



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony SUPPORTING SB2540
Relating to the Department of Health

SENATOR JILL N. TOKUDA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Hearing Date: February 11, 2016, 9:30 a.m. Room Number: 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined at this time.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports this measure. We thank
3 the Legislature for its continued support. Only through a combination of financing support,
4 building a new facility, support in rebuilding community programs, and fundamental policy
5 changes will Hawaii be able to effectively address the needs of its citizens, the operation of the
6 Hawaii State Hospital (HSH), and be able to provide an effective continuum of mental health
7 supports. Separately, we will be addressing measures the Governor and others have introduced
8 regarding policy and staffing challenges. Clearly, all three branches of government play a
9 critical role in making this system function effectively.

10 The purpose of the measure is to authorize the governor to negotiate with any person for
11 the development or expansion of a forensic facility of the DOH. The DOH is in desperate need
12 of a new building at the Hawaii State Hospital TODAY.

13 This proposed legislation would permit the governor to use a ‘fast track’ process, which
14 should have the new building completed and operational in as little as three years from now. We

1 defer to other agencies, specifically Administration and General Services and the Attorney
2 General, regarding technical and legal aspects of what is being proposed.

3 The capacity issues at the HSH have been at crisis levels for years. Overcrowding was
4 part of the reason the United States Department of Justice filed a Civil Rights for
5 Institutionalized Persons (CRIPA) lawsuit against the State of Hawaii in 1991. The high census
6 is expected to continue increase into the foreseeable future.

7 The HSH Master Plan, originally completed in 2005, and updated in 2015, calls for the
8 design and construction of a 144 bed secure patient care facility to house high-risk patients.
9 However, according to the current timeline, the design and construction of the new building is
10 expected to take as much as five to eight years. Much of that delay will be due to the process of
11 procuring services and obtaining the necessary permitting. Those processes are governed by a
12 myriad of laws, rules, and procedures, all of which will add delay to the completion of this
13 much-needed project.

14 The time has come for the construction of a new, state of the art, secure building to house
15 the increasing number of high risk forensic patients ordered by the courts into the HSH. The
16 number of individuals ordered to the DOH for care and custody, and the severity of their charges,
17 has long exceeded the available physical space available in which to house and treat them. The
18 DOH projects the HSH will have continued increase in admissions for the foreseeable future.
19 Our state needs this new facility. This legislation will potentially speed the process up
20 considerably.

- 1 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
- 2 **Offered Amendments: (none)**