



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB0970
RELATING TO CIVIL SERVICE EXEMPTION FOR
THE MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARY PROGRAM**

SENATOR GILBERT S.C. KEITH-AGARAN, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH
Hearing Date: Friday, February 10, 2017 Room Number: 016

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department STRONGLY SUPPORTS this Administration bill as
3 it will temporarily extend the exempt status of the five (5) full time equivalent (FTE) medical
4 marijuana dispensary licensing staff by three (3) years from June 30, 2017, to June 30, 2020.

5 If not approved the Department is in jeopardy of losing these staff prior to June 30, 2017,
6 because of the reduction in salary from conversion to civil service. The additional three (3) years
7 is necessary to stabilize program operations.

8 Due to the novelty of the program, a local workforce with specific and specialized
9 experience in dispensary regulations was not available. The Department is fortunate to have
10 hired as its five (5) staff, a supervisor, two (2) surveyors and two (2) persons with strong
11 administrative support in accounting, contracts, and secretarial services.

12 The Department has made good progress in implementing the MMJ licensing program.
13 Much work remains to bring all dispensaries to the point of cultivating and selling medical
14 marijuana. A disruption of the staffing will halt or significantly delay inspections aimed at

1 ensuring patient safety, product safety, and public safety, and the eventual sale of medical
2 marijuana products.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of this bill.

4 **Offered Amendments:** None.