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WRITTEN
ONLY

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB 807 SD1
Relating to Health**

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

Hearing Date: 03/02/15, 1:00pm

Room Number: 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None

2 **Department Testimony:** We appreciate the intent of SB 807 SD1, but defer to the Department of
3 Public Safety as the lead agency in regards to the impact this might have on current capacity.

4 This measure seeks to help ensure that prescribing practitioners follow appropriate
5 prescribing practices for narcotic drugs by establishing an advisory body to the Department of
6 Public Safety to guide the development of a mandatory continuing medical education program.
7 Based on HRS 329, these responsibilities appropriately belong within the Department of Public
8 Safety.

9 Education for practitioners is a critical component to reducing incidences of prescription
10 drug abuse and misuse based on a comprehensive national review of policies and approaches.¹ In
11 support of efforts outlined in SB 807 SD1, the Department of Health is collaborating with the
12 Department of Public Safety on a study to increase understanding of the type of substances
13 responsible for drug poisoning and how these substances were accessed by decedents, as well as
14 educational efforts to increase prescriber use of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and
15 appropriate prescribing practices. The Department of Health also conducts ongoing surveillance
16 related to drug poisoning to help shape program and policy efforts and produces an annual report.
17 Last year's report is entitled "Drug Overdose Deaths among Hawaii residents, 1999-2013" can be
18 accessed at

19 http://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/files/2015/02/Hawaii_SER_Drug_Deaths_3.pdf

¹ <http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH2013RxDrugAbuseRptFINAL.pdf>

1 Drug poisoning is a serious public health problem in Hawaii and across the nation. Based
2 on Hawaii death certificate records, fatal drug poisoning among Hawaii residents have increased
3 significantly over the last 20 years to make it the leading mechanism of fatal injuries, surpassing
4 deaths from motor vehicle crashes and falls. There was an almost two-fold increase in deaths
5 from drug poisonings from 78 deaths per year in the 1999-2003 period to 151 deaths per year over
6 the 2009-2013 period. Almost all of the fatal poisonings in the 2009-2013 period were drug-
7 related (88%, or 754 of 856). Prescription drugs were implicated in nearly half (45%) of the
8 unintentional poisonings, including 36% of deaths that involved opioid pain relievers. Death
9 certificate codes further indicated that 52% of these deaths involved illicit substances, most
10 commonly methamphetamine (43%) and cocaine (8%).

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.