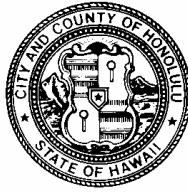


HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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KIRK CALDWELL
MAYOR



JAMES D. HOWE, JR.
DIRECTOR

IAN T.T. SANTEE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

February 22, 2018

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair
State Committee on Ways and Means
The Senate
Twenty-Ninth Legislature
Regular Session of 2018

LATE

Re: SB2374 Relating to Community Paramedic Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran and Members:

The Honolulu Emergency Services Department is the contractor to the State of Hawaii for the provision of Emergency Medical Services for the Island of Oahu.

The increasing demand on EMS services on Oahu due to the aging of our population, increasing visitor arrivals, and the low acuity high demand use by both sheltered and non-sheltered homeless population is straining the ability of the EMS system to meet its prime directive.

The City and County is in support of ensuring that the EMS system continues to have the ability to meet the pre-hospital needs of our community.

Several state and municipalities on the continent have experienced similar impacts on their EMS systems and have implemented Community Paramedicine Programs.

Community Paramedicine Programs have been successful in reducing the demand on EMS calls for service for low acuity medical needs. They have proven to reduce the number and costs associated with low acuity transport to emergency rooms. These programs have been successful in connecting low acuity high demand individuals with medical care and transition this care into long term connection with existing social services programs and providers to arrive at long term solutions to their needs both medical and social.

Sincerely,

For 
James D. Howe, Jr.
Director

LATE

SB-2374

Submitted on: 2/23/2018 12:04:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Lisa Poulos | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Dear Senators;

I support SB2374 which provides a Community Paramedic Services Pilot Program; establishes and appropriates funds for a three year community paramedic services pilot program, but believe it does not address the immediate crisis our emergency medical services is experiencing. I hope that the community paramedic services will be part of the solution in the future, but this does not help the immediate issue of our Oahu EMS services being over being stretched to and beyond its limits.

The bill states, "As the call volume rises each year and the number of ambulance stations remains the same, it is critical to establish community paramedic services to provide appropriate services to non-emergency callers who would otherwise be using valuable emergency medical services needed by other individuals."

This sounds wonderful, and I hope it works but what is going to be done immediately about the crisis? This is a three year pilot program that is to commence in 2019 – over a year from now – and then terminate in 2021 with reports results not expected until 2022. Potentially we are looking at four years before we actually know if the program works. What happens in the meantime?

Below is the news story Hawaii News Now Thursday, February 15th 2018, 6:02 pm HST HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow)

Honolulu's plea for a new Emergency Medical Services station is on life support at the state Legislature. Given present resources, managers of Oahu's paramedics and emergency medical technicians say they're already stretched to the limit and they desperately need help in order to continue saving people's lives. "We really need help. We are in a critical stage where one of these days, we're not going to be able to respond to all the calls that we get in a timely manner," said Honolulu EMS Chief Dean Nakano. "I hate to say it, but one of these days, somebody is going to have to wait for an ambulance and the outcome is not going to be good. Nakano says there are only 20 ambulances on Oahu to serve nearly one million residents, plus around 10 million visitors annually. He says they simply can't keep up with the amount of calls. Our call volumes been going up steadily, at an average of 10,000 more calls each year, and we still have the same amount of ambulances," Nakano said. EMS officials say the last new

ambulance they received was in 2012. Sometimes, Nakano says, they are stretched so thin that an ambulance from Hawaii Kai will get called out to Nanakuli. "At this point, we're not meeting our required response times, because like I said, we're stretched to the limit," he said.

From personal experience I know how overworked our EMTs and medics are. My daughter is a medic with the City and County. She regularly works past her shift filling out paper work that she was not able to complete during her working hours because of the amount of calls they received. Often in a 12 hour shift they have 14 or more calls. She is often physically and emotionally drained by just the sheer number of calls they need to respond to; they have very little recovery time, if any before the next call comes in. I know there are many needs and we have a limited supply of funds, but we need to make sure our residents have the safety services they need and take care of our emergency medical providers so that we give the best care to all.

We need to appropriate money for more ambulances now on Oahu to deal with the immediate crisis along with supporting the Community Paramedic Program which will hopefully be one of the pieces of a long term solution.

Mahalo,

Lisa Poulos