



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB1235
RELATING TO HEALTH.**

SENATOR ROSALYN BAKER, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 8, 2017

Room Number: 229

1 **Fiscal Implications:** \$1,500,000 and \$1,925,000 appropriations to the Department of Health for
2 operational subsidies for emergency room services for Hana Health and Waianae Coast
3 Comprehensive Health Center, respectively.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health acknowledges the importance of twenty-
5 four-hour access to emergency department services to the Waianae and Hana communities. As
6 such, the Department of Health intends to continue support for both facilities through contracts
7 financed by the Community Health Center Special Fund for fiscal biennium 2018-2020, as part
8 of overall department policy to support Federally Qualified Health Centers.

9 In the event Community Health Center Special Fund (FQHC) moneys become unavailable or
10 diminish, the department will work with stakeholders in the community, the Legislature, and the
11 Executive Branch to assure continued operations of both emergency rooms.

12 As a precaution and light of declining cigarette tax revenue deposits (the sole source of moneys
13 for the Community Health Center Special Fund), the Department of Health respectfully requests
14 that SB1235 advance to continue a conversation, but that addresses the FQHC/Community
15 Health Center system as a whole and consistent with current practice.

16 **Offered Amendments:** None.

17

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February 7, 2017

LATE

TO: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair
Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 1235: Relating to Health

SUBMITTED BY: Gail Gomes

Aloha Chair Baker and Vice Chair Nishihara and Committee members:

My name is Gail Gomes and I am a forty plus year resident of the Wai'anae Coast. I am the editor of our local community newspaper, *Westside Stories*, however today I am submitting testimony as an individual.

I am requesting your support of SB 1235 to ensure emergency medical services are available to all on our "Westside," the Wai'anae Coast community, 24-hours a day, 365 days a year via the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) for continued operation of its twenty-four hour Emergency Room.

As you are aware, other than WCCHC, there are no other medical facilities available to our residents and visitors. The closest medical facility is Queens West, some twenty miles away. Although the distance may sound short, we only have one road off our Westside, Farrington Highway, which is woefully inadequate. In addition to normal traffic congestion, we now have an afternoon contra-flow lane in the eastbound direction which limits traffic leaving the Westside to only one lane. Traffic backs up, sometimes for almost two miles, and there is no way for vehicles to safely move over for emergency vehicles. This is in addition to other incidents including accidents, weather related debris on the road, flooding, downed telephone poles, etc., which frequently blocks or completely shuts down highway access.

The ER at WCCHC is an essential facility that provides lifesaving intervention in critical need situations for both residents and visitors alike. Being a "beach community", we have many "snow birds" that arrive beginning in October and stay until April or May. Most of them are kupuna status and often need emergency care. In the past, WCCHC was the only medical facility that was open during natural disasters such as Hurricane Iwa and Hurricane Iniki as Farrington Highway was closed for nearly 2 weeks. In addition, due to our increasing vogy weather, the ER staff has been very busy with folks that have breathing issues in the late evening and early morning hours.

I am urging everyone on this committee to **please support SB 1235** to fund the 24-hour operation of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Centers Emergency Room, a necessary and vital resource for our Westside community.

Mahalo,
Gail Gomes
86-232 Alamihi St
Waianae HI 96792
696-6782 (home) 696-7978 (work)

baker4 - Mary Kate

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2017 2:22 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Cc: victor.ramos@mpd.net
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB1235 on Feb 8, 2017 09:00AM*

LATE

Categories: Late

SB1235

Submitted on: 2/7/2017

Testimony for CPH on Feb 8, 2017 09:00AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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