



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE, 2019**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

H.B. NO. 614, RELATING TO WAIANAEO COAST COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CENTER EMERGENCY ROOM.

**BEFORE THE:**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

**DATE:** Thursday, February 7, 2019                      **TIME:** 8:30 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room

**TESTIFIER(S):** Clare E. Connors, Attorney General, or  
Diane K. Taira, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair Mizuno and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

This bill appropriates \$5,280,842 to the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center each year for fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

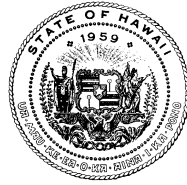
According to the records of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, the "Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center" is a registered trade name of the Waianae District Comprehensive Health and Hospital Board, Incorporated, a domestic nonprofit corporation.

This bill, if passed, appears to violate article VII, section 4, of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii which provides, in part, that "[no] grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law."

Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), prescribes the standards for the grant, award or appropriation of state funds to a specified recipient. In particular, section 42F-102, HRS, requires the submission of an application at the start of each regular session of the legislature. Section 42F-102, HRS, sets forth other requirements that a grant applicant must meet, such as applicable licensure or accreditation.

We are unaware if a grant application was submitted by Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center and whether the requirements of section 42F-103 have been met.

The Department of the Attorney General recommends that these concerns be addressed before proceeding with the grant of money to Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center.



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

**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 614  
RELATING TO WAIANAE COAST COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CENTER  
EMERGENCY ROOM.**

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN M. MIZUNO, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 7, 2019

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The proposed measure appropriates \$5,280,842 out of the general revenues  
2 of the State for fiscal year 2019-2020 and fiscal year 2020-2021 to the Waianae Coast  
3 Comprehensive Health Center for operating costs for its twenty-four-hour emergency room. The  
4 Department defers to the Governor's Biennium Budget Request (FB 2019-2021) for  
5 appropriations priorities.

6 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health respectfully offers comments on H.B. 614  
7 to assist the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) in continuing twenty-four-  
8 hour year-round emergency room services to residents of the Waianae coast to ensure emergency  
9 medical and disaster-related response services are available for the fifty thousand residents of the  
10 Waianae coast.

11 A portion of the cigarette tax revenues are deposited into the Community Health Center Special  
12 Fund and the Department administers those funds. The Community Health Centers Special Fund  
13 currently funds: 1) Purchase of Services (POS) contracts with 13 Federally Qualified Health  
14 Centers (FQHC)—including WCCHC—to provide medical (perinatal, pediatric, adult primary  
15 care) and support services, behavioral health care, dental treatment, and pharmaceutical services  
16 to uninsured and under-insured individuals that are at or below 250% of the federal poverty  
17 level; 2) A single POS contract with Hana Health for the provision of comprehensive primary  
18 care services and urgent care (24/7) services; and 3) An additional POS contract with WCCHC  
19 to provide emergency room services, diagnostic laboratory and radiology services, as well as

1 other services related to the provision of emergency room services at their facility between the  
2 hours of 12:00a.m. and 8:00a.m., 365 days a year.

3 The annual revenues to the Community Health Centers Special Fund are capped at \$8.8M per  
4 year. These funds are distributed across the 13 Federally Qualified Health Centers, Hana Health,  
5 and WCCHC emergency room services.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

7 **Offered Amendments:** None





**Testimony to the House Committee on Health  
Thursday, February 7, 2019, 2018; 8:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329**

**RE: SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL NO. 0614, RELATING TO WAIANAE COAST COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CENTER EMERGENCY ROOM.**

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and Members of the Joint Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 0614, RELATING TO WAIANAE COAST COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CENTER EMERGENCY ROOM.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would:

- (1) Appropriate \$5,280,842 in general funds for Fiscal Year 2019-2020, and \$5,280,842 in general funds for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 to operate a twenty-four hour emergency room at Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC);
- (2) Provide that the sums be expended by the DOH; and
- (3) Take effect on July 1, 2019.

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of health.

WCCHC has clearly demonstrated its leadership in serving the health needs of our most vulnerable populations. As such, the appropriation of funds to assist WCCHC most definitely will serve the public good.

**Testimony on House Bill No. 0614**  
**Thursday, February 7, 2019; 8:30 a.m.**  
**Page 2**

Furthermore, the inclusion of funding into the base budget would benefit the entire State by ensuring that our community health centers are able to provide desperately needed services to all who may need them -- from Medicare and Medicaid enrollees, to locals residing near these facilities, to tourists visiting our islands. Supporting WCCHC strengthens Hawaii's overall health care infrastructure.

For this reason, we urge your favorable consideration of this measure.

Lastly, we note that WCCHC has identified that the appropriation should be \$800,000 per year instead of the \$5,280,842 as stated on page 7, line 9 of the bill. The HPCA does not object to this amendment and urge the Legislature to work with WCCHC in determining the sufficient amount needed to continue this very important service.

In advance, thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



**WAIANAE COAST  
COMPREHENSIVE  
HEALTH CENTER**  
www.wcchc.com

**LATE**

February 6, 2019

To: House Committee on Health  
Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Hearing: Thursday, February 7, 2019; 8:30am  
Conference Room 329

From: Richard Bettini, MPH, MS  
President & Chief Executive Officer

**Subject: Support for HB 614 RELATING TO WAIANAE COAST COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CENTER EMERGENCY ROOM.**

**BACKGROUND**

The Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) serves 38,000 patients annually through 203,000 primary care and emergency visits. Twenty-four hour emergency care is provided 365 days a year at the Center's main campus at 86-260 Farrington Highway in Waianae. Around the clock care includes physician on-site, nursing, mid-level professional, laboratory and radiology services.

The Center's emergency department plays a dual role in both serving as the communities "ER" having responded to approximately 22,000 emergency visits annually, as well as being a critical component of the State of Hawaii's disaster preparedness and EMS network. The Waianae Community is subject to frequent road closures and many of the resources available to respond to disasters in Waianae are in flood zone inundation areas. The Center has served as the hub of emergency medical response in the last two major hurricanes.

A report identifying the acuity levels of medical visits to the Waianae emergency department is provided to the State Director of Health upon request. The late night hours include many emergent cases at the level of cardiac arrest, deliveries, and severe wounds, amongst other serious conditions. The facility plays a critical role in stabilizing patients, and when needed, triaging them to Honolulu hospitals.

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The State of Hawaii has generously supported the Waianae Comp's ER since 1986. The state subsidy allows the Center to remain open between midnight and 8:00 A.M. For the last eleven years the State subsidy for the Waianae ER has been unchanged despite the fact that ER visits



have grown, the Center has made a \$50 million investment in new facilities (on the DLNR land the Center leases), QUEST and Medicare do not support ER facility fee payments to the Center, and costs to hire and retain staff have increased substantially over the last decade.

The Center is requesting that the State supplement the \$1,468,000 annual subsidy it has been providing through the Community Health Center tobacco tax allocation. We request the creation of a separate allocation of \$800,000 that would partially cover current shortfalls. This funding should not be provided at the expense of other community health centers that receive essential support through the diminishing resources of the tobacco tax.

### **FINANCIAL JUSTIFICATION**

The Health Center's operating costs for midnight to 8:00 am services, 365 days a year, was \$5,280,842 in 2017-2018. The difference between current Legislative support provided through the Department of Health (\$1,468,000), and the actual cost to operate services between midnight to 8:00am (\$5,280,842), is \$3,812,842.

Although the Center's unfunded operating cost is \$3,812,842, we are requesting an \$800,000 increase to our current subsidy as a first attempt to address our shortfall. Center management believes this is a reasonable and respectful request based on other important needs in the state.

**(NOTE: HB 614 states the funding request at \$5,280,842 which is the total cost of operations from midnight to 8:00am.)**

There are other factors that contribute to the rationale for State support for emergency preparedness in Waianae, including:

- The typical cost to Hawaii's Healthcare system for an ER visit to the Waianae facility is one-fifth of that to a hospital ER. Should Waianae be required to reduce its hours of operations, overall costs within the State system of care will increase.
- The emergency department services a very low income population with many users homeless or in need of supplemental social services. The Waianae ER is designed to link emergent patients to primary care and to connect patients with a primary care medical home. A goal is to reduce dependence on more expensive ER utilization.
- Waianae as a community is low income and unable to support an emergency department. Its' needed services is somewhat comparable to neighbor islands that often receive parallel services through the State Hospital system. Waianae has, however, been able to leverage State support with federal and private foundation funding so that total State operational support for overall Center operations is less than 10% of annual costs.

Mahalo for considering our request.



**WAIANAE COAST  
COMPREHENSIVE  
HEALTH CENTER**  
[www.wcchc.com](http://www.wcchc.com)

**LATE**

Date: February 6, 2019

To: Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair  
Committee Members: Rep. Della Au Belatti, Rep. Calvin K.Y. Say, Rep. Nadine K. Nakamura,  
Rep. James Kunane Tokioka, Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Rep. Gene Ward

From: Lorraine Kaleiupu  
Assistant Emergency Operations Manager  
Resident of Waianae

**Subject: Support for HB 614 RELATING TO WAIANAE COAST COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CENTER EMERGENCY ROOM. Appropriates funds to the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center for operation of its twenty-four-hour emergency room.**

I am here today to express my support for HB 614. This bill provides funds that will support the Emergency Department of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center and its commitment to provide 24 hour services to our community.

I've worked many years for the Center, seen its growth and I am very proud of the services we provide. I remember when the Center closed at 8pm. It later extended its hours to close at midnight. I remember as a child hoping to get in before the chain got put up at the bottom of the hill. I can't imagine that happening today.

Our Emergency Department (ED) is heavily utilized with a total of 23,227 ED visits for fiscal year 2018 as compared to a similar "Rural" emergency department with approximately 21,000 encounters. Since moving to the new Emergency Medical Building in July 2018, there has been an increase in patient volume. During the hours of midnight to 8am, we are seeing sicker patients as evidenced by the increase of transfers from our facility to hospitals on the island. There are also more patients being brought in by City and County ambulances, and also by HPD.

Waianae Comprehensive is in partnership with the Hawaii Healthcare Emergency Management Coalition. The Center is proactive in "Disaster Preparedness" and moreover the Emergency Department stood vigilant and ready to serve during past threats of hurricanes and tsunamis.

Our Emergency Department is not much different from others. Yes, we have limited capabilities such as not having a CT scan but that doesn't stop us from treating patients suffering from having the common cold; or to assist a woman who can't make it to a hospital and is now in labor to deliver her infant; or to resuscitate a patient in cardiac arrest who we managed to pull out of the car that was driven to our



facility by a family member; or to give much needed antibiotics to an infant with a high fever whose mom and dad caught the bus in the middle of the night to our ED; to provide counseling and support to a worried mother and teenage daughter with cut marks to her wrists; a woman whose asthma is now out of control and needs help breathing with a tube placed in her lung; and to be trauma ready for a young man who was assaulted, shot, drove himself to our doorstep and who is alive today.

Now imagine the chain at the bottom of the hill being locked up at night. Without the support from you Mr. Chair, Vice Chair and Committee, and the passing of HB614, what will happen to our people of Waianae?

We need the \$800,000 increase to our emergency room subsidy from the Department of Health to relieve our financial burden for serving as a 24-hour safety net for medical care and disaster-preparedness for the Waianae Coast.

**OUR ED EXPERIENCE:**

TOPIC	July 17 <sup>th</sup> -Dec 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	July 17 <sup>th</sup> -Dec 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	Difference	% Change
PT. VOLUME	9,800	10,432	+632	6%
BIB Ambulance	417	427	+10	2%
CODE 500	14	22	+8	60%
CLINIC UPGRADE	67	61	-6	-10%
BIB HPD	101	119	+8	8%
LWOBS/ELOPMENT	3.8%	1.7%	-2.1	-56%
TOTAL ADMISSIONS	491	565	+74	15%
911 ACTIVATION	42	61	+19	42%
AVG LOS (national 127 minutes)	89 MINUTES	85 MINUTES	-4	-4%
SECURITY STANDBY	Unknown	65		
SECURITY SB Avg. LOS	Unknown	1hr 40 min		

BIB= brought in by; LWOBS= left without being seen; LOS= Length of stay

**February 5, 2019**

**TO: Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair  
Committee on Health: Thursday, February 7, 2019  
8:30am, Conference Room 329**

**RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 614 Relating to Waianae Coast  
Comprehensive Health Center Emergency Room**

**Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi and Committee members:**

My name is Duane Hew Len, President of the Waianae Kai Hawaiian Homestead Community Association.

I am requesting your support of HB 614 to ensure emergency medical and disaster preparedness services are available to the Waianae coast community 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

This bill will have a direct impact on the lives of approximately 48,000 people living on the isolated Waianae coast with a single highway serving as the only entrance into and exit out of the community that extends from Nanakuli, through Maili, Waianae, Makaha and out to Kaena Point.

Besides normal traffic congestion, other incidents including accidents, roadside fires, weather related debris, downed telephone poles, etc., frequently blocks or completely shut down highway access, that in critical emergency situations can mean the difference between life and death.

Without adequate funding support, the Health Center's Emergency Medical Services could face a decrease in operating hours or closure between midnight and 8:00 a.m., severely limiting the vital emergency and disaster-related services needed for our community.

As a resident of the Waianae Kai Hawaiian Homestead, I know how important these services are to me, and my community. I am urging your committee to please support HB 614 to fund the 24-hour operation of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center's Emergency room, a necessary and vital resource for the Waianae Coast Community.

Mahalo.

Duane Hew Len, President, WKHHCA

Duanehewlen@msn.com

**HB-614**

Submitted on: 2/5/2019 8:10:19 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/7/2019 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Frank DeGiacomo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The Waianae Coast NEEDS Waianae Comp. The state should be thankful for them. They are mitigating the damage from decades of neglect and environmental injustice in that area.



**HB-614**

Submitted on: 2/6/2019 2:03:07 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/7/2019 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Tadia Rice	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-614**

Submitted on: 2/6/2019 8:00:20 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/7/2019 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Carolin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

In strong support. Mahalo!

**HB-614**

Submitted on: 2/5/2019 8:28:55 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/7/2019 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Phebe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a resident of Waianae and I support this bill.

Thank you.

**HB-614**

Submitted on: 02/06/2019 9:00 AM

Testimony for HLT on 02/07/2019 08:30 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier	Present at
		Position	Hearing
Sandra Chun	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I SUPPORT WAIANAE COMP GETTING 24 HRS. SERVICE THEY NEED THE FUNDING TO OFFER SERVICES TO THEIR COMMUHNITY!!!!

**HB-614**

Submitted on: 02/06/2019 9:05 AM

Testimony for HLT on 02/07/2019 08:30 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Deborah Ramirez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support HB614. This is a much-needed common sense bill. The Waianae Coast needs a 24-hour Emergency Room!

**LATE**

**HB-614**

Submitted on: 2/6/2019 5:22:35 PM  
Testimony for HLT on 2/7/2019 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dee Pudvah	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

West side only has 1 er. Many residents. Needs massive improvements starting with call buttons in each exam room.. Better nursing staff that care about the patient and yes should be open 24 hours.

February 6, 2019

**TO: Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair  
Committee on Health – Thursday, February 7, 2019, 2018; 8:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329**

**RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 614 Relating to Waianae Coast Comprehensive  
Health Center Emergency Room**

**SUBMITTED BY:** Judy Babson

**Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi and Committee members:**

My name is Judy Babson, and I've lived in Makaha since 1982, and a Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (Health Center) board member.

I am requesting your support of HB 614 to ensure emergency medical and disaster preparedness services are available to the Waianae coast community 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

This bill will have a direct impact on the lives of approximately 48,000 people living on the isolated Waianae coast with a single highway serving as the only entrance into and exit out of the community that extends from Nanakuli, through Maili, Waianae, Makaha and out to Kaena Point.

Besides normal traffic congestion, other incidents including accidents, roadside fires, weather related debris, downed telephone poles, etc., frequently blocks or completely shuts down highway access, that in critical emergency situations can mean the difference between life and death.

Without adequate funding support, the Health Center's Emergency Medical Services could face a decrease in operating hours or closure between midnight and 8:00 a.m., severely limiting the vital emergency and disaster-related services needed for our community.

As a Makaha resident and worked with the Emergency Room for 37 years, I know how important these services are to me, my family, and my community. My best friend had visited the Emergency Room and had the best service here than she did at a hospital. I am urging your committee to please support HB614 to fund the 24-hour operation of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center's Emergency Room, a necessary and vital resource for the Waianae Coast Community.

**Mahalo.**

**Judy Babson  
JBabson@hawaii.rr.com**



February 6, 2019

**LATE**

**TO: Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair  
Committee on Health – Thursday, February 7, 2019, 2018; 8:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329**

**RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 614 Relating to Waianae Coast Comprehensive  
Health Center Emergency Room**

**SUBMITTED BY: Anthony R. Guerrero, Jr.**

**Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi and Committee members:**

My name is Anthony R. Guerrero, Jr. and I live at 84-501 Farrington Highway, Makaha Beach, HI. I am the Chairman of the Board of Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (Health Center).

I am requesting your support of HB 614 to ensure emergency medical and disaster preparedness services are available to the Waianae coast community 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

This bill will have a direct impact on the lives of approximately 48,000 people living on the isolated Waianae coast with a single highway serving as the only entrance into and exit out of our community that extends from Nanakuli, through Maili, Waianae, Makaha and out to Kaena Point.

Besides normal traffic congestion, other incidents including accidents, roadside fires, weather related debris, downed telephone poles, etc., frequently blocks or completely shuts down highway access, that in critical emergency situations can mean the difference between life and death.

Without adequate funding support, the Health Center's Emergency Medical Services could face a decrease in operating hours or closure between midnight and 8:00 a.m., severely limiting the vital emergency and disaster-related services needed for our community.

As a patient of Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center and an active waterman, I know how important these services are to me, my family, and my community. I am urging your committee to please support HB614 to fund the 24-hour operation of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center's Emergency Room, a necessary and vital resource for the Waianae Coast Community.

**Mahalo.**

**Anthony R. Guerrero, Jr.  
antsguerrero@gmail.com**



**LATE**

**February 5, 2019**

**TO: Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair  
Committee on Health**

**RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 614 Relating to Waianae  
Coast Comprehensive Health Center Emergency Room**

**SUBMITTED BY: Candy Suiso**

**Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi and Committee  
members:**

My name is Candy Suiso, a Makaha resident, teacher at Wai`anae High School and a Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center board member.

I am requesting your support of HB 614 to ensure emergency medical and disaster preparedness services are available to the Waianae coast community 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

This bill will have a direct impact on the lives of approximately 48,000 people living in on the isolated Waianae coast with a single highway serving as the only entrance into and exit out of their community that extends from Nanakuli, through Maili, Waianae, Makaha and out to Kaena Point.

Besides normal traffic congestion, other incidents including accidents, roadside fires, weather related debris, downed telephone poles, etc., frequently blocks or completely shuts down highway access, that in

critical emergency situations can mean the difference between life and death.

Without adequate funding support, the Health Center's Emergency Medical Services could face a decrease in operating hours or closure between midnight and 8:00 a.m., severely limiting the vital emergency and disaster-related services needed for our community.

As a resident of the Wai`anae community for over 50 years, I know how important these services are to me, my family, and my community. I have personally used the emergency service numerous times and am thankful it's location is near, sparing me the long drive to town. I am urging your committee to please support HB614 to fund the 24-hour operation of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center's Emergency Room, a necessary and vital resource for the Waianae Coast Community.

**Mahalo.**

**Candy Suiso**

**[candysuiso@seariderproductions.com](mailto:candysuiso@seariderproductions.com)**