



LATE

To: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer protection, and Health

From: Trish La Chica, Policy and Advocacy Director, Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Re: **Support for SB 1238, Relating to the Patient Navigation Program**

Hrg: February 13, 2017 at 10:30 am at Capitol Room 229

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of SB 1238 which makes an appropriation for a two-year temporary patient navigation program based at Moloka'i General Hospital for patients with chronic disease in medically underserved rural communities.

The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i. HIPHI weaves silos into working relationships as an effective network, ensuring that we come together across sectors to advance collaboration and innovation in public health and work towards making Hawai'i the healthiest place on earth.

SB 193 is a legislative priority of the Native Hawaiian Health Task Force, formed by the State Legislature in 2013 (SR 60) to improve the health of indigenous people and of all people in Hawai'i.

Residents on Moloka'i often need to travel to Oahu to access specialty care.

Moloka'i is a federally designated medically underserved area with limited medical services and a shortage of healthcare providers. Due to the island's mountainous topography, access to care is particularly challenging for many residents. According to Moloka'i General Hospital's 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment¹, patients needing treatment in cancer and substance abuse often need to travel to Oahu to obtain needed services.

Patient navigation services benefit those with the greatest socioeconomic need.

Low income residents are often the most affected by healthcare problems yet are unable to get the care they need the most. Further, those living in poverty areas are less likely to engage in healthy behaviors that can prevent illness and chronic diseases. Patient navigators work with patients to navigate the health care system and access much needed social and financial services. Patient navigators also provide appropriate language, transportation, and care coordination assistance.

SB 1238 provides the resources for a pilot program that will help Moloka'i patients get the care they need. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and we respectfully ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trish", is centered on the page.

Trish La Chica
Policy and Advocacy Director

ⁱ http://www.molokaigeneralhospital.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Molokai.HI_CHNA_Final_Report_03.29.13_-_MGH_06.24.13_.pdf