



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 678 HD1 PROPOSED
RELATING TO HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN M. MIZUNO, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 14, 2019

Room Number: 329

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** There are no fiscal implications for the Department of Health (DOH).
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health strongly supports this proposed measure.
- 3 This bill mandates the reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve
- 4 identification and follow-up of infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. This issue is especially
- 5 important since state data show that the incidence of infants who are born deaf or hard of hearing
- 6 is about twice the incidence in other states.
- 7 Newborn hearing screening is mandated by Hawaii Revised Statutes §321-361 (2001) as a public
- 8 health screening program that helps deaf or hard of hearing children reach their developmental
- 9 milestones and be language ready for school. The national standards for early hearing detection
- 10 and intervention are screening by 1 month of age, identification by 3 months, and enrollment in
- 11 early intervention services by 6 months. Many studies have shown that the 1-3-6 goal results in
- 12 children who have better vocabulary outcomes, reach their milestones at the right time, and are
- 13 language ready for school.
- 14 In 2017, approximately 170 newborns did not pass newborn hearing screening. Without access
- 15 to all the diagnostic audiologic evaluation results on these newborns, the DOH Newborn Hearing
- 16 Screening Program (NHSP) does not know what happened to 44 (26%) of these newborns. This
- 17 means that the NHSP does not know if it needs to follow-up with the families to facilitate
- 18 diagnostic testing or entry into early intervention services, or just document that the newborn is
- 19 not deaf or hard of hearing.

1 In addition, infants are not receiving timely evaluations. Of the 126/170 infants who received
2 diagnostic audiologic evaluations, only 100 (57%) received an evaluation before 3 months of
3 age. Timely and consistent reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results will allow the
4 program staff to identify, contact, and provide support to families of infants who need an
5 evaluation before 3 months of age.

6 The missing diagnostic audiologic evaluation results also cause great delay for entry into much
7 needed early intervention services for the infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. In 2017, 65
8 infants were diagnosed with permanent hearing loss, but only 15/38 (39%) were enrolled in early
9 intervention by 6 months of age. Timely reporting and referral to early intervention will increase
10 the percentage of deaf and hard of hearing infants receiving appropriate early intervention
11 services to develop oral and/or sign language communication.

12 Mandating the reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results for the newborns who do not
13 pass newborn hearing screening will help Hawaii meet the national 1-3-6 goal to help children
14 who are deaf or hard of hearing be language ready for school.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

16 **Offered Amendments:** None



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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February 14, 2019

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill 678, Proposed HD1 - Relating to Health

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 678, proposed HD1 that amends the Newborn Hearing Screening statute to mandate reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve hearing follow-up of infants and to update definitions and terminology. Our testimony specifically supports only the language in the proposed HD1, as it mirrors language in House Bill 1017.

The sooner a parent is aware of hearing difficulties that their child has, the more advantageous it is for the child. Spoken language is learned through hearing and making appropriate responses for the child to develop some form of language. The child's hearing difficulties need to be identified and addressed as early as possible and this bill allows for early screening and evaluation to be conducted and for infants to be enrolled in early intervention services. Language development is a critical factor in the child's ability to maximize socialization skills.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

LATE

HB-678

Submitted on: 2/13/2019 11:10:20 PM
Testimony for HLT on 2/14/2019 9:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

HB-678

Submitted on: 2/12/2019 2:52:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/14/2019 9:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nikki	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha Chair Mizuno and Committee Members,

My name is Nikki Kepo'o and I am a mother of a 6yr old deaf child. Newborn screening occurred immediately for our family, however that road to a final diagnosis was long and difficult. 95% of deaf/hh children are born to hearing families and most of us have absolutely no resources or knowledge in how to navigate that road. In order for us to obtain services, those providers need to be aware of that diagnosis. The reports provide information that is gathered and compiled for review by those within decision-making positions like yourself.

These statistics reflects need for appropriate and adequate services to families like mine who have no where to turn to. This bridges the gap a little more and provides a family some starting point on what direction they can pursue following it. There is a severe loss to follow up and our children suffer the loss of access due to this. Although my son is one, he is one of many and that larger population grow to be adults. The early detection and support by departments can be key to whether our children grow into functional contributors to society or another lost statistics in Hawaii.

I strongly support this bill and urge the committee's support to help better all our state services for our children in Hawaii by making that need for reporting a priority.

Mahalo,

Nikki Kepoo

HB-678

Submitted on: 2/13/2019 9:22:29 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/14/2019 9:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Amanda Kaahanui	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support this bill. All hospitals and clinics should be reporting thier data to NBHSP so they can do thier job properly. This loophole needs to be closed. Thank you.