

LATE

The Honorable Josh Green, Chair
Senate Committee on Health

RE: Support for HB578, HD2

As a public health professional, I strongly support HB578, HD2 for two reasons:

- 1) Creates an opportunity to identify health issues and provide anticipatory guidance as youth enter adolescence. Through screening, health professionals will be able to identify potential behavioral health and medical issues, risky behavior, gender and sexual health issues, obesity and overweight, as well as promote healthy lifestyles, including exercise and healthy eating.
- 2) Possible identification and early treatment of Hansen's disease, if the DOE Student's Health Record (Form 14) is modified to include screening for Hansen's Disease. DOE's Form 14 does not specifically require screening for Hansen's Disease. Early identification increases opportunities for prompt treatment. Universal screening will help to assure that no particular group(s) are targeted or stigmatized.

Hansen's Disease

According to the CDC, Hansen's disease (HD), or leprosy, is a reportable disease that can cause significant disability if not diagnosed and treated. During 2009–2011, the annual incidence of newly diagnosed HD in the United States was 0.43 cases per 1 million population. Persons born in Oceania were identified as the population with the highest rate of HD within the United States, with a rate of diagnosis >10 times that of any other region. **Hawaii was identified as the location where most of the patients from Oceania were diagnosed.**

HD can lead to severe nerve and tissue damage if treatment is delayed for months or years; for this reason it is important to recognize this disease and begin treatment as early as possible. While most patients were diagnosed within 1 year of the onset of symptoms, many patients had symptoms for many years before diagnosis. Foreign-born persons were at the highest risk for delayed diagnosis.

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), Incidence of Hansen's Disease — United States, 1994–2011, **October 31, 2014 / 63(43);969-972**

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6343a1.htm>

Epidemiology of Hansen's Disease

The US National Hansen's Disease Program (NHDP) has noted an increasing number of cases among US-resident Marshall Islanders and Micronesians, including several persons with advanced disease. During January 2000–October 2009, 72 (55%) of US HD cases in Micronesian or Marshallese patients were reported in Hawaii. Of 29 Micronesian patients, 22 (76%) had multibacillary HD, 5 were female, and **3 were children**. Of 43 Marshallese patients, 31 (72%) had multibacillary HD, 17 (17%) were female, and **1 was a child**.

Hansen Disease among Micronesian and Marshallese Persons Living in the United States, *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2011 Jul; 17(7): 1202–1208

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3381381/>

May I suggest amendments to the bill to 1) require screening specifically for Hansen's Disease, and 2) increase the frequency of the health assessments in alignment with child development milestones.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure,
Sandra Pak, MPH