



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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April 4, 2017

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senate Concurrent Resolution 105, SD1 – Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Effects of Requiring Health Insurers, Mutual Benefit Societies, and Health Maintenance Organizations to Provide Coverage for Medically Necessary Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy for Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injuries

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is a statewide Governor-appointed Board with a majority of its members being persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full inclusion, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society. This testimony represents a position voted upon by the Legislative Committee of the Board.

DCAB supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 105, SD1 Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Effects of Requiring Health Insurers, Mutual Benefit Societies, and Health Maintenance Organizations to Provide Coverage for Medically Necessary Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy for Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injuries. We have worked with the Brain Injury Association of Hawaii by providing community educational and awareness activities over the past two decades.

Through our interactions with the sponsors and survivors of traumatic brain injuries (TBI), we have first-hand experience with the devastating impact TBI has on individuals. We have also seen that over the years, if a survivor of TBI has access to cognitive rehabilitation services that recovery does occur allowing the individual to lead a productive life. It is different for each individual depending on the severity of the injury, age, support network, and access to and types of services the person has that makes a difference in the rate and level of recovery.

Hopefully the various studies that have been published, since the 2004 Auditor's Report Number 04-11, will provide the information necessary to allow survivors of TBI to obtain more insurance coverage for medically necessary cognitive rehabilitation therapy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 31, 2017 6:18 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: louis@hawaiidisabilityrights.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR105 on Apr 4, 2017 09:45AM

SCR105

Submitted on: 3/31/2017

Testimony for WAM on Apr 4, 2017 09:45AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	No

Comments: We have been involved with this issue for more than a decade. During that time the prevalence of brain injuries has increased exponentially. Everyone has heard the expression that traumatic brain injury is the signature wound of the wars around the world. Our understanding is that while receiving immediate acute hospital care has not been a particular issue, what has been lacking has been coverage for rehabilitation care and further treatment such as cognitive therapy.. We are aware of the 2004 Report from the Legislative Auditor which expressed that there was not a clear definition of what constitutes cognitive rehabilitation therapy. It also left room to receive new studies and there have been many of them since that time.. We would urge the Committee to advance this measure so the Report can be updated with the hope that we can come to a baseline understanding of specifically what gaps currently exist in the service delivery and coverage system so that the legislature can then assess the rationale for any gaps in coverage and make a comprehensive policy decision as to what further steps are needed.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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