrum which are not currently covered.

Background

The Child

We have a son with Asperger's syndrome. He is now 7 and a Grade 2 student at Queen Kaahumanu School in special education classes. His Asperger conditions made him very hard to parent, especially his opposition.

Our son has been treated by many medical professionals, taken different medications and participated in many school Individualized Education Programs.

We started our son at Applied Behavioral Analysis, an autism clinic, in the summer of 2014. Our son's treatment includes behavioral training and management uses positive reinforcement, self-help, and social skills training to improve behavior and communication. We are seeing steady progress almost weekly and we are genuinely encouraged. We believe that Applied Behavior Analysis can result in improved behavior which should transfer into adulthood.

The Parents

Like many parents we find raising a child with autism one of the hardest things we have ever done. It is an overwhelming challenge physically and emotionally. Needless to say, we are completely exhausted both mentally and physically.

We are paying more than \$2,000 per month for the service. This is a significant sum for us and none of it is covered by our HMSA insurance.

Children on the autism spectrum can become a huge drain on families, society, and themselves when they become adults. However, if they are provided with appropriate services as children, they could lead very productive lives contributing to the society as adults. A mind is a terrible thing to waste.

Issue - Our Request

We urge you to pass a bill so that children on the autism spectrum can get what they need the most – a chance in life.

Rationale of Our Request - The Disability and its Impacts

More parents are raising children with a diagnosis of autism and families often find themselves dealing with financial and social challenges all by themselves. Daily care routine, economic problems, receiving appropriate help and education are the basic hardships of the parents of a disabled child. The additional stress can be significant, taking its toll on the whole family and even contributing to a high divorce rate. The backbone of the American society and its value is at stake.

Further, children with autism could be productive citizens if given the proper treatment and care. A mind is a terrible to waste.

Thank you.

**Felix and Lela Kwan
Honolulu, HI 96814**

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Emily
Last Name : Skidmore
Affiliation (optional) : Horizons Academy
and Street Address : Lahaina
City/Town : Lahaina
Island : Maui
Email : emily61488@gmail.com

I am a support worker for special needs individuals in Maui and I support the autism bill and am ready to help.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Elena

Last Name : Vieu

and Street Address : 14-3385 Paradise

City/Town : Pahoa

Island : Big island

Email : kozmovieu@gmail.com

Message to legislators : Please pass this bill , it's life saving for our children . ABA is proven to be one of the best therapies for autism and every child deserve a chance !!

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Gephy
Last Name : Del Real
Affiliation (optional) : Horizon's Academy
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Kihei
Island : Maui
Email : gephsydr@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I am a service worker for those with special needs on Maui. I support autism insurance.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Heather Dewoody

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Jamie
Last Name : Oehler
Affiliation (optional) : Bayada Habilitation
and Street Address : 1143A 7th Ave
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email : jamie.oehler2014@gmail.com

Message to legislators : Autism affects many families in our state, but many cannot afford the cost of getting services for their child. Research has shown that ABA services at a young age reduce the cost of care as an adult by making the child more independent in adulthood. I send this message to you asking you to please consider passing autism insurance reform to assist the many families in the state for their children to be able to receive the services they need.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Jean Paul Geden

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Dan Barczov

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Darilyn
Last Name : page
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Kihei
Island : maui
Email : darilynpage@gmail.com

I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Dove
Last Name : Vagatai
Street Address : 4510 Salt Lake Blvd Ste D8
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email Address : dvagatai@bayada.com
Company : Bayada
Position : Client service manager

Tell us where you stand on the bill : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Darren
Last Name : Chu
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : 45-357 Nakuluai St.
City/Town : Kaneohe
Island : Oahu
Email : d.chu27@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support Autism Insurance.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : David
Last Name : Namiki
Affiliation (optional) : Bayada Home Health Care
and Street Address : 4510 Salt Lake Boulevard, D-8
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email : namikid@hotmail.com
Message to legislators :

Dear Legislators,

I am writing in support of autism insurance. Meaningful insurance coverage will allow people diagnosed on the autism spectrum to receive cost-effective insurance coverage for services that will enhance the quality of their--and of those around them--lives.

I have been working as a behavioral therapist (aka "skills trainer") for five years and have witnessed the efficacy of the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) method. ABA works due to several reasons: (1) It is founded on well-researched, scientifically proven principles; (2) The workers in this field are a highly professional, dedicated, and enthusiastic group; and (3) The unique characteristics of the autistic population allows them to respond very well to ABA therapies.

In my relatively short time in this field, I have observed significant behavioral improvement in the vast majority of cases. I have seen non-verbal children able to consistently communicate their thoughts and needs within a few years. I myself have been able to teach a number of unskilled clients basic work skills, such as sweeping floors and wiping tables, in a matter of months. No matter what the starting baseline for an autistic child, each improvement in daily living, communication, and occupational skills (and the improvement rate is high!) provides that much more relief for their parents, schools, and community.

The great personal satisfaction from being a part of this beneficent process has inspired me to pursue a master's degree in psychology, and following that, a BCBA certification. I know that will entail a large amount of diligence (because I have already earned a master's degree, in International Management), but I also know that the rewards are substantial and that there is a real need for more qualified behavior analysts in this field.

The fate of many thousands of children with autism lies in your hands. Passage of autism insurance reform will be a critical step in a process that will dramatically improve the lives of such children and their families, and will reduce millions of dollars in health and support costs in the long run. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

David Namiki

Behavior Therapist / Skills Trainer
PO Box 10385
Honolulu, HI 96818

(808) 389-6524
namikid@hotmail.com

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

Derrick K. Abe, O.D.
1441 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite #805
Honolulu, HI 96814
PH: (808) 946-6136
FAX: (808) 943-6236

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I am a small business owner in Hawaii, and I am writing to ask you to support HB1108. As you know, children with autism in Hawaii currently aren't covered under most medical insurances.

I have been a small business owner for 11 years, and I understand the impact of high insurance premiums. However, I am also aware of the impact of autism on families in Hawaii, and there is simply no comparison between the struggles. Families with autism struggle daily – emotionally and financially – to provide for their children. Our state should act to relieve some of the financial burden on these families who did nothing to deserve their dire situations. The increase in cost that the insurance industry will pass on to small businesses is truly minuscule (0.2 percent, based on experience in other states) and is simply not a valid reason to turn our backs on children with autism.

Please support HB1108. Not only does it make good fiscal sense for our state, it is morally and ethically the right thing to do.

Mahalo,



Derrick K. Abe, O.D.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Donna
Last Name : MacIver
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : PO Box 349
City/Town : Haiku
Island : Maui

Email : dmaciver17@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support autism insurance reform with no age or dollar caps on services. The needs for people with autism has grow rapidly and legislation needs to change along with their needs to help them in their life skills.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Emaley
Last Name : McCulloch
Affiliation (optional) : Relias Learning
and Street Address : 2800 Woodlawn #175
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email : emaleymcculloch@gmail.com

Message to legislators : My name is Emaley McCulloch and I am a professional Behavior Analyst who works with children and families affected by autism and I also have a child on the spectrum. I have made Hawaii my home for the last 12 years. I am writing to you because I want to show my support for HB1108, and discuss how it will benefit our ohana and community.

Thirty-eight other states have adopted similar legislation already that require insurance to cover necessary treatments for autism. Is Hawaii going to be the last to adopt this? Are we going to continue to put the burden of necessary treatments on our ohana and the state programs such as the DOE and the DOH?

The treatment covered by insurance (ABA) is not solely an educational treatment. It is considered to be a medically necessary, empirically validated treatment approach for children diagnosed with autism (and other related disorders). This has been verified by all the other states that are now requiring it be covered by insurance.

Public schools on island are not equipped to fully meet the needs of children with autism. Behavioral needs go beyond academics and should be addressed in the home with parents and family.

Applied Behavior Analysis is a science of evidenced-based interventions that have been substantiated by over 1,000 research studies. ABA been backed by the US Surgeon General, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychological Association, Autism Society of America and National Institute of Mental Health
<http://appliedbehaviorcenter.com/ABAEndorsements.htm>.

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to you for introducing and supporting autism insurance coverage.

Thank you for your consideration and your time. Let's make 2015 be the year Hawaii joined the other states in supporting our ohana that have children with autism.

Sincerely,

Emaley McCulloch M.Ed. BCBA

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Gavin M Azvedo

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Aloha! We are living in an age of epidemic. Autism is estimated to affect 1 in 68 children. These children experience a number of severe challenges in their everyday life, to the point of relying on multiple family and community members for assistance for the simplest tasks, every single day of their lives.

Having personally spent 7+ years working with children with special needs, I have witnessed the toll it takes on families first-hand. Their inspiring courage is more that can ever be measured. By providing therapy, especially at a young age, we can help ease that burden on both families and society.

Autism is not the only epidemic that plagues the people of Hawaii. There are thousands and thousands of people currently living at or below the poverty line, many who work multiple jobs and make minimum wage. Couple that with the cost of living in Hawaii being one of the highest in the world, and a majority of families, even middle to upper class families, simply cannot afford to pay for their child's services.

Yet these same families, each and every one of them, deserve to be able to give their children the help that they need. They deserve the opportunity to give their son or daughter a chance at life. The families of Hawaii need our help now more than ever.

The children are our future. Encouraging their development should be our priority. That is why I write in support of autism insurance coverage, specifically HB1108. It is my hope that Hawaii joins in with the 38 other states that have already taken that step to provide their children a brighter future.

Mahalo,
Geoffrey Sato
Dream Float Hawaii, LLC

February 11, 2015

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
The House Committee on Health

Dear Hawaii State Legislators:

I offer a different perspective in support of the passage of HB1108. I am the mother of a 44 year old Down's Syndrome, the grandmother of a 13 year old nonverbal autistic grandson with sensory issues, social issues as well as a myriad of other issues and the daughter of a 95 year old mother with Alzheimer's.

I share this with you because I think you understand Down's Syndrome and Alzheimer's but I don't think you understand autism. So let me share, through experience, as someone who helps care for our autistic grandson, that caring for him is like caring for a very Autistic Down's Syndrome requiring the same kind of patience needed to care for a geriatric with Alzheimer's. It is difficult taking him into the community. It is difficult leaving him at home because he requires 24-hour adult supervision. Family life becomes very difficult.

Autism is a spectrum disorder. It varies in severity and is inconceivably individualized presenting a wide range of issues. Not every person with autism will require additional help and there are many who can be placed within the DOE system and thrive. But there are also those like my grandson who had to be taught "the pre-requisites to learning" and who would never be able to do this in a "group setting". These autistic individuals are those who need to attend a "private school" to learn the basics because only after a child learns the basics - including but not limited to socialization, focus, feelings, confidence -- can he or she move forward. His social interaction requires trust and without his trust you will never reach first base. It's a deliberate sequence that requires ABA.

The autism logo is "a puzzle piece" because autism is puzzling. Parents of autistic individuals need help putting the pieces together so they can see the big picture. You can only help that which you understand. This can only be done through ABA. They hold the expertise. I know this because we have tried it and have experienced the results. The financial investment for a family of average means spells hardship, painful decisions and extreme sacrifices. It's going to take a community.

Glenna K. Arakaki
Aiea, Hawaii 96701

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Jade
Last Name : Torres-Vrobel
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : 1303 McMurtry Ct
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email : doctora_taina@hotmail.com
Message to legislators :

Aloha legislators,

My name is Jade and I have been working with children with autism for 3 years here in Oahu. I just want you to know that ABA works.

Before I was hired as a behavior technician, I did not understand applied behavior analysis (ABA). I have a master's degree in counseling psychology and I thought cognitive behavioral psychology was the best treatment for autism. I was wrong. The best treatment for autism is ABA. I have been well trained in ABA and I am currently completing post graduate courses to become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. This shows how serious I am about ABA and how much I believe in it.

I have worked with 15-20 children with autism, all with different skills and needs. My supervisors have wrote ABA programs to help each of these children individually. They have trained me to implement the programs effectively. I have seen the positive results first hand. There is plenty of data to show the results. It is one of the beautiful things about ABA. It is a science. Behavior is observable and measurable, it is not us saying ABA works, it is the graphs and the numbers showing it works.

I have seen the amazing results of ABA in the following areas: potty training, tooth brushing, eating fruits and vegetables, making requests, playing with peers, ordering food and drinks, paying using a credit card, participating in outings, reducing and eliminating problem behaviors, among plenty more.

Children with autism deserve to receive the services they need. It has been shown that ABA is what they need. Now, it's time to provide those services; the earlier, the better. Just like a cancer patient needs chemotherapy, a child with autism needs ABA services.

Thank you for your time and support.
-Jade (mom, behavior therapist, and student)

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Jamie
Last Name : Walker
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Makawao
City/Town : Makawao
Island : Maui
Email : jamiewalker@gmail.com

I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Jason
Last Name : Arnold
Affiliation (optional) : Bayada Home Health Care
and Street Address : 600 Piikoi
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email : jasnarnld@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : jessica
Last Name : LA rue
and Street Address : hc2 box 5726
City/Town : keeau
Island : Hawaii
Email : divincewon@gmail.com
Message to legislators : Aloha. Mahalo for your support

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

We are asking your support in the passage of HB1108, which would provide much-needed additional insurance coverage for those having been diagnosed as falling within the autism spectrum.

We are parents of a 13-year-old boy who was diagnosed with autism at the age of 2 ½ and shortly thereafter attended the DOE special education preschool program. He continued his education in the public school special education programs through his 7th grade year. This 8th grade year, he is being home schooled. Let me share that throughout his years in the public school system our son's autism required the assignment of a Para-professional (aka skills trainer) who guided him throughout his school day.

However, over the past 10 years, we have had to look for ways to supplement the programs he received from the Hawaii Department of Education as they could never meet the individualized and intense program standards he required and educators fell short in autism expertise. Through weekly private pay speech and occupational therapies, we discovered Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). We had finally found a qualified group of specialists who were able to create, deliver and support the intense, individualized, one-to-one program our son required. Through ABA our son had to be taught to focus. He had to be taught to try different foods. He had to be taught to socialize. He had to be taught to give us eye contact. He had to be taught to speak. We have experienced the results of privately-paid ABA as we are now able to see our son sit at a table and do his studies. We see social interaction. We see the development of eye contact. We see him try new foods. Through ABA we also learned how to help him overcome bad behaviors and develop new positive behaviors. Through ABA we are managing the complexities of an autistic teenager.

Through ABA, we know that there is hope and a future. But ABA came at a cost – financial hardship. The sacrifice of living on one income in order that the other parent could learn to manage our autistic son all while covering the costs of private-pay ABA drained our savings. We have a younger daughter to raise as well and we know we are not alone in our story.

The passing of HB1108 will benefit families of children on the spectrum. It will benefit the community because even autistic children will someday be adults who, having been provided the necessary supports and opportunities, will become contributing members to their families and to society.

Thank you.

Jeffrey Nakama Erin Nakama
Aiea, HI 96701 Aiea, HI 96701

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear Legislators,

I am in support of the Hawaii Autism Insurance Bill. My younger brother (10 years my junior) was diagnosed with autism when he was three years old. Although he was accepted into a state funded special education program when he was diagnosed, he never actually received ABA services. Since my being a provider to young children with autism since 2012 and now being a BCaBA, I have been blown away at the high rate of skills these children have been taught and have retained through the use of applied behavior analysis, and have been quite sad to think of how far my brother (now 18 years old) could have come if he had received these services. The hardship this has caused my single mother is something that I hope no other family will have to go through. I believe we should all strive to have this bill pass so that all of our children can receive the best possible care and education.

Sincerely,

Jessica Sumner

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Jesse V. Larson

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Joe
Last Name : Dalessandro
Street Address : 656 Meakanu Ln., #1601
City/Town : Wailuku
Island : Maui
Email Address : jdpmaui@gmail.com
Company : Joe Dalessandro Photography
Position : Owner

I support autism insurance.

Is there anything else you would like to share? : ABA works, I've seen it with my own child. While I support the bill, The \$300,000.00 behavioral health cap is unrealistically low and should be bumped to at least \$1mil. This is a lifetime disability.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear Representatives Belatti and Creagan,

My name is Jessica Carvalho and I am writing you today to urge you to consider the positive impact HB1108 will have on our state. I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) here in Hawaii and I also have a brother with Autism. I am lucky enough to have the pleasure of working with children with Autism on a daily basis and through my work I am able to see first hand the remarkable effects Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) has on people on the Autism spectrum. I am writing to you because I want to talk about autism insurance reform and how it will benefit children and families with autism.

When I was 18 years old Autism became a part of my life when my mother and father decided to become specialized foster parents. They opened up our home to a beautiful blue-eyed boy. This little boy was 4 years old when he came to live with us. He had the biggest smile, the most mesmerizing blue eyes and he also had an Autism diagnosis. Unfortunately he hadn't had the best little life within his 4 years on earth. His Autism diagnosis was severe he was on the low end of the spectrum, meaning he was functioning well below his age level. He was unable to do anything for himself and he constantly engaged in severe self-injurious behaviors. He still drank from a bottle, he was unable to chew and therefore eat food, he still wore diapers, he babbled but didn't have any functional way of communicating his wants and/or needs, he was unable to crawl or walk, he was fully dependent on the people in his world.

This little blue-eyed boy stole my heart within hours of meeting him. I wanted to make his life easier, happier, and teach him things other people said he'd never do. At that time in my life I was a nursing student in my freshman year at an out of state university, I was eager, ambitious, and completely naïve about Autism and how to help my little blue-eyed angel. I quickly learned that teaching a child with Autism was a lot more difficult than I had anticipated. I also realized that finding people with experience in Autism and knowledge in how to help people with this diagnosis especially with such a severe case was difficult, at best. For these reasons and because of my growing love for this blue-eyed boy I decided to change my major to special education. I also moved back home so I could be a daily part of this growing boys life, this beautiful boy had somehow managed to change the course of my entire life!

My family and I sought help from doctors, educators, and therapists. We tried diets, therapies, and medications. We loved our blue-eyed boy and did our best for him. He grew quickly and did make gains although small compared to his rapidly increasing challenging and self-abusive behaviors. I continued on with my studies, I graduated with a Masters in special education K-12. Throughout my studies and my years of experiences with my

younger brother I only briefly ever heard about Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). It was never an offered service to help my brother, there was never a BCBA on any of his educational teams, there was never discussion of the functions of his challenging behaviors, there was never any diets, therapies, and/or medication that worked!

Our blue-eyed boy grew into a blue-eyed young man. He grew taller than us, stronger than us, he still didn't have a functional way to communicate his wants/needs, he still needed help with most tasks, and now he also needed someone with him constantly to keep him safe as his self-injurious behaviors continued to get worse. It became obvious to us that our love for him wasn't enough we couldn't keep him safe he needed constant one-on-one supervision. He became a danger to himself, which left us with a heartbreaking decision.

When my blue-eyed boy was 13 years old he moved to a live-in residential setting. In this new home he would be safe, he would have someone with him at all times, he would have a team of doctors and nurses available to him, he would have an educational team that collaborated with his home and school environments. But he wouldn't see us on a daily basis, his family the people he lived with for nine years of his life. And still even in this live-in residential program he still wouldn't receive ABA services, he still wouldn't have a BCBA on his educational team, and he still wouldn't have a plan in place to help decrease his challenging and self-abusive behaviors.

Around this time I was also transitioning into the life of a teacher. I loved teaching, I loved my students but I quickly realized that my knowledge and experience wasn't enough. Again I felt as though I wasn't making the difference I had hoped, again I felt like I was failing. To me letting down another child wasn't an option! This is when I made the decision to go back to school and study Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). It was only through my study of ABA and in becoming a BCBA that I have felt like I have been able to make a difference in the lives of people with Autism.

Every day through my ABA work with children with Autism I see my blue-eyed boy. Every day I see the chances he didn't get, the progress he didn't make, and I see the consequences and challenges he faces because of these lost opportunities.

I feel honored to get the opportunity to work with the children and families that I work with. I feel lucky to be given the opportunity to provide the ABA services that I do. I have seen ABA positively affect so many families' lives, some in small ways but most in enormous life changing ways. The point I would like to make is that ABA is effective. It is the only research and evidenced based treatment for Autism. Because of my experiences with Autism including ABA and without ABA I feel strongly that you should vote to pass Luke's Law.

I have seen first hand the life changing positive effects that ABA can have on children with Autism. I feel that had my blue-eyed boy been given the opportunity to receive ABA services that his life would be completely different today. It breaks my heart that other families and children go without ABA services and face similar challenges that my family had to face.

Thank you very much for taking the time to hear my story and point of view as to why you should vote to pass HB1108.

Respectfully,

Jessica Carvalho, M.Ed., BCBA
Jesslynn1882@aol.com
(808) 542-1204

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

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Last Name : Coelho
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Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Josh Sudow

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Karen
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Email Address : kkimball@bayada.com
Company : BAYADA Habilitation
Position : Behavioral Support Manager

Tell us where you stand on the bill : I support autism insurance

Is there anything else you would like to share? : I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and I truly support the Autism Insurance bill. I believe it will bring much needed ABA services to all families in need. I have seen children who are nonverbal develop functional communication skills. I have seen children, who in preschool, only ate bread and chocolate milk, now enjoy foods from all 5 food groups. I have seen a student who had severe communication delay, run for Treasurer and present in front of the whole elementary school. I have seen a student graduate and attend a community college. I have also seen each of these students' families who have done everything they can and more to support their children.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Joseph Ginapp

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Jon Watari

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Jonathan Fritzler

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Kaley
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Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear Legislators,

For the past 2 years, I have been given the wonderful opportunity to work with a lively group of children, whom almost all, have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. I have always wanted to work with children and adolescents, but it wasn't until I began working at Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi that I realized the true importance of patience, understanding, equality, and education. I am currently working with children with autism of all ages and recognize the importance of being able to receive Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services at a young age, as soon as the child is diagnosed, since it is in the early childhood years where learning is most effective. Also, by working with adolescents, I understand how much of an impact having ABA services for several years has made on their lives. Through the data collected from each ABA session the children have with us, I am able to see how much of an impact our services make on their communication, academic, motor, and social skills.

I am in support of HB1108 because it will provide children with autism insurance coverage for services that are proven to be tremendously important to their livelihood and future. The passing of the bill will allow countless families to attain the services they need for their children, and for the children to receive an equal opportunity at learning that is not often found in schools. As of now, many of our clients have parents who serve in the US Military so they are able to be insured through the DOD. However, we also have clients who must to pay through private expenses to receive the same ABA services. Nonetheless, I find the ABA services necessary for all children who fall on the autism spectrum. By recognizing the grave importance and wanting to learn more in order to provide the best services I can, has pushed me to pursue a Board Certified Behavior Analysis certification.

With the education for the 18 month online curriculum as well as the over 2,000 hours spent in the field providing ABA services, I am now preparing for the exam in February. By becoming a BCBA, I will be able to better serve this amazing population of individuals by creating treatment plans, attending school IEP meetings, and plan parent training opportunities, in order to aid children with ASD to live independent, fulfilling lives.

Sincerely,

Joni Wong

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Jordan Aceves-Foster

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Jordan
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Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

My name is Joshua Levine and I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst practicing applied behavior analysis (ABA) in the state of Hawaii. The legislation addressing autism insurance coverage is of high importance to me because it will help ensure all families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Hawaii have equal access to ABA services.

Research has shown that ABA-based interventions are effective in reducing problem behaviors and increasing appropriate skills for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID), autism and related disorders. Noteworthy reviews include ones conducted by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality which found evidence to support the effectiveness of ABA-based interventions¹. The American Academy of Pediatrics endorsed intensive behavioral interventions as having Level 1 (Best Support) among psychosocial interventions for autism². The Rand Corporation study, Nonmedical Interventions for Children with ASD, also endorses ABA as effective with moderate support, with no studies to date categorized as having strong support based on the study's criteria³. The National Standards Report issued a comprehensive manual assessing the level of evidence for treatments available for individuals with autism, and found that treatments from the behavioral literature (ABA) have the strongest research support at this time⁴. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) lists ABA as a widely accepted notable treatment that can be combined with occupational therapy, speech therapy, Sensory Integration Approaches and Diet to improve outcomes.

It is significant that thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia have laws that mandate commercial insurers to cover treatments or offer coverage for ASD either through specific or limited coverage requirements or mental health parity. At least 37 states-Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin-specifically require insurers to provide coverage for the treatment of autism. Although there are variations in specific terms of these requirements, most limit coverage to treatments and/or care that is deemed medically necessary and, despite differences in language, all require ASD coverage to include some level of ABA coverage.

I ask that you support autism insurance coverage, specifically the language of HB1108. In supporting this bill families affected by ASD in Hawaii will receive the needed health coverage for ABA services. All children should have the opportunity to lead the most independent, fulfilling lives possible. I believe that in supporting this bill you will positively impact the lives of countless children and families affected by ASD.

Thank you for your consideration of my viewpoint on this matter.

Sincerely,

Joshua Levine, Ph.D., BCBA
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Waimanalo, HI, 96795
808-258-2375
JoshuaLevine9@gmail.com

1 Warren, Z., McPheeters, M. L., Sathe, N., Foss-Feig, J. H., Glasser, A., & Veenstra-VanderWeele, J. (2011). A systematic review of early intensive intervention for autism spectrum disorders. *Pediatrics*, 127, e1303-e1311.

2 American Academy of Pediatrics (2010). Appendix S2: Evidence-based child and adolescent psychosocial interventions, *Pediatrics*, 125, S128.

3 Maglione, M. A., Gans, D., Das, L., Timbie, J., & Kasari, C. (2012). Nonmedical interventions for children with ASD: Recommended Guidelines and further research needs. *Pediatrics*, 130, S169-78.

4 Wilczynski, S., Green, G., Ricciardi, J., Boyd, B., Hume, A., Ladd, M., Ladd, M., Odom, S., & Rue, H. (2009). National Standards Report: The national standards project-addressing the need for evidence-based practice guidelines for autism spectrum disorders.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Kate
Last Name : Disney
Affiliation (optional) :
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Email : katemdisney@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I am the mother of two sons; and one of them, Jake, has Autism. We began receiving care from our BCBA's while living in Kentucky when he was 3.5 years old. Prior to receiving services, Jake spoke 3-5 words, could not transition through his daily activities without tantrums and was frustrated much of his day because he could not communicate his needs. Within 6 months, Jake could speak to us and tell us what he wanted, answer basic yes/no questions, could transition to and from activities better and began potty training. He was receiving between 15-25 hours of ABA per week, both center-based and home-based; and the tools we were taught by his BCBA's were invaluable for Jake and our entire family's happiness.

Is there anything else you would like to share? : Our move to Hawaii challenged us with access to quality care, but since we are Tricare beneficiaries we at least had access to services. Losing ABA services would mean a detrimental impact on his progress. Schools are ill-equipped to analyze, plan and implement the type of care, therapy or education needed for children like Jake. By denying coverage for ABA services by trained professionals for the Keiki of Hawaii, you are sentencing them to continued frustration and desperation for them and their families.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Aloha,

My name is Kathleen Bradler, M. Ed. BCBA. I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. I have been working with individuals with autism (from 18 months to 60 years of age) since 2001. I provided Applied Behavior Analysis to our keiki on neighbor-island Maui for two and a half years through a private company that was contracted by the Department of Education and Department of Health. I currently provide Applied Behavior Analysis to our military keiki here on Oahu through Tricare insurance. I am writing you on behalf of the autism insurance legislation that sits before you today.

I have seen, first-hand, the difference between children with autism who have access to a clinically appropriate level of treatment, and those who do not. On Maui, the children with autism that I receive minimal services, usually by under-trained staff, and at school age or later; funded by the State of Hawaii. On Oahu, children with autism in military families receive Applied Behavior Analysis by Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts, and Registered Behavior Technicians at the age of diagnosis; funded by military health insurance.

The difference is in the data. The children who receive an earlier diagnosis, who receive early intervention, and who receive consistent evidenced-based effective treatment by Behavior Analysts make the most gains. These children will need less services as they age, than if they did not have access to Applied Behavior Analysis. These children will have the best chance at reaching their fullest potential; the best chance at independence. And these children will cost the State of Hawaii less.

Please support autism insurance reform in Hawaii and help our keiki as well our State's budget.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Bradler, M. Ed. BCBA

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear Senators,

My name is Kathryn Larson and I am writing in support of HB1108 which would mandate insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorders. I have been working with individuals with autism using ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) for over 10 years and have been a BCBA for the past 4 of those years. I have worked in multiple settings, primarily in Connecticut and Virginia and moved to Hawaii during 2014.

During my time working with individuals with autism I have worked with children and adolescents between the ages of 16 months and 16 years, though the effectiveness of ABA goes far beyond those ages all the way through the lifespan. Decades worth of studies have shown the effectiveness of ABA with individuals with autism, and I have had the privilege of witnessing this effectiveness first hand. In addition, I have witnessed the vastly different outcomes in states where children have more access to ABA as compared to states where access is limited. When I moved from Connecticut to Virginia in 2008, I was shocked by how few individuals were able to access ABA services and how much more limited the services were. Both states have since enacted legislation mandating autism coverage. Hawaii should be next.

I have had the privilege to work with young children who were nonverbal or minimally verbal and were able to become indistinguishable from their peers. Though this is an ideal scenario it is possible for a number of children with autism assuming they have access to the appropriate services, in particular ABA. Even outside of the ideal progress made by individuals is striking. ABA can make it possible for an adolescent to have their first conversation, can teach an adult important job skills, and enable an individual to sit down and eat a nutritious meal when previously their diet was severely restricted. These are just a very few examples of things which are possible with adequate services.

ABA is an individualized therapy, tailored to the specific needs of each individual with the ultimate goal of increasing independence as much as possible. This means that accessing ABA services now will reduce the individuals need for services, often more costly services, in the future. It also means that the individual will have more to offer their community throughout their life. As more and more individuals are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders each year, it is imperative that they receive the necessary services now to help prevent over burdening the community services available in the future.

Research supporting ABA with individuals with autism has been amassing for decades and continues to show the same result, that ABA is effective for individuals with autism of all ages.

Time and time again, ABA has been ruled to be medically necessary. It is endorsed by the US Surgeon General, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and numerous other related organizations. In addition to this, the Behavior Analyst Certification Board ensures that those with the BCBA-D, BCBA, BCaBA, and now RBT credentials are rigorously trained with continually increasing requirements to obtain and maintain certification. These requirements include not only obtaining the necessary knowledge on ABA and demonstration of that knowledge on a difficult exam, but includes hours' worth of supervised experience to ensure providers can successfully implement that knowledge. Only those at the masters level or higher are able to provide services without continual supervision which ensures consistent and appropriate services are being provided.

Currently I work solely with military families, due to their insurance providing ABA coverage. I feel this is unfair to the local community. It is my sincere hope that in the near future ALL children in Hawaii will have equal access to these necessary services, and passing this bill would be the first step.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Larson, MA, BCBA

Dr. Kathryn Taketa-Wong, N.D., L.Ac.
Naturopathic Physician
Licensed Acupuncturist

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

RE: Support-HB1108 Relating to Health

I am a naturopathic physician practicing here in Hawaii specializing in the treatment of medical conditions co-morbid with autism, having been trained through the Medical Academy of Pediatric Special Needs and the Autism Research Institute. I work closely with many autism support and advocacy groups here in Hawaii including Talk About Curing Autism Hawaii, Autism Society of Hawaii, and the Hawaii Autism Foundation. Approximately 75% of my patients have been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. I am also personally involved in the autism community as my brother is an adult with high-functioning autism.

While I am not a provider for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy, I refer many of my patients for ABA services as I have seen its clinical efficacy in helping autistic children and adults to decrease problem behavior and increase functional living skills. Especially when used along with other early intervention services such as occupational therapy and speech therapy, ABA can sometimes make the difference between a child who becomes dependent for life on the state and federal government, or a child who can function in the world and potentially become an employable taxpayer. Please see the attached study on how early intervention services provide significant economic savings in the long run, and essentially pay for themselves within 8 years.

Because the only insurance carrier in Hawaii which regularly covers ABA services is Tricare, most of my patients with other insurance companies need to pay out of pocket for these services. I know families who have literally depleted all their savings and retirement funds and taken out loans to fund the cost of these services. Families should not be asked to go to such measures to secure evidenced-based and effective therapies for their child. I have seen some of my patients make remarkable strides when in ABA therapy from a BCBA, then regress significantly when families run out of funds to continue the therapy.

Imagine if your child was diagnosed with a condition for which there was evidenced based, effective treatment but you were told it would not be covered by insurance. That is what many of my patients' parents hear when their child receives a diagnosis of autism. While not all families with autism choose to pursue ABA therapy, I do not think that should limit the choices of those families who want these services for their children. **Please SUPPORT HB1108.**

Sincerely,

Kathryn Taketa-Wong, N.D., L.Ac.
Medical Academy of Pediatric Special Needs Fellowship Candidate

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

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Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

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Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Kehaulani
Last Name : Yamaguchi
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and Street Address : 4510 Salt Lake Blvd
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Message to legislators : Passing this bill will benefit so many families and children in Hawai'i. It will ensure quality providers and services to help in the overall quality of life for these families and children.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Kayla
Last Name : Kim
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City/Town : Honolulu
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Email : kkim2009@yahoo.com
Message to legislators :

Aloha,

This bill will not only lift a financial burden on many families but it can be the catalyst for many autistic citizens of Hawai'i to live a healthier and happier life. Every life counts no matter your mental, physical or spiritual situation. As a paraprofessional, I work with an autistic child and it is such worthwhile work but having a 1:1 during school is not enough. If autistic care was covered, my client and so many other kids would have the opportunities to excel and get further in life. Please think of all the keiki who need your help in this decision. Thank you for all that you do.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Ken G. Kosada

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Kenneth Kochersperler

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Aloha State Legislators,

Currently, I work as a R.B.T. focusing on ASD. As a R.B.T., I am responsible for data collection and conducting assessments based upon the treatment plans my supervisor provides. Also included in my job description is working under the direction of a classroom teacher as a contracted service provider with students, supporting community integration activities and in home tutoring services. This work requires patience, reliability and willingness to work with a diverse population.

I discovered more than myself living in Hawai'i and being here is where my passion for helping others grew. The sense of pride and purpose I have found in helping others has sealed my commitment to social services. I remember one of these such moments clearly: I was working with my client with limited vocabulary, one afternoon as I was walking out of the classroom the words, "Bye, Mr. Marc" uttered under my client's breath. Those few words meant the world – this child trusted me, relied on me and saw me as part of their life. After that moment I realized that I do have the potential to change lives for the better.

Mahalo,
Kepa Malate

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Lynn
Last Name : Mahoney Heckle
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I support the autism insurance insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

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Message to legislators : I am in support of the intent of House Bill 1108 and think it is long overdue. To pay for services out-of-pocket puts such a strain on families. I know this because a family member of mine was diagnosed with autism, and finding affordable therapy for him was a struggle.

I also work with children who have been diagnosed with autism and can attest to the positive developments, learning, and progress that our kids make with ABA therapy. If services were made more widely available, I believe that more kids would be able to access therapy and not be left behind because of not being able to afford to learn.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Legislators:

My name is Kriste Draper and along with my husband we strongly support the passage of HB1108 which will provide health insurance coverage for services vital to the treatment of children on the autism spectrum.

My son Finn was diagnosed with autism in February, 2014 a week before his second birthday. Devastated and overwhelmed we delved into all the research we could find on how to treat autism. Time and again in our research showed that Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) was a therapeutic treatment scientifically proven to improve the quality of children with autism.

Specifically, 40 hours a week of ABA therapy could be the difference between our son living an independent productive and fulfilling life or living at home with us needing care throughout his lifetime.

We started researching ABA therapy providers on Oahu and by April of 2014 Finn started his ABA program. The transformation we saw in our son almost immediately was nothing short of miraculous. Until starting ABA therapy our son had never spoken a word. He did not know his name or his mom and dad. Finn would not look you in the eye or let anyone other than myself or his dad touch him. Finn screamed in terror every time someone sang Happy Birthday and would run around the living room in circles flapping his arms every time a family member or friend came to visit. Within a week of started his ABA program Finn was looking me in the eye. Within a month he spoke his first word "go" and month after month new words just kept coming. Nine months later my son now lets other adults touch him, hug him and even play with him. He wears shoes and no longer cries when he gets around other children. Finn talks using one, two and three word phrases and has even started preschool with his peers.

Seeing the difference ABA therapy has made in our sons' life we were shocked to learn that not all families in Hawaii have access to the same therapy. We are very lucky that Justin's health insurance through the military covers 40 hours of ABA therapy for Finn each week but to learn that the state of Hawaii does not require all health insurance companies to cover ABA therapy treatment for autistic children is appalling. I ask you this: would a health insurance company get away with denying chemo therapy treatment for a child with

cancer? The answer is no. No one would stand for allowing a child to remain ill and suffer when a treatment that could make the better was available. And yet every year this is how the state of Hawaii treats its autistic children.

Each of you has the opportunity to pass this bill and allow autistic children all through Hawaii receive the treatment they need and deserve. My son is amazing and one of a kind but no more deserving of treatment than any other child with autism in Hawaii. Every autistic child deserves a chance to step into the world around them and have a meaningful life. Your yes vote can give them this.

Sincerely,

Kriste Draper
Honolulu, HI 96818

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Kristin
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Message to legislators : I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Madea
Last Name : Owen
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : 1027 Morris Lane
City/Town : Honolulu
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Email : madea.d.owen@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I am in support of the intent of HB 1108. I have been working with children with disabilities for about four years. I have noticed a lack of services for children with Disabilities in Hawaii, and many children seem to "fall through the cracks". Many family's and parents cannot afford the services their children need. Providing coverage for autism treatment and treatment for other disabilities is most cost effective for families, the state, and our government. This is especially true with early intervention treatment which has good outcomes. Please Malama our Keiki and invest in the future of Hawaii and Hawaii's children.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Kyle
Last Name : Machos
Affiliation (optional) : Autism Behavior Consulting Group
and Street Address : 711 Wailepo PI #303
City/Town : Kailua
Island : Oahu
Email : kyle.machos@gmail.com
Message to legislators : Aloha,

My name is Kyle Machos. I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. I have dedicated my career to helping improve the quality of life for children with autism and their families for over 10 years. I am currently a supervisor at a center providing Applied Behavior Analysis therapy for children on the autism spectrum. I am writing in regards to the autism insurance proposed in this legislative session.

Autism is a pervasive disorder that can be devastating to the development of our Keiki. It is now known that autism affects 1 in 68 children in the United States. Applied Behavior Analysis is the only evidence-based treatment of Autism that has been proven to be effective. It is the only treatment of autism that is endorsed by the US Surgeon General, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and many other reputable agencies and experts. 38 States in the United States have already passed Autism Insurance Mandates. Hawaii is one of the 12 states remaining where this legislation is gravely needed. It is the only democratic State in the US without this type of legislation. Passing autism insurance reform is absolutely critical for the lives of all of our citizens. House bill 1108 would allow endless Hawaiians the ability to receive the services they desperately need and are currently being denied. Early intensive behavioral intervention has been proven to be crucial for teaching new skills, reducing problematic and challenging behavior, improving social skills, language and communication to children on the autism spectrum.

Applied Behavior Analysis is provided by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). The behavior analyst is certified through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board. Each BCBA must take graduate classes in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis, and work in the field under a certified behavior analyst. Before attempting to take the certification exam each applicant must be supervised for 1500 hours and mentored by a BCBA in the behavior analytic principles listed in the board's task list. This is a very rigorous process that culminates in passing of a comprehensive exam to become certified. Once certified each analyst must continue their education through workshops, conferences, and other trainings. This ensures that therapy accepted by this legislation will be administered by a behavior analyst that has the skills and ability to make positive change through ABA.

I have personally experienced many inspiring cases in which the lives of my clients and their families have been unbelievably changed in a positive way due to intensive ABA therapy. I have worked with children that have absolutely no language, and use severe self-injurious behavior to get their wants and needs. These same children were taught using applied behavior analysis to communicate through language, engage in their environment appropriately, and stopped the self-injurious behavior. In 2005 I was working with a 4-year-old boy that had no language or communication skills, and was not learning from his environment. His family had accepted that this is how their son would be, and were trying to cope with his future. After some intensive applied behavior analysis I witnessed my client run to his mother and say "love you, mommy." Although this was still the beginning of the help this client needed to bridge his developmental deficits, this was the moment I choose to dedicate myself to helping children with autism through applied behavior analysis.

Besides the overwhelming benefit ABA therapy can provide for the family and the individual diagnosed with autism there is a huge value for our state as a whole that the House bill 1108 passes. Having meaningful autism insurance reform is the right thing to do for many reasons. One of these reasons is that it makes undeniable financial sense. The early intensive ABA therapy needed for many of our keiki in this state has an estimated to cost \$35,000-\$50,000 for three years depending on the intensity needed. When children with autism are given the opportunity to receive these services at such a vital time in their development the outcomes can be vastly different in regards to their functioning, and placement. According to all estimates the price of caring for individuals with autism that do not receive the services they need from ages 3-55 is between \$600,000 and \$1,000,000. The majority of this burden will fall on the state to provide. This makes the choice to provide mandated autism insurance coverage obvious.

Passing an autism insurance mandate is the only acceptable outcome of this legislative season. We have to do this for all the people of Hawaii, and the future of our state.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1 108 Relating to Health

First Name : Margart
Last Name : Aguiar
and Street Address : Lahaina
City/Town : Lahaina
Island : Maui
Email : tma1301@gmail.com

I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Magnolia
Last Name : Centeno
Street Address : 87365 Heleuma Street
City/Town : Waianae
Island : Oahu
Email Address : mcenteno74@gmail.com
Company : Bayada Habilitat
Position : Paraprofessional

Autism has greatly impacted my life. I am a paraprofessional that works with children and parents that are affected with autism. I believe that this bill will greatly support those with autism and their families.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Lindsey
Last Name : Shepherd
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : PO Box 1284
City/Town : Lihue
Island : Kauai
Email : lshepherd@aptitudeservices.com

Message to legislators : My 52 year old cousin from California was diagnosed with moderate Autism as a child. His traits were similar to many of the children that I work with today, repetitive behaviors, delayed language, and frequent meltdowns. His parents were told that he could not receive adequate care living with them, so they relinquished their rights to him and he became a ward of the state. He was moved to a state facility where he was treated as if he had a mental illness. In recent years my cousin was able to receive aba services to help him develop self help skills and he is currently living in a group home with 4 other men. He is working with the assistance of an aide at a local grocery store.

Knowing the amount of progress he has made as an adult with minimal services it pains me to think of where he could be if he had been able to live at home with his parents and receive aba services as a child.

People are always citing that it will cost too much money to provide aba services to children, but I disagree. For my cousin the state still pays for his care. If they had invested in him as a child with research proven services he would be completely independent, I am sure of it. My cousin inspired me to get into the field and become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. I have worked with several children who when given appropriate ABA services at a young age were able to join kindergarten with their typically developing peers. I have worked with several children who when given ABA services were able to stop engaging in dangerous and aggressive behavior. I have worked with several children who when given ABA services were able to make friends.

I would ask that you support families as they do their best to provide for their children with Autism and pass the Autism Insurance Bill.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Marissa Ayala
Behavioral Technician, Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi Inc.

Dear elected State Officials and Federal Officers of Hawai'i,

I, Marissa Ayala am writing this testimony in support of autism insurance coverage, specifically the language of HB1108. This bill if passed will help families struggling with autism receive proper assistance through insurance to receive Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) treatment.

I've received my bachelor's degree in Speech Pathology from California State University, Long Beach. Since my degree was in speech pathology and communicative disorders I naturally did not know too much about Autism, and especially not about ABA. I have been working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) for over two years now. I have learned so much about ABA and how it helps children, and I have seen it with my own eyes. I have also learned that ABA is the only empirically supported intervention for those with autism, which makes it that much more valuable. I have seen parents amazed to see the progress and vast improvements their children make from year to year receiving ABA services. In my experience the earlier a child receives services; the better chances are for successful treatment. That is the essence of why this bill is so important –to detect earlier onset, diagnosis, and treatment. Currently in Hawai'i only families through Tricare receive funding for ABA services. This should not be limited to only Tricare, but to all insurance holders of Hawai'i.

Today one in every sixty-eight children are diagnosed with autism according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and as that number rises more and more children will need intervention. The people and families of Hawai'i should have the right to proper treatment for children and young adults with autism.

In conclusion, I encourage you to support HB1108.

Thank you for your consideration,

Marissa Ayala
Via email: meayalacsulb@yahoo.com

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Mark
Last Name : Martins
and Street Address : Kahului
City/Town : Kahului
Island : Maui
Email : martinsmarc@hotmail.com

I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Mallory
Last Name : Stinger
and Street Address : 95163 Hokuloa Lp.
City/Town : Mililani
Island : Oahu
Email : malloryqjanzen@hotmail.com

The passing of this bill is very important for the students that I serve. By passing this bill, the students I serve on a daily basis, will be able to have services that assist in improving their everyday lives. We provide assistance in training development of socially significant behaviors such as completing individual tasks at home, at school, and out in the community. Our goal is to equip our students with as many skills as we possibly can so they can enter community possibly contributing their gifts to society. With the services we provide we are able to assist in providing a quality of life that they would not otherwise get. Please consider passing this bill as these human beings deserve to have services provided that assist in developing these important life skills.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Mary Sadler

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

My husband and I strongly support passage of autism insurance reform specifically the language of Bill HB1108 which will provide insurance coverage for services for children on the autism spectrum which are not currently covered.

We have a son diagnosed with autism. He is a preschooler and is in special education classes. His diagnosis makes things that many parents take for granted much more difficult--little things like answering to his name, going to the bathroom, feeding himself, playing with another child, saying someone's name, or even hugging his grandparents. We cannot even begin to describe the tantrums, dangerous behavior like running into the road, or bouts of head-banging that we have gone through. Like many parents, we have been through a whole battery of medical professionals, different therapies, and school Individualized Education Programs since he was 2 years old. We are completely exhausted!

In 2013 we started him at an autism clinic where his primary services are in Applied Behavioral Analysis. Since then he has shown slow but steady progress. He now says thank you at times, can answer a question and look at the other person, and even go to the bathroom with minimal help. Recently, he even told us he has a friend, and the friend's name. For parents who feared for his well-being--even just his being able to go to the bathroom safely--these things are more than progress points. They are small miracles. These are some of the things that Applied Behavior Analysis has done for him. This particular clinic has even reached out to his school to integrate his treatment.

We understand that Applied Behavior Analysis can result in improved behavior which should transfer into adulthood. These services run about \$1,200+ per month, not an insignificant sum for us. We are blessed to be in a special pilot program right now with our private insurance, but if that pilot ends or there is the smallest change in employment for us, we would be unable to cover the entire cost. We have older parents we help care for as well.

Children on the autism spectrum can become a huge drain on families, society, and themselves when they become adults. However if provided appropriate services as children, they can lead productive lives as adults. There is that saying "It is much easier to build a child, than fix an adult!"

We urge you to pass HB1108 so that children on the autism spectrum can get what they need the most -- a chance in life.

Thank you.

Aloha,

L. Wolfe

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Mele
Last Name : Stoner
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : 1633 Pali Hwy
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : O'ahu
Email : melestoner@yahoo.com

Message to legislators : I support House Bill 1108. I currently work in the field of special needs and have seen ABA impact and change individual lives. I have seen children who were unable to speak starting with eye contact to tell what they want, then to sounds, then to words, and then to phrases. Years down the road their language was at the same level as peers. I have also seen high problem behaviors like slamming their heads on the ground because they were unable to appropriately communicate their wants and needs with intensive behavior training this child can now speak and no longer uses Self Injurious Behaviors to attempt to get what they want.

Each child with autism is different. There is no cookie cutter definition. Each child is diagnosed and assessed by professionals who have been trained and are seeking the best for that child. Coverage limits deny the capabilities of ALL children receiving the appropriate intensity that is required.

BCBA are highly qualified in assessing the needs of children and have had education and training to become certified by the BACB.

Please vote in favor of the House Bill 1108.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Lauren
Last Name : Kelley
Affiliation (optional) : Horizon's Academy
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Kihei
Island : Maui
Email : lkelly5007@yahoo.com

I am a service support worker at Horizon's, I support the autism insurance bill and am ready and able to help.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Lisa May Dominia

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Mali
Last Name : Tsurudsto
and Street Address : Wailuku
City/Town : Wailuku
Island : Maui
Email : Maiekona@gmail.com

I support the autism insurance bill.

2/11/11

5

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Dear Legislators,

I support the autism insurance bill. I worked with an ABA provider for a year as a Behavior Technician under several Behavior Analysts. I've seen firsthand the effectiveness of Applied Behavior Analysis. The positive changes that ABA can make in the life of a person with autism are priceless. Please take care of our keiki and our state and pass Autism Insurance reform.

Sincerely,

Mandy Stieb

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Maureen

Last Name : King

Affiliation (optional) :

and Street Address : 59-014-C

City/Town : Haleiwa

Island : Oahu

Email : cwmking057@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I support extra help for the Autistic Children in Hawaii, and I support the autism insurance bill. Would you please support their cause in my behalf? Thank you.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

May Hoang

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Caroline

Last Name : Kong

and Street Address : 3711 Mahina Ave.

City/Town : Honolulu

Island : O'ahu

Email : haha@hawaii.rr.com

Message to legislators : I am writing here in STRONG SUPPORT for HB1108:

As the mother of a special needs child I know the struggles within a system that so often blocks not only the fundamentals for a child with complex needs but more so the medically necessary specialized services required for safety and long term successes. The strain on an entire family in this situation is an immense and heartbreaking experience from the gravity and ramifications of a serious disorder carried by a sibling or child. To add more of a burden on families and children in this situation by denying much needed support services, such as ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis) and related evidence based treatments is cruel and painful for everyone effected. These services are overseen and implemented by what is currently known as a BISS (Behavioral Instructional Support Services) in the Hawai'i DOE systems.

Behavior analysis is a scientifically validated approach to understanding behavior and how it is affected by the environment. In this context, "behavior" refers to actions and skills.

"Environment" includes any influence, physical or social, that might change or be changed by one's behavior.

On a practical level, the principles and methods of behavior analysis have helped many different kinds of learners acquire many different skills, from healthier lifestyles to the mastery of a new language. Since the 1960s, therapists have been applying behavior analysis to help children with autism and related developmental disorders.

I implore the Senate and specifically the Senate Committee on Health at the Legislature to vote IN FAVOR of HB1108. Please listen to the voices of parents and medical professionals as well as highly regarded academies and associations (CDC, AAP and the U.S. Surgeon General).

Understand that the cost benefits to the State will be huge in the approval and implementation of HB1108. By the early mediation services of ABA, community based interventions, and the improvement of access to measures direly needed, HB1108 will ensure the safety and well being of our students. Hawai'i can only then be on par with 38 other states in preparing children on the Autism Spectrum to become active and secure members of society as they grow into adulthood. Mahalo for your time and consideration in this urgent matter.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Shawna
Last Name : Paloma
and Street Address : Kahului
City/Town : Kahului
Island : Maui
Email : mrpalomoswife@gmail.com

I support autism insurance reform.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Zhang Hua Chen

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1 108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support
autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Yaron Shlame

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Aloha, my name is Shannon Ching and I am a Board Certified assistant Behavioral Analyst (BCaBA). I am writing to you because I want to talk about autism insurance reform and how it will benefit children and families with autism. I began working with children with developmental disabilities just over two years ago. I came into this field without any prior experience with children with autism. Within a month of working my life and outlook on the field had changed significantly. Working with my clients and their families I was awakened to just how important and effective treatment for autism is. I have seen children begin therapy with nearly no skills, engaging in a variety of challenging behaviors to simply communicate their wants and needs, and parents frustrated and confused not knowing what to do with their child. Under the direction of a highly trained Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), individualized, intensive treatment plans were created which resulted in these kids gaining skills and reducing challenging behavior. The success of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is remarkable, ongoing, and proven.

I started off as a behavioral tutor and within less than a month and a half, I set out to begin coursework to become a BCaBA and get specialized education in ABA. Within such a short period of time I decided to commit myself, my time, my money, to become a BCaBA. The schooling was an intense 135 hours of classroom hours combined with 1000 hours of supervised fieldwork, before I could even apply for the Board Exam. Although the amount of work that needed to be completed was intensive, the outcome made everything worth it.

As a mother of a typically developing child I understand the struggles and frustrations of parenting; however working a few hours a day with special needs children I can only imagine the magnitude of struggles the families I work with face day in and day out. Although the time the treatment team spends with our clients is limited, by talking with parents and seeing our clients interact with others and their environment appropriately, using the skills we worked on in sessions, is awesome and so rewarding for everyone involved. To see parent's react to their child being able to say "mommy" or to be able to point at what they want, or even to simply give a high-five is priceless. These simple skills are overlooked by many, but for those living with developmental disabilities and their families these are very significant steps!

I was born and raised in Hawaii. It pains me to see that the local children of Hawaii are unable to receive effective ABA services because their insurance does not cover such therapy. They struggle through life without appropriate support, when crucial help is so close. Let's give our keiki a better future, improve their quality of life, give them access to the treatment they need. With the passage of this bill so many more children with autism will lead a more significant and meaningful life. We all deserve to be given the opportunity to reach our full potential, this bill allows for that!

Thank you for your time and for hearing my point of view of why you should vote to pass autism insurance reform. .

Respectfully,

Shannon M. Ching, BCaBA, B.A.

808-383-0358

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Willy Grace
Last Name : Bunghanoy Diama
Affiliation (optional) : BAYADA
and Street Address : 95-178 Kipapa Drive #61
City/Town : Mililani
Island : Hawaii
Email : gbunghanoy-diama@bayada.com

Message to legislators : My name is Grace Bunghanoy-Diama and I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. I am also a Licensed Social Worker (LSW). I have worked with children and families affected with autism for the past 15 years in Hawaii. I am writing to you because I want to talk about HB1108 how it will benefit children and families with autism.

I have seen the positive outcomes in utilizing Applied Behavior Analysis. When I first started off as a skills trainer 14 years ago, I had training on behavior modification but not on Applied Behavior Analysis. It wasn't until I attended a training on ABA and working with mentors with ABA experience that I witnessed firsthand how systematic, objective, and effective ABA has on children with autism. I remember working with a child with no vocal language and primarily communicating by gesturing or grabbing his mother to indicate what he wanted. If his mother did not know what he wanted, he would flop to the ground and engage in a tantrum. Within in a week of working with him, he was saying a few words and on his way to more functional communication. Of course, his parents were so happy to see his progress and gave them hope that their child could achieve so much more and reach his fullest potential.

I have also seen the struggles families go through with trying to obtain services for their child. Only a few families that I worked with were able to pay for services on their own but not with a lot of financial sacrifices. Most of my families cannot afford to pay for services and must rely on state assisted programs, if they are fortunate enough to be eligible. There is an abundance of literature that illustrates the effectiveness of utilizing ABA in reducing problem behaviors and increasing appropriate skills in communication skills, social skills, and ultimately a better learner. I have witnessed the effectiveness of running an ABA program across the lifespan from infants in the Early Intervention program and after they graduate from high school. The key to an effective ABA program is that it is created by a well-qualified BCBA.

Respectfully,

Grace Bunghanoy-Diama, LSW, BCBA

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Yvonne Perry

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Sarita
Last Name : Velada Schmitz
and Street Address : Kahului
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I support the autism insurance reform.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Sarah
Last Name : Skidmore
and Street Address : Honolulu
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Island : Oahu
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I support the autism insurance reform.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Bianca
Last Name : Antonio
Affiliation (optional) :
and Street Address : Khei
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Message to legislators: I work as a paraprofessional on Maui and I support autism insurance.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Ruth
Last Name : Ballinger
and Street Address : 220 Napoko Place
City/Town : Kula
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Email : ruthballinger@gmail.com

My name is Ruth Ballinger. Ten years ago I became an Autism Consulting Teacher for the Department of Education (DOE) for Maui District. Soon after I started my new job, I was first introduced to an education consultant with a BCBA, who had been contracted by the DOE. Even with my master's degree in special education, it was immediately clear to me that this individual had expertise in the area of autism that went beyond my own. I remember at the time becoming determined to figure out what he knew so that I could provide the same level of skill to the children that I worked with.

Becoming a Board Certified Behavior Analyst is a rigorous endeavor. It took me over 6 years to gain the experience, complete the coursework, find a supervisor to oversee my 1500 supervised hours, and pass the exam. Nevertheless, what I am now able to offer students with autism, their families, and their teachers is incomparable to anything that I was capable of before I gained this credential.

As a public school teacher, I will not personally benefit from the passage of this bill. But what Hawaii's children with autism and their families stand to gain is immeasurable; it is hope for a life that includes basic communication, friendship, employment, independent living, and citizenship.

Please pass autism insurance reform.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

My name is Roland Yee. I am authoring this testimony in the middle of the night, because like most parents, there's not enough time in the day to handle much else beyond a demanding job, supporting your local community or church, and quality time raising a family. And then there are families hit with the additional challenge of Autism.

It's easy to assume that kids will eventually grow out of whatever phase they are going through, that is, until that "phase" doesn't go away. Our son was tested and diagnosed with developmental delay at 2 and a half, a somewhat early age, and his diagnosis was later changed to Autism as he grew older. We were fortunate that he was diagnosed early from the Dept of Health's Zero to Three Program, but we were mostly at a loss on how to help him after he turned 3 as the services were limited to start, but cut off fully at age 3. Every child is unique, and there is not cookie cutter solution to Autism. We didn't know where to turn. At the time, our son received speech and occupational therapy with limited success. We hoped, like most parents would, that our son would just grow out of it, and we would downplay this part of his life as a slow learner, but that wasn't the case.

He qualified for a special education preschool, but they did not understand his unique needs. Our son didn't understand the transitions going on in his life, the lack of routines, the strange people outside of his family, and it scared him. When this triggered anxiety, he would engage in tantrums, crying, and shut-down behaviors. When there was a fun activity, there was concern that he would get too attached and not want to engage in peers or adults or anything else. He would communicate non-verbally, or not at all. We couldn't let him outside the house by himself for fear that he would run into dangerous situations without a care. He needed more.

Since his school wasn't enough, we started to look elsewhere. We heard some great things about Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy, and decided to try it out despite the fact that our insurance wouldn't cover it.

ABA Therapy with certified BCBA's made a significant difference in our son's life, despite the cost. They worked really hard to understand the activities he could and could not do, liked and did not like, and mapped out different strategies to leverage his preferences to stretch him. Slowly but surely, he started to communicate, first with "yes" responses, then "yes" and "no" responses, to single word answers, to whole sentences. They used countless motivations and data collection to help reinforce simple facts, like names and face recognition, reciting his parent's phone numbers and house address, even just answering his age when asked. ABA Therapy created social scenarios with toys, then with peers, then peers with toys, and safe social settings, to the point where he could interact with others. With ABA therapy, our son could go outside the house without running off.

But make no mistake, fruitful ABA therapy is hard work. To motivate a young child to do an undesirable task or re-direct him from a break to get back to therapy wasn't easy. The BCBA's and the tutors had to work as a team, constantly changing things to keep the content fresh and engaging. Our team for my son changed from Team Angry Birds, to Team Disney Princesses or Fairies, to Team Lego Friends in 3 short years, reflecting the highly motivating themes that they needed to incorporate into their therapy. They were able to generate lots of meaningful data and made a lot more progress than the schools could, and in less time as well. The ideal situation was to see our son's special education program in public school collaborating with our private therapy teams, but they didn't.

ABA was a huge success, but we literally had to drain our finances to do it. We did as much as we could while we could afford it, but we had to stop to prevent from living on the streets. We have another child, a daughter, our son's older sister. She's a godsend at 9 years old, seeing first hand how we need to treat her 7 year old little brother. She's like a mini BCBA around the house -- part time therapist, part time goof ball, full time sister. Sometimes she asks why brother gets all the attention, and then we realize that we need to love both our kids equally.

We strongly believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. I thought health insurance companies understood this concept long ago, so enacting legislation that fosters early intervention and treatment of Autism through ABA and similar therapies would be a foregone conclusion. We need ALL insurance companies in Hawaii to support this, just as they do on the mainland.

Please pass whatever legislation is needed to bring affordable therapy for Autism to the islands. If the 1 in 88 statistic for Autism still holds true, one day, someday soon, you or someone you love will need to make use of this legislation, too. Mahalo for your support.

Sincerely,

Roland Yee

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Ryan
Last Name : Kerr
and Street Address : PO BOX 1307
City/Town : Kihei
Island : HI
Email : rwkerr6@gmail.com

I SUPPORT AUTISM INSURANCE REFORM.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

I represent a local resident in Hawai'i and I support children with autism. I support
autism insurance campaigns in Hawai'i, specifically House Bill 1108.

Robert James

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Richard
Last Name : Bartolf
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Khei
Island : Maui
Email : richardb@gmail.com

I support autism insurance reform.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Raenell
Last Name : Barcarro
and Street Address : Pukalani
City/Town : Pukalani
Island : Maui
Email : raenellbacarry@yahoo.com

I support autism insurance reform.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Misty
Last Name : Kahuhane
Affiliation (optional) : Horizon's Academy
and Street Address : Kula
City/Town : Kula
Island : Maui
Email : mistykah@gmail.com

I am a service worker on Maui for those with special needs. I am willing and able to help and I support autism insurance.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Paul
Last Name : Brown
and Street Address : Kihei
City/Town : Kihei
Island : Maui
Email : pbrown@gmail.com

I am a PAB service worker working with children and adults with autism. I am ready and able to help all individuals with autism on Maui. Malama our Keiki!

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Peter
Last Name : Warda
Affiliation (optional) : Horizons Academy
and Street Address : Paia
City/Town : Paia
Island : Maui
Email : peterwardavisionquest@gmail.com

I am a support worker for special needs individuals and support autism insurance reform.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Mikey
Last Name : Kukahiwa-Haruno
Affiliation (optional) : Bayada
and Street Address : 2170 Jennie St
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : HAWAII
Email : mkukahiwaharuno@gmail.com

Message to legislators : I work as a skills trainer/paraprofessional in the school setting and have mostly dealt with children with ASD. For all my clients, they have always seen me as their helper and they seem to understand that. They appreciate the support they get from their skills trainer. Based off data, they seem to become better, academically, socially, and behaviorally. Most times, this is due to the support they receive from their skills trainer or other resources that help with their daily challenges and struggles. I've learned and used ABA strategies with my clients and in some way or another, there always seems to be a solution to help with their needs. I support this cause.

2/11/15

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Noelani
Last Name : Emelio
Affiliation (optional) : Horizon's Academy
and Street Address : Kahului
City/Town : Kahului
Island : Maui
Email :

I am a direct support worker here on Maui, I support autism insurance and I am ready and willing to help.

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

First Name : Patricia
Last Name : Tsukimura
Affiliation (optional) : Shafter Elementary School
and Street Address : 2-Fort Shafter
City/Town : Honolulu
Island : Oahu
Email : patty_tsukimura@notes.k12.hi.us

I am writing in support of the autism insurance bill. Having worked in the Department of Education as a Preschool Special Education Teacher and Student Services Coordinator for 25 years, I have seen the progress that children with autism can make when they are provided with the appropriate supports.

The individual support given at home with ABA services is very important to help children learn behavioral skills and also to assist the families with managing their children's behaviors.

Because Autism is a Spectrum Disorder, and children display such a wide variety of problem behaviors, it becomes crucial that their programs at school and home become individualized. The ABA providers can deliver a program that is tailored to the child's needs.

As the child's behavior is addressed systematically at home with ABA services, then at the school level we see a corresponding decrease in problem behaviors also. Then the child can be provided with a less restrictive setting, and less of the school's resources are needed to deal with individual children.

Parents have expressed to me how much they have been helped when they have the ABA services. The stress level in the home is lessened and the family is happier with a feeling of hope for the future.

I urge you to support autism insurance reform!

2/11/15
The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

HB1108 Relating to Health

Name : Nayda
Last Name : Collins
Street Address : 95-1246 Moea
City/Town : Miliani
Island : Oahu
Email Address : naydajramos@yahoo.com
Company : BAYADA
Position : Registered behavior technician

I support autism insurance.

2-11-15

Good Morning Chair(s) and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am in support of the Autism Bill but with amendments to the age cap. I think it should follow the Medicaid age of 21.

Please allow me to demonstrate what this bill does for Luke.

We go to work every day filling up the bowl with services for those who need. Children with Tricare need services. We take them from the bowl. Great! We are helping Keiki! Children with Medicare need services. We take them from the bowl. Fantastic! We are helping Keiki! Luke, our son, needs services we go to the bowl and are told to go away that we are not eligible.

Luke is 14. Does he need help? Yes! Can he still be helped? Yes! As an example, Luke was lured across the street from his High School by some students. It is an extremely busy road. Luke went. He said to me after, "Mom, the cars wouldn't stop!" "They should stop!" Luke does not have the capabilities to cross the street on his own. If he could have access to services he could get the help he needs to navigate some of these dangerous situations.

Luke is liking a girl in his class. So appropriate behavior from a student that age would be? Well what does Luke do? He writes his life story, his genealogy on a paper, and wants to give it to her. He is offering this of himself. Socially appropriate? No! He needs the services to understand how to navigate socially and become an independent functional adult.

Are these services offered by the D.O.E.? No! We are told that his behavior needs consequences, write-ups for insubordination, and suspension. When in fact he needs people who are trained in helping him.

We are going back to work on Thursday, our insurance will be paid, the bowl will be replenished. When will Luke have access to the bowl?

Do what is right! We are ALL counting on your help!

Respectfully submitted,

Geri Pinnow (Luke's Mom)

2-11-15

Good Morning Chair Bellati and Committee,

I would like to ask for your help. My brain does not work too good. I would like an operation or something to fix it. To get better education because I want to get smarter. Ok, I'm done.

Thank you for your help,

Luke Pinnow