

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB113
Relating to Health
February 13, 2015, 1:35pm
Conference room 414
Submitted by Cori Takesue, Psy.D.
Post-Doctoral Psychology Fellow, Behavioral Health Specialist, Lanai Community Health
Center**

Written Testimony in Support of SB113

I am writing to offer my strongest support for **SB113**. It has come to my attention that Hawaii has a shortage of over 800 doctors and many other types of primary care and behavioral health providers. This greatly impacts the healthcare needs of individuals in Hawaii as it limits their access to the care they need. Those who are especially impacted by this shortage are individuals living in rural communities and on less populated neighbor islands as these areas are already lacking in appropriate resources. It is difficult to recruit providers and retain them due to remoteness of rural living, the high cost of living, and the expense of having to relocate. One of the fastest and most cost effective ways to recruit providers to areas of need is by paying back their loans in return for continuous service to that area.

I have been privileged to be a part of the Lanai Community Health Center (LCHC) team since February 2014 as a Post-Doctoral Psychology Fellow and Behavioral Health Specialist. I have been learning first-hand how the programs and services offered by LCHC are utilized and how they have been beneficial to the community of Lanai. Through our integrative services, our medical and behavioral health providers are continuing to discover the behavioral health needs of our patients and are working together to develop collaborative treatment to promote the wellness of our patients, with the goal of decreasing the burden of chronic disease and improving quality of life. During the course of a year, I have seen my caseload reach full capacity serving children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families. We have seen an overall surge in child and adolescent patients utilizing behavioral health services, especially through referrals from Child & Welfare Services and more recently, self-referrals and parental-referrals who prefer to have their child receive behavioral health services away from the school to protect their anonymity. In looking at our calculations comparing BH utilization from 2012 to 2013, there has been a 30% increase in BH visits and a 10% increase in number of BH patients. I expect these numbers to increase when looking at BH utilization for 2014-2015 due to the expected growth of the island's population, the increasing visibility of services, and the rapid changes happening on the island. Will your support of this bill, I will be able to continue making an impact on the community of Lanai by providing the much needed behavioral health services and integrative primary care while reducing the burden of my graduate student loans and adjusting to the high cost of Lanai living. Please support SB113!

Some other important facts to consider: In 2012, the UH John A. Burns School of Medicine Area Health Education Center created a state loan repayment program with private donations from HMSA, Queens and AlohaCare and received a grant for dollar for dollar matching funds from the federal government. This loan repayment program has provided repayment of up to \$40,000 a year in educational debt for 16 individuals. The individuals funded are from all the islands except Kauai (so far, but we hope to change that). Nine are Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioners (eight FNPs and one Geriatric/Adult NP) and seven are physicians (two family physicians, two pediatricians, one psychiatrist, one obstetrician and one internist). The practice locations are primarily community health centers, with one provider working at the Halawa Correctional System and one provider working at a non-profit in a rural area. These providers have all made a two year commitment to working in underserved areas, and we hope to extend this commitment by continuing this program. In September, 2014, Dr. Kelley Withy at John A. Burns School of Medicine has received a 4 year grant for \$311,875 a year in federal funds to be spent on loan repayment in Hawaii, but the money can only be spent if there is local funding to match it. She has been able to raise \$50,000, but no more. So that will leave \$261,875 of federal money unspent when we have a severe shortage to fill. Dr. Withy also was able to expand the types of providers who can be assisted to include social workers, psychologists, marriage and family counselors, as well as physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants. This is an important program, and it will end if there is no state legislative support, so please support SB113. Mahalo and thank you for your time!

Written Testimony in Support of SB113

I am writing to offer my strongest support for **SB113**. Hawaii has a shortage of over 800 doctors, and almost all other types of primary care and behavioral health providers. Without these healthcare providers, the people of Hawaii will not have access to the healthcare they need. The need is most acute for those on neighbor islands and those with the least resources in the first place. The fastest and most cost effective way to recruit providers to areas of need is by paying back their loans in return for continuous service to that area.

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Sincerely,

Shaun Berry MD