



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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WRITTEN ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB0115  
RELATING TO HEALTH**

SENATOR JILL TOKUDA, CHAIR, SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: March 2, 2015

Room Number: 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None for DOH.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports Senate Bill 0115  
3 (SB0115). The purpose of SB115 is to connect adolescents back to their healthcare provider by  
4 expanding the physical examination requirement. Currently, physical examinations are only  
5 conducted upon entry into the school system in kindergarten. SB0115 expands the physical  
6 examination requirement to also include entry into seventh grade. Grade seven was chosen  
7 because it coincides with current immunization requirements. This bill follows the lead of other  
8 states and Hawaii private schools who have multiple physical examination requirements  
9 throughout a child's educational journey.

10 The Department offers comments in the interest of the health of our students because  
11 increasing the physical exam requirement for school attendance provides a broader, systematic  
12 approach to connecting children back to their primary care physicians. The policy also promotes  
13 utilization of the covered preventive health benefits established by the Affordable Care Act  
14 (ACA). Due to the ACA, annual well child examinations are a required covered benefit in all  
15 health plans.

16 The proposed increase in the physical exam requirements is congruent with the policy  
17 priority set forth by the Obesity Prevention Task Force. The Task Force, co-chaired by our late  
18 Director Loretta Fuddy developed and recommended legislation pursuant to Act 269 (SB2778  
19 CD1), Session Laws of Hawaii 2012. The policy to expand physical examination requirements  
20 for public school students was proposed to reinforce a culture of wellness and preventive health  
21 care.

1           Currently, the state expends \$470 million a year on obesity-related medical costs, and  
2 \$770 million on diabetes-related medical costs. Today in Hawaii, more than one in two adults  
3 (BRFSS 2012; 56%) and over one in four high school (YRBS 2013; 28.2%) are overweight or  
4 obese. The rate adults with diabetes in Hawaii is 8.4% and an additional 12.9% have been  
5 diagnosed with pre-diabetes (2013 BRFSS). By 2030 half of adults in Hawaii are projected to be  
6 obese without effective interventions (2013, Trust for America's Health). According to the Trust  
7 for America's Health, "Keeping people healthier is one of the most effective ways to reduce  
8 healthcare costs," (July 2008).

9           The adoption of this measure entails family and community engagement. The additional  
10 physical exam requirements offer physicians and healthcare providers together with parents and  
11 adolescents the opportunity to address developmentally relevant physical and mental health  
12 issues. Regular visits are preventive, so health needs can be assessed and addressed early. The  
13 requirements of SB0115 embraces the whole child to assure they are healthy and ready to learn.

14           Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
March 2, 2015 at 9:00 am

By

Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor

And

Jerris R. Hedges, MD, Dean

John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

May Okihiro, MD, Professor of Pediatrics

John A. Burns School of Medicine

### SB115 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kouchi, and members of the committee:

Thank you for an opportunity to testify in strong support of SB115, which requires children to undergo a physical examination prior to attending seventh grade beginning with the 2016-2017 school year.

Almost three-fourth (3/4) of all adolescent mortality is a result of motor vehicle accidents, homicide, suicide, and unintentional injuries (CDC, 2010). Unhealthy lifestyles and risk factors for chronic disease, such as smoking, poor nutrition, and mental health problems, begin in childhood and adolescence and track into adulthood. Youth are also at risk for suicide from underlying depression. In 2011, among youth in Hawai'i:

- 29.5% reported that they felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row
- 15% said they would attempt suicide in the past 12 months
- 1 in 4 are overweight or obese, and in some communities over 50% of adolescents are overweight or obese
- 37% reported that they ever had sexual intercourse

Except for routine immunizations and mandated sports physicals, many youth do not receive health screening for depression or chronic health conditions such as obesity. As academic success of Hawaii's youth is intimately linked to their health, annual health screening of school age youth has great promise for strengthening the fabric of society. Research shows that poor health such as mental health disorders, uncontrolled asthma, poor nutrition and sleep disorders are closely linked to poor academic outcomes. On the other hand, research also shows that academic success is a primary predictor of adult health outcomes. For example, in Hawai'i, the prevalence of diabetes among those who did not graduate from high school is 10.6%, twice that of those who graduated from college (4.8%).

Primary care providers are in a unique position to screen for chronic disease risk factors and behaviors and provide guidance, brief counseling and care coordination for the adolescent and his/her parents. In the ideal world, youth would see their physicians regularly throughout childhood for preventive health care. However, in today's busy world this often does not happen; physicians often only see children and adolescents when they are sick or injured.

Thus mandating annual health screening by a primary care provider as they enter their adolescent years offers great promise for advancing the health of our keiki, ensuring that they are healthy and ready to learn.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

# HMSA



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

March 2, 2015

The Honorable Jill Tokuda, Chair  
The Honorable Ronald Kouchi, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**Re: SB 115 – Relating to Education**

Dear Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kouchi and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on SB 115, which establishes a program in the Department of Education requiring any child entering seventh grade to provide appropriate written documentation from a licensed physician or advanced practice registered nurse confirming they have received, or are in the process of receiving, a physical examination performed within twelve months of the date of attendance. HMSA supports the intent of the Bill which reinforces the preventive health mandate under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) which assures medical examination coverage for children up to age 21.

Recognizing the sagacity of the old adage, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” a critical element of the ACA is a mandate for preventive care for infants and children, as well as for adults. Pursuant to rules promulgated to implement the ACA, children under the age of 21 are covered not only for their annual physical examination and immunizations; but also for vision and hearing screening; oral health risk assessments; developmental assessments to identify any developmental problems; screenings for hemoglobin level, lead, tuberculin, and other test; and screenings to detect, prevent, and treat problems such as obesity and depression.

HMSA believes that preventive health is the cornerstone of a more efficient and effective health care system. We applaud the intent of SB 115, which reinforces the goal of the ACA’s focus on preventive health generally, and on well-child visits, specifically.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Diesman'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jennifer Diesman  
Vice President  
Government Relations



**HPCCA**

HAWAII PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

The Hon. Jill N. Tokuda, Chair

The Hon. Ronald D. Kouchi, Vice Chair

**Testimony on Senate Bill 115**

**Relating to Health**

**Submitted by Nani Medeiros, Public Affairs and Policy Director**

**February 27, 2015, 9:00 am, Room 211**

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA), which represents the federally qualified health centers/community health centers in Hawaii, supports Senate Bill 115, requiring children undergo a physical examination prior to beginning seventh grade.

In Hawaii, public education is student centered and grounded in a commitment to equity. Part of that equity depends squarely on ensuring all children having the opportunity to pursue, and excel in, their education. The number one cause most often provided by parents of children experiencing chronic absenteeism from our public schools is healthcare. As a community, we must do more to ensure our students have access to health care, and utilize that access through wellness checkups and preventive visits so they can reduce their incidents of chronic absenteeism by identifying and addressing health issues early-on. Asthma, vision, hearing, depression, and many other health issues can be identified through screenings and physical examinations.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to testify.



To: The Honorable Jill N Tokuda, Chair, Committee on Ways and Means  
The Honorable Ronald D Kouchi, Vice Chair, Committee on Ways and Means  
Members, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jessica Yamauchi, Executive Director

Date: February 27, 2015

Hrg: Senate Committee on Ways and Means; Monday, March 2, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. in Rm 211

Re: **Support for SB 115, Relating to Health**

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Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in **support of** Senate Bill 115, which requires children to undergo a physical examination prior to attending seventh grade, and provides for provisional attendance with written documentation if a child is in progress of undergoing a physical examination and sets a deadline for submittal of documentation of completion of such examination.

The Hawaii Public Health Institute (HIPHI) supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawaii. HIPHI weaves silos into working relationships as an effective network, ensuring that we come together across sectors to advance collaboration and innovation in public health and work towards making Hawaii the healthiest place on earth.

Currently, kindergarten is the only time when students are required to have a health assessment in order to attend public school. In contrast, students attending private schools are assessed every one to two years. While physical examinations are conducted for sports activities, those types of examinations are limited and not as comprehensive as a health assessment. As academic success of Hawaii's youth is intimately linked to their health, this additional health screening has great promise for strengthening our youth. Research shows that poor health such as mental health disorders, uncontrolled asthma, poor nutrition and sleep disorders are closely linked to poor academic outcomes. Further, obesity is becoming more of an issue each year, with as many as one in four children in Hawaii already being considered overweight or obese, contributing to medical expenditures that totaled more than \$470 million in 2009 alone.

The routine physical assessment of students is important for monitoring the health and wellbeing of our keiki. Conducting an additional physical assessment at the benchmark of entering seventh grade greatly aides in addressing and preventing health-related issues such as childhood obesity, smoking, and dealing with stress, as well as maintaining a current schedule of vaccinations. Vision and hearing are also screened, which can interfere with learning. The physical exam helps link the child back to their medical home, which has shown an improvement in health for a variety of outcomes. Primary care providers are in a unique position to screen for chronic disease risk factors and behaviors and



provide guidance, brief counseling and care coordination for the adolescent and his/her parents. Under the Affordable Care Act, these physical exams would be done free of charge for all of Hawaii's keiki.

Hawaii Public Health Institute supports SB 115, and asks the committee to pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jessica Yamauchi'.

Jessica Yamauchi, MA  
Executive Director



Testimony of Phyllis Dendle  
Director, Government Relations

Before:  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, Vice Chair

March 2, 2015  
9:00 am  
Conference Room 211

**SB 115 RELATING TO HEALTH**

Chair Tokuda and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 115 which would require students in the seventh grade to have physical exams.

**Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports this bill.**

Preventing illness is the best way to assure a happy, healthy life. It is also the best way to reduce the cost of health care. Prevention is important though out our lifetimes however, children may not always get the attention that may help to identify health issues before they become a crisis. This bill seeks to assure that at least once, on the brink of puberty, that children will have a physical exam to determine their overall health.

These well child exams are already covered under insurance plans. The small commitment of time needed by parents, students and the department of education to assure that students are healthy as they approach their teen years is a worthwhile investment to assure the wellbeing of our children.

Thank you for your consideration.



## Hawaii Chapter

February 27, 2015

Written Testimony from Michael Hamilton, President

### AAP - Hawaii Chapter

5414 Kirkwood Place  
Honolulu, HI 96821

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### RE: SB115 Relating to Health

Thank you for this opportunity to testify *in strong support* of SB115 which will establish a policy mandating documentation of a physical examination, by a licensed physician or advanced practice registered nurse, at entry to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

The Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is a voluntary organization of over 200 pediatricians in Hawaii. Our mission is to attain optimal physical, mental and social health and well being for infants, children, adolescents and young adults in Hawaii.

Adolescence is a period of tremendous physical, emotional and social change. During this period youth can develop numerous health issues, the majority of which are preventable. High-risk health behaviors that contribute to the most common causes of morbidity and mortality among young adults are often established in childhood and adolescence. These include smoking, drinking/drug use, high-risk sexual practices, unhealthy nutrition, lack of sleep and physical inactivity. These behaviors are also intimately linked to academic failure and achievement.

Primary care practitioners, pediatricians, family physicians and nurse practitioners who have a long-standing relationship with families, are ideally suited for preventing problem behaviors. The adolescent well child visit creates a safe environment where adolescents can feel comfortable talking to their doctor about their health and wellness. The American Academy of Pediatrics has advocated that child should have regular "Well Child" physical exams throughout childhood. In adolescence, they should receive appropriate screening and guidance for alcohol and drug use, depression and suicide, sexuality and reproductive health issues as well as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. However, this cannot be done in a 10-minute sick visit for a cold.

Too many adolescents are now *only* seen by their primary care provider for the occasional sick visit. The reasons are many. Prior to the Affordable Care Act, some health insurance policies did not cover preventive healthcare visits for children. The Hawaii Department of Education has mandated documentation of a comprehensive physical exam *only* at kindergarten entry. In turn, many busy, over-taxed parents have not prioritized preventive healthcare visits. It should not be surprising then that many public school students have not had a comprehensive physical exam for years. It should also not be a surprise that depression, obesity, pre-diabetes, substance abuse too often go undiagnosed until a crisis occurs.

SB115 will ensure that all youth attending public school in Hawaii have a well child preventive health care visit at 7<sup>th</sup> grade entry. While we know this is just the start, we think this bill strongly supports the medical home, optimal adolescent health and student achievement. In addition, the bill enhances the working relationship between adolescents, their parents, and the health and educational systems in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Michael Hamilton".

R. Michael Hamilton, MD, FAAP  
President

**SB115**

Submitted on: 2/28/2015

Testimony for WAM on Mar 2, 2015 09:00AM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Anthony Orozco	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

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