



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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**LATE**

**Testimony COMMENTING on HB147  
RELATING TO DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICERS.**

REP. JOHN M. MIZUNO, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: January 29, 2019

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health recommends HB147 be deferred for further  
3 discussion.

4 The primary purpose of District Health Officer is to administer State public health services and  
5 programs for a county and serves as the principal public health representative for the Director of  
6 Health. Due to the largely administrative nature of the position, the civil service position  
7 description (EM-08) emphasizes experience in management, budgeting, fiscal controls, and staff  
8 supervision and development.

9 Most practicing physicians lack executive management experience in large and complex  
10 organizations, and as clinicians they may also lack exposure to population health management,  
11 which is a key distinction between clinical medicine and public health. The rare combination of  
12 all those characteristics restricts the number of qualified applicants, and when combined with  
13 Hawaii's cost of living and modest civil service pay scale, the department has experienced  
14 recruitment difficulties.

15 As a result of these realities of physician recruiting, the Department of Health needs to retain  
16 flexibility to hire a physician or a non-physician who has public health training and is most  
17 qualified for the position.

1 Recent health crises such as mosquito-borne illnesses and volcanic eruptions required the  
2 Department of Health to respond as an entire department, coordinated by the DHO but lead by  
3 subject-matter experts in vector control or air quality, as the case may be. While the department  
4 can acknowledge the perceived value of a physician leader during health crises, the reality of the  
5 response can be quite different.

6 An excerpt from the recruitment posting is as follows:

7 *“One (1) year of professional experience in a public health program which demonstrated a*  
8 *thorough knowledge of one or more aspects of the management/administrative process. The*  
9 *management/administrative process includes organization and work methods, fiscal systems,*  
10 *budget systems, program planning and evaluation and personnel management.*

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12 *The work experience may have been in one or a combination of these areas and may have been*  
13 *gained in either a staff or a line position. However, in any case, it must demonstrate a high*  
14 *degree of analytical skill and have involved evaluating and improving elements of the*  
15 *managerial/administrative process such as policies, systems, work methods and practices.”*

16 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.

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**LATE**

**HB-147**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 4:43:32 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/29/2019 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments: