



PARTNERS IN CARE Oahu Continuum of Care

Partners in Care is a coalition of Oahu's homeless service providers, government representatives and community stakeholders working together in partnership to end homelessness.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 765: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair, Human Services; and Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair, Housing; and Members Committees on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Advocacy Committee, Partners in Care

Hearing: **Thursday, 2/5/15; 10:00 am; CR 329**

Dear Chair Morikawa, Chair Hashem, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in strong support** of HB 765, which appropriates funds to DHS to continue to administer housing first programs for chronically homeless individuals. I am Betty Lou Larson from the Advocacy Committee of Partners in Care.

Partners in Care strongly supports \$3 million to continue this successful program and to expand it to the Neighbor Islands. We respectfully urge you to add this funding to the **base budget of DHS**. Because funding is not in the base budget, the sustainability of housing for individuals in the current program (40 households as of 1/28/15) is at risk. Real people could be impacted without sustained funding, people like "Wanda" and her daughter. Success stories like Wanda demonstrate that Housing First can change lives and can successfully transition the chronically homeless into permanent housing.

Wanda is a 41 year old single mother with a 15 year old daughter. This family had been homeless for 6 years, living unsheltered on the streets. Wanda has a serious mental illness, and was self-medicating with drugs and alcohol. Her daughter was not attending school and was helping to care for her mother. Wanda and her daughter are now stably housed. The daughter is attending classes again, and the case manager is working with Wanda to take medication more regularly. Housing First has enabled the daughter to again be a teenager and get her life back on track as well as helping Wanda to stabilize and be successful in permanent housing.

People in every community in Hawaii are concerned about homelessness. Last year PIC circulated a petition about affordable housing and received many comments about the need to solve homelessness. Two poignant comments show what people in the community feel about homelessness and how we must solve this crisis:

"When I see a person without a home I think: Where's the Aloha Hawaii? Where is the empathy? How can we allow children to live on beaches and on the streets? How can we allow our Veterans to be Homeless? I know some folks need mental health services so let's get them help. I couldn't imagine being forced to live my life out in the public, can you? So I vote Yes! Please do all you can to End homelessness in Hawaii and hopefully every state will follow us." And

"Malama our Island Ohana! Support the cause, and put a roof over homelessness."

The People of Hawaii are speaking to you today. Thank you for hearing their testimony. Please contact me at (808) 373-0356 or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org if you have any questions.



The Public Policy Voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii

HEARING: House Committee(s) on HUS/HSG, hearing on February 5, 2015 @ 10:00 a.m. #329

SUBMITTED: February 4, 2015

TO: House Committee on HUS House Committee on HSG
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair Rep. Mark Hashem, Chair
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair Rep. Jo Jordan, Vice Chair

FROM: Walter Yoshimitsu, Executive Director

RE: Support for HB 765 Relating to Housing (Housing First Appropriations)

Honorable Chairs and members of the joint Senate Committees on Human Services, Hawaiian Affairs and Public Safety, I am Walter Yoshimitsu, **representing the Hawaii Catholic Conference**. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii, which under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents Roman Catholics in Hawaii.

We support HB 765 because homelessness continues to be one of the State’s most significant and challenging social problems. The Diocese of Honolulu supports any strategic plan that makes homelessness and affordable housing one of its primary areas of focus. For many households in Hawaii at risk of becoming homeless, high housing costs mean skimping on food and medical care, moving frequently to find lower rents—which can interrupt a child’s education—creating periods of homelessness. As people of faith, we simply cannot sit back and watch while families fall apart.

Appropriations to Housing First programs only benefit the community by:

- Targeting chronically homeless individuals who are vulnerable and have difficulty accessing much-needed programs and services;
- Providing necessary funding for (1) permanent housing subsidies and (2) intensive care management and/or support services; and
- Saving taxpayers the expense of providing hospitalization, medical treatment, incarceration, police intervention, and emergency shelter expenses.

For families and individuals facing emergency needs, the Housing First approach is ideal, as it provides them with assistance to find permanent housing quickly and without conditions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

kobayashi2-Lynda

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 11:03 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: bmenino@hopeserviceshawaii.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB765 on Feb 5, 2015 10:00AM

HB765

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for HUS/HSG on Feb 5, 2015 10:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brandee Menino	Hope Services Hawaii	Support	No

Comments: Please clarify whether allocation includes funding to expand to the neighbor islands

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.

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TO: Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Human Services

Representative Mark Hashem, Chair
Representative Jo Jordan, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Housing

FROM: Scott Morishige, Executive Director, PHOCUSED

HEARING: House Committees on Human Services and Housing
Thursday, February 5, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in Conf. Room 329

Testimony in Support of HB765, Relating to Housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of **HB765**, which would increase the appropriation for the State's Housing First program to \$3 million. PHOCUSED is a nonprofit membership and advocacy organization that works together with community stakeholders to impact program and policy change for the most vulnerable in our community, including the homeless.

Housing First: A 'Best Practice' Approach to Ending Homelessness

Housing First is a nationally recognized best practice for effectively and efficiently housing the most vulnerable and high-need homeless individuals by (1) Placing them quickly into permanent housing, and (2) Providing wrap-around supportive services to assist them in maintaining housing. The program not only provides immediate assistance to our most vulnerable homeless individuals, but also helps to reduce the public cost of serving these individuals in the long-term. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness has endorsed Housing First as a 'best practice' for governments and service agencies addressing chronic homelessness.

A Smart Investment: Housing First Reduces Long-Term Public Costs

The individuals targeted for Housing First are often the highest utilizers of public services, including police and emergency responders, emergency room services, and mental health crisis services. Nationally, research has demonstrated that Housing First programs result in large public cost savings by stabilizing homeless individuals and reducing their use of these ongoing public services. For example, a study found that in Los Angeles, placing just four chronically homeless individuals into permanent supportive housing saved more than \$80,000 per year.

Housing First Locally

Since March 2014, PHOCUSED has surveyed over 2,200 homeless individuals and families on the island of Oahu. Through this standardized assessment, we have been able to identify 590 homeless households that appear eligible for Housing First based upon their level of need. Through the work of the State's Housing First program and other local Housing First efforts, we have been able to connect 46% (270) of these households to a Housing First provider for intake and housing search. This is a



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tremendous achievement, but we will not be able to continue these efforts without a further, long-term investment from the State. An increased appropriation of \$3 million for Housing First will not only sustain efforts on Oahu, but also enable expansion to our neighbor island communities (i.e. Maui, Kauai, Hawaii Island, etc.).

Housing First in the Base Budget

Currently the State Housing First Program has permanently housed **43** individuals and families. Without continued funding for this program both the supportive case management and rental support would cease and these individuals and families will be at great risk of falling back into homelessness. To prevent the disruption of months of progress PHOCUSED strongly advocates for the inclusion of the State Housing First program into the base budget.

Once again, PHOCUSED strongly urges your support of this bill. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact PHOCUSED at 521-7462 or by e-mail at admin@phocused-hawaii.org.

kobayashi2-Lynda

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 9:12 AM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: ajc@aloha.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB765 on Feb 5, 2015 10:00AM

HB765

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for HUS/HSG on Feb 5, 2015 10:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alika Campbell	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support the Housing First approach and encourage you to support it also.

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.

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HPCA

HAWAII PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

LATE

House Committee on Human Services

The Hon. Dee Morikawa, Chair

The Hon. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice-Chair

House Committee on Housing

The Hon. Mark J. Hashem, Chair

The Hon. Jo Jordan, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of House Bill 765

Relating to Housing

Submitted by Robert Hirokawa, Chief Executive Officer

February 5, 2015, 10:00 am, Room 329

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA), which represents the federally qualified community health centers in Hawaii, supports House Bill 765, appropriating funds to administer housing first projects for the chronically homeless.

The HPCA is a staunch believer in the social determinants of health, those economic and social conditions that influence an individual and a community's health status. These conditions serve as risk factors endemic to a person's living and working environment, rather than their behavioral or genetic histories. Factors such as income, education, access to recreation and healthy foods, housing, and employment, can and do have measurable impacts on a person and a community, both in health and financial outcomes.

House Bill 765 speaks to one of these major determinants by seeking to creating viable housing opportunities for chronically homeless individuals here in Hawaii. For that reason, we strongly support this measure and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE



Community Health Outreach Work

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 226
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone (808) 853-3292 • Fax (808) 853-3274

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 765: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair, Human Services; and Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair, Housing; and Members Committees on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Heather Lusk, Executive Director, CHOW Project

Hearing: Thursday, February 5, 2015 10:00 AM, Room 329

Dear Chair Morikawa, Chair Hashem, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support** of HB 765, appropriating funding for a variety of critical programs targeted at addressing the affordable housing crisis and ending homelessness.

For over 20 years the CHOW Project has been working improve the lives of men women and families experiencing homelessness who also may be touched by addiction. The CHOW Project is dedicated to serving individuals, families, and communities adversely affected by drug use, through a participant-centered harm reduction approach. CHOW works to reduce drug related harms such as but not limited to HIV, hepatitis B/C and overdose. As a nonprofit organization that provides services for the homeless, we have seen firsthand how the new housing first approach is effective when working with our population.

CHOW has been involved in the original implementation of Housing First and we have had several participants of our program be housed under the current Housing First program and the change in their lives has been remarkable. For example, one of our participants has been on the streets for over a decade and in the throes of chaotic addiction for even longer. After housing her through the Housing First program, she now has the stability to address her substance use and is healthier than she has been in a long time.

Thank you for considering this bill – it will save lives.

Sincerely,

Heather Lusk
Executive Director
CHOW Project

kobayashi2-Lynda

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 11:20 AM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: rezentesc@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB765 on Feb 5, 2015 10:00AM



HB765

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

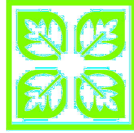
Testimony for HUS/HSG on Feb 5, 2015 10:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cynthia K.L. Rezentes	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I have seen some of the preliminary results of placing people into housing via the Housing First program and have been pleased to see how this program has turned a number of people's lives around. I would encourage that this program be continued for not just the ones that are currently housed but that the program be expanded to include additional individuals who are chronically homeless to get them off our streets, provide them an improved quality of life and also to decrease the hidden costs of providing service to them on an on-going basis, i.e. emergency care at hospitals instead of continuing and managed care, ambulance runs, etc. Mahalo, Cynthia K.L. Rezentes

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 765: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair, Human Services; and Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair, Housing; and Members Committees on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Trisha Kajimura, Social Policy Director, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Hearing: Thursday, 2/5/15; 10:00 am; CR 329

Dear Chair Morikawa, Chair Hashem, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of HB 765, which funds various homelessness service programs.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 60 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, developmentally disabled, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy to the most vulnerable of the people in Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of working on housing issues and solutions to homelessness. We strive to help people live in dignified circumstances and reach their full potential.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i strongly supports \$3 million to continue this successful program and to expand it to the Neighbor Islands. We respectfully urge you to add this funding to the **base budget of DHS**. Because funding is not in the base budget, the sustainability of housing for individuals in the current program (40 households as of 1/28/15) is at risk. Catholic Charities Hawai'i is partnering with other agencies on the Pathways Project (a Housing First model), to end chronic homelessness. This program draws on a different funding source but follows the same Housing First evidence-based model. A recent story shows how Housing First services are effective to change lives and end homelessness.

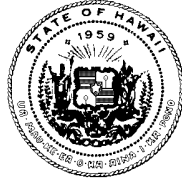
"John" came to the Hawaii Pathways program when he was identified as one of Oahu's most vulnerable and displaced homeless adults through the Hale O Malama coordinated assessment and intake process. As specified by the Housing First model, we provided intensive clinical and support services as he has struggled with living independently in his own apartment, relapsing periodically into substance abuse. Recently, a crisis occurred when he had his personal affects stolen, including the key to his apartment. He called on the CCH support service team for help, and was able to maintain sobriety despite returning to the streets for a night. The therapeutic relationship developed by our support service team with John has kept him in the fight to stay housed and recover from his many challenges. We can clearly see that this intensive partnership with our clients is an effective intervention to chronic homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 527-4810 or trisha.kajimura@catholiccharitieshawaii.org if you have any questions.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808)527-4810 • trisha.kajimura@catholiccharitieshawaii.org





STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

LATE

February 4, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair
House Committee on Housing

FROM: Rachael Wong, DrPH, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 765 – RELATING TO HOUSING**

Hearing: Thursday, February 5, 2015; 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329; State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of H.B. 765 is to appropriate \$3 million to the Department of Human Services to support the State's Housing First program to assist Hawaii's chronically homeless.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure as it is supportive of our goals and objectives by providing to continue the State's Housing First (HF) program. However, the DHS respectfully requests the Legislature support the DHS's priorities set forth in the Executive Budget which contains a request for \$2,000,000 for the continuation of the HF program.

The State's HF program was designed and is being implemented to align with nationally recognized best practices to house and provide robust services to the chronically homeless with the highest acuity (needs), without pre-requisite compliance with treatment services. Together

with Hale O Malama, the State's coordinated entry system to available homeless resources, by statute, the HF program is targeting service to unsheltered, chronically homeless that typically overuse high cost services such as hospitals, 911 systems, emergency rooms and jails.

The HF program leveraged federal grant funding totaling approximately \$2.9 million awarded in 2013 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to the Department of Health (DOH), to implement the Hawaii Pathways Project (HPP), and an evidence based housing first program for individuals with substance abuse and/or co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues. This important collaboration with the DOH and other stakeholders is part of the State's overall effort to develop a coordinated approach to end homelessness. The SAMHSA grant provides funds for services; it does not provide funding for housing costs that the HF program provides.

Since the June, 2014 execution of the most recent HF program contract with vendor, US Vets, the HF program has housed 43 chronically homeless people, including two households (families). Another 32 people have been referred and are at various stages in preparation for housing and services. Thus far, the average cost of each housing unit has been \$1,229 per month. Supportive services costs have varied due to the range of needs of each client. However, one key outcome established by the HF program is that each client will be provided case management services and will apply for all benefits for which they are eligible to receive.

As part of a client's transition to housing stability, if a client is eligible for and receives Social Security Disability Income (SS DI), no more than 30% of the client's income would be used to contribute to rent costs. As more clients proceed through this process, cost savings will be achieved in the total cost of housing each person. To date, U.S. Vets has used approximately \$16,000 of such funding to supplement rental cost for clients.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



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Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
In Support of House Bill 765 Relating to Housing
House Committee on Human Services
House Committee on Housing
Scheduled for Hearing Thursday, February 5, 2015, 10:00 am, Room 329

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is a nonprofit law firm created to advocate on behalf of low income individuals and families in Hawai'i on policy and legal issues. Our core mission is to help our clients gain access to the resources, services, and fair treatment that they need to realize their opportunities for self-achievement and economic security.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of House Bill 765, which would provide \$3 million in funding for the state's Housing First program. Hawai'i Appleseed supports this bill because permanent housing is **the only solution to homelessness**.

Housing First is the most effective housing intervention for some of the most vulnerable members of our community—people experiencing chronic homelessness. It is a best practice that immediately places individuals experiencing homelessness into permanent housing, while also providing clients with the opportunity to receive social services. Without stable, permanent housing, it is virtually impossible for a client to address the root causes that led to their chronic homelessness. Many of those experiencing chronic homelessness have been unsheltered for years and are medically vulnerable. As a result, they face many barriers to accessing housing. Housing First removes those barriers by placing them in permanent housing and providing the supportive services that enable them to stay housed.

Hawai'i Appleseed strongly supports a total of **\$3 million** in appropriations for Housing First, including continued funding of \$1.5 million for the highly successful Housing First program on Oahu. The Housing First program has already placed 40 individuals into permanent housing, and it is critical to maintain stable funding for housing or else many of those already in the program will end up unsheltered again. We also support an additional \$1.5 million to expand the program to the neighbor islands, where service providers can leverage federal funds. We also request that these funds be added to the **base budget of the Department of Human Services** to ensure program stability going forward.

We commend the Legislature for supporting real solutions to homelessness and funding Housing First last session. We hope that you will continue this commitment and also bring the benefits of the program to the neighbor islands to help vulnerable individuals and families throughout the state. Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of HB 765 to truly end homelessness.