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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
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March 17, 2019

TO: The Honorable Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SCR 201/SR 161 – URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CREATE
A COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION ADVISORY BODY**

Hearing: March 18, 2019, 2:50 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports SCR 201 and SR 161.

PURPOSE: The purpose of SCR 201 and SR 161 is to urge DHS to create a Compact of Free Association (COFA) Advisory Board to make recommendations on different aspects of health care coverage for COFA residents.

DHS recognizes the unique circumstances our community members from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau face while navigating their way through systems of care that can struggle to meet their needs, particularly in the areas of health insurance and health care. Beginning in 2015, DHS's Med-QUEST Division (MQD) has facilitated a COFA Stakeholder meeting to provide a forum for ongoing dialog between health providers, COFA community leaders, outreach workers called "kokua," health insurers and members of Hawaii's congressional delegation. We believe that this informal group may serve as a foundation for the establishment of the more formal advisory body that is called for in these resolutions. We look forward to the continued dialog and co-created solution building that will come from this body.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/16/2019 4:22:15 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/18/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
amy agbayani	Testifying for Filipina Advocacy Network FAN	Support	No

Comments:

This resolution is a very necessary step to address a critical issue and remove barriers facing COFA persons. This COFA community needs support so these families can thrive and fully participate in our state.

To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Human Services Hearing

Date: Monday, March 18, 2019 at 2:50 p.m.

Re: Testimony of Save Medicaid Hawaii in strong support of SCR 201 and SR 161 "Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Body."

Dear Chair Ruderman, Vice Chari Rhoads and Members of the Committee

Save Medicaid Hawaii writes in strong support of SCR 201 and SR 161 "Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Body."

COFA citizens residing in Hawaii and their Hawaii-born families are actively contributing to Hawaii's economy and culture, just as all immigrant groups before them have done. However, the unique immigration status of COFA residents stems from their close and historical relationship between the United States and their homeland of origin.

The ill-conceived experiment to dis-enroll COFA migrants in Hawaii from MedQUEST and onto the ACA instead has been of questionable economic value to the state and has caused enormous loss and burdens upon these families and upon our health care system as a whole.

Hawaii is one health insurance risk pool and when a large group of residents goes uninsured or underinsured, as many COFA migrants are, this raises the costs of health care for the entire system, which then get passed on to all of us in increased health insurance premiums.

Take for example the health of pregnant women and their children. Hawaii wisely continues to cover pregnant low- income COFA women under MedQUEST. However, just 2 months after giving birth, such a COFA woman is now considered an "adult" and loses MedQUEST coverage, even though she is still low-income, often under 100% of the FPL. While ACA insurance can be applied for, there are higher copays, and differing confusing rules, resulting in gaps in coverage for many new COFA mothers. The 6 months after a baby is born is considered the most critical time: to prevent health problems in the next pregnancy, to help babies breastfeed longer, to assist families to decide upon appropriate family planning methods, etc. The result of this sudden bureaucratically-induced loss of MedQUEST by post-partum COFA women is that a vulnerable population is falling off and on various insurance coverage during critical times in their life and health care. The end-result, experience shows, is increased hospitalizations and NICU babies - painful and expensive situations that good continuity of care can help prevent.

Save Medicaid members serve on the front lines of our communities and health care system and see in our practices examples of such compromised care and lives. We welcome the collection of quality data to determine the extent of the problems and the best solutions.

We fully support the SCR 201 and SR 161 calling on the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Body, which will recommend the best approach for providing

parity in state-funded health coverage for otherwise eligible COFA residents; and provide an economic analysis of the financial impact of the Advisory Body's recommendations.

Recommend steps for reducing or eliminating entirely administrative burdens for program enrollment and re- enrollment;

Sincerely,

Doris Segal Matsunaga, MPH

On behalf of Save Medicaid Hawaii

Save Medicaid Hawaii, a network of people advocating for NO CUTS in Medicaid and working towards a stronger health care system in Hawaii that provides high quality universal health care for all.

<https://www.facebook.com/SaveMedicaidHawaii/>

LATE

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 9:23:43 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/18/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nicole Woo	Testifying for Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice	Support	No

Comments:

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/14/2019 12:48:20 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/18/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Toni Symons- HAPI	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We really need to do this. With the Compact due to expire in 2023 we must be able to advocate for health and education funding. Those who come from Compact areas are a part of our communities and since many can't vote we need to be a voice for them!

Toni Symons

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/16/2019 6:20:04 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/18/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lea Minton	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill and urge legislators to pass this bill. We need Medicaid for COFA residents and having an advisory board to help guide Hawaii in appropriately reinstating these benefits is beneficial.

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 8:24:14 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/18/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Megan Kiyomi Inada Hagiwara	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to write in strong support of SCR 201 and SR 161 resolution “Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Board”

Thank you for the opportunity to write in strong support of SCR 201 and SR 161 resolution “Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Board”

I have had the honor of working with our COFA resident community since the proposal of the severely inadequate Basic Health Hawaii healthcare coverage. Over many years there has been much confusion, frustration, and heartbreak around people not getting the care that they need due to the ever changing, inappropriate, beurocratic health plans this community has been shuffled between.

I have seen fierce advocacy in the face of discriminatory policies by our local policy makers, COFA community, and health advocates. I have felt the joy of community abundance as well as the collective grief of losing another loved one to a preventable disease. I have witnessed resiliency of community throughout these events, as well as hopelessness - with people feeling like they have no options, “that I don’t want to be a burden, so I’ll just stop taking my medicine, I’ll just stop going to the doctor”.

It is time we definitively let our COFA community know that they are NOT a burden. That their giving of access to their land and waters to our government, their bravery in our military, their sharing of their cultural knowledge is honored and greatly appreciated. COFA residents are an integral part of our Hawaii Ohana. They are our friends and family. They are doctors and restaurant workers. They are our mentors and students. And just like everyone else, they deserve appropriate access to dignified healthcare. It is time.

I believe support of this task force can help lead to providing equitable care to all of our residents and members of our ever growing community.



Dr. Vidalino S. Raatior

Email: vidraatior@gmail.com | Phone: 808.430.2017 | Website: www.raatior.com

To: Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Dr. Vidalino S. Raatior

RE: Support for SCR 201 and SR 161, Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association (COFA) Advisory Body

Hearing: Monday, March 18, 2019, 2:50 pm, Conference Room 016

It is an honor to write this testimonial in strong support of the identical resolutions --- SCR 201 and SR 161 "Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Body." As a Micronesian educator and Pacific focused education consultant who spent six years working in the University of Hawaii system to support the success of Micronesian and other Pacific Islander students attending schools in Hawai'i, I feel this is much needed step in the just direction. It provides a formal way for those who provide much needed services for my Micronesian community to be accountable for providing equitable services for our people. Perhaps it is also a way for our Micronesian leaders to be part of the conversations.

It has been a painful journey for many Micronesians who arrived in the Hawaiian islands since the COFA Treaty was ratified by the US Congress and signed by President Reagan in 1986. We come from Pacific cultures where hospitality is an important cultural tradition particularly for visitors to our respective islands. We expect that same hospitality in the great state of Hawaii, home of the Aloha Spirit. Sadly, I have researched, witnessed, and felt the pain of racial discrimination against Micronesians and even American citizens born of Micronesian parents. That sadness runs deep for those of us who are related in blood to the late Papa Mau Piailug who joined our indigenous communities together through his sharing of our sacred knowledge of wayfinding to the Hawaiian people. I hope that this COFA Advisory Body would become an embodiment of Papa Mau's "stick" that has already been laid between our peoples and the ocean we all share.

I know healthcare will be an important work for this proposed COFA Advisory Body. But equally important will be the message such a body will communicate to the future generations of Micronesians in the Rainbow State...that they are as much a part of that rainbow as any law abiding, tax paying resident. After all, the success of one Micronesian in the Hawaiian islands adds to the our greater success as a Hawaiian Ohana.

Mahalo! Killisou! Kamagar! Kalahngan! Kulo! Sa Hachichig! Kommol! Mesulang! Thank you for your support.

Dina Shek
Honolulu, HI 96816
dinasf@gmail.com

To: Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Dina Shek

Hearing: Monday, March 18, 2019, 2:50 p.m., Conference Room 016

RE: Support for SCR 201 and SR 161, Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Body

I write in strong support of SCR 201 and SR 161, resolutions “Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Body.” This resolution would promote equal treatment for Hawai‘i residents legally present under the Compact of Free Association (COFA). COFA residents have lived, worked, and contributed to Hawai‘i’s community and economy for over three decades, and they should be afforded the same access to healthcare as other Hawai‘i residents.

Since 1996 and the implementation of the Welfare Reform Act,¹ COFA residents have been excluded from federal Medicaid and other benefits, despite contributing to local, state, and federal taxes that cover benefits for others. Over the last decade, COFA residents in Hawai‘i have been subjected to devastating healthcare cuts and been forced to navigate inconsistent and confusing systems. This has led to devastating health outcomes that affect us all as neighbors and community members. SCR 201 and SR 161 are critical steps towards correcting this unfairness.

As states like Oregon and Washington commit to meaningful and justice-oriented solutions to providing consistent healthcare for COFA residents in their states, Hawai‘i must do the same. Ensuring access to healthcare coverage for all Hawai‘i’s residents benefits us all and promotes justice and fairness for Hawai‘i’s COFA residents, workers, parents, caregivers, and valued neighbors. For these reasons, **please support the passage of SCR 201 and SR 161.**

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this important matter.

¹ The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-193, 110 Stat. 2105.

LATE

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 10:57:32 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/18/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ann S Freed	Individual	Support	No

Comments: