



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Health  
Thursday, March 24, 2016 at 10:15 a.m.

By

Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor

And

Jerris Hedges, MD, Dean

John A. Burns School of Medicine

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HCR 139/HR 91 – REQUESTING THE JOHN A. BURNS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL IN WEST HAWAII.

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Creagan and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HCR 139/HR 91 which requests the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) to conduct a feasibility study for a university hospital in West Hawai'i.

There is a growing need for an additional hospital in West Hawai'i in light of the growing population on the area and the potential of increased numbers of visiting tourists as plans to restore commercial international air services to Kona Airport come to fruition. Kona Community Hospital is limited in terms of capacity and unable to accommodate West Hawai'i's health care needs.

Workforce studies indicate that Hawai'i is nearly 700 physicians short (across all disciplines) when compared to national norms. This number has been steadily rising over the years and is predicted to increase, especially as more physicians reach retirement age. However, it has been shown that physicians who train in Hawai'i remain here to practice. 80% of physicians who received their medical degree and completed their residency training at JABSOM have stayed in Hawai'i, which is the highest in the nation. The addition of a teaching hospital in West Hawai'i provides an additional training site for our local students who may potentially practice there.

The University agrees that a feasibility study for a university hospital in West Hawai'i would be valuable. We recommend that this planning effort be done in conjunction with leadership from the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation, so that redundancies with existing hospitals in the area are avoided. JABSOM would welcome the opportunity to conduct such a study, but requests an appropriation to enable it to perform the requested task. Thus, we ask that sufficient funds be appropriated so that a meaningful study may be conducted.