



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

By

Jerris Hedges, MD, Dean

Winona Lee, MD, Director, 'Imi Ho'ōla Post-Baccalaureate Program

Joseph Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula, PhD, Chair, Department of Native Hawaiian Health

John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, PhD

Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2392 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **strong support** of SB 2392, which would appropriate funds for 'Imi Ho'ōla student stipends or for other 'Imi Ho'ōla student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) supports the intent of SB 2392, which would ensure the sustainability of student stipends and other student support for 'Imi Ho'ōla participants. The 'Imi Ho'ōla Post-Baccalaureate Program is a proven diversity pipeline program that provides educational opportunities to disadvantaged students pursuing careers in medicine. Since 1973, 'Imi Ho'ōla (Hawaiian meaning those who seek to heal) has successfully equipped deserving local students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to achieve success in the competitive field of medicine. The literature demonstrates that students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are traditionally underrepresented in medicine are more likely to choose primary care and rural settings in which to practice medicine.¹

Addressing the workforce shortage by producing primary care physicians committed to rural and underserved communities

JABSOM is committed to producing a diverse health care workforce that addresses the health needs of all people of Hawai'i. The Hawai'i physician shortage has created a gap in current services. When applying the national demand model to the Hawai'i, the state indicates a need for 3,483 total FTEs or a shortage of 509 physicians. However, when island geography and unmet specialty specific needs by county are examined, the estimated unmet need for physicians increases to 820 FTEs with Primary Care experiencing the largest shortage statewide (300 FTEs needed).² Growing our local physicians has never been more critical, and efforts to create a robust culturally-competent physician workforce committed to Hawai'i and its people are vital.

The mission of 'Imi Ho'ōla is to improve health care for Hawai'i and the Pacific by increasing the number of physicians through a program that enhances disadvantaged students' academic and professional readiness for medical school. The program accepts up to 12 students per year and

once enrolled, participants gain a conditional acceptance to JABSOM. 'Imi Ho'ōla's success is largely due to the longstanding commitment by the medical school, community supporters, and stakeholders. All 'Imi Ho'ōla faculty positions and operational costs are completely institutionalized within the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). Student stipends in 'Imi Ho'ōla have been generously supported by the Queen's Health Systems for the past 15 years. The current agreement for support is now in its final year of funding.

To date, 278 'Imi Ho'ōla alumni have successfully graduated from JABSOM. Although 'Imi Ho'ōla is not limited to persons of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander descent, a large number of students from these backgrounds have demonstrated that they are from a disadvantaged background and are deemed eligible for the program. 'Imi Ho'ōla's contributions to Pacific Islander diversity at JABSOM are significant for 38% of all Native Hawaiians, 34% of Filipinos, 57% of Micronesians, and 89% of Samoan students accessing medical school and successfully graduating from JABSOM came through this program.

In a 20 year retrospective study (1996-2016), it was found that 'Imi Ho'ōla produced more MDs that remained in Hawai'i for residency (39% vs. 26%) and chose primary care at higher rates compared to JABSOM graduates who did not go through 'Imi Ho'ōla. When combined, 'Imi Ho'ōla significantly produced more MDs who either chose primary care or residency in Hawai'i when compared to non-'Imi Ho'ōla MDs (72% vs 57%). In the study, factors that predicted choosing a primary care practice were female, 1st generation college students, and a higher science GPA. Factors that predict practicing in underserved communities include underrepresented minority status and a demonstrated commitment to serve.³

'Imi Ho'ōla's contributions are a rarity across the nation

Based on data from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) and the Post Baccalaureate survey conducted in 2017, JABSOM is one of only 45 schools across the nation that have a post-baccalaureate program. Of these schools, only 16 programs consider student groups that are underrepresented in the health professions as a criteria for enrollment and only 6 programs grant admissions to an affiliated medical school upon successful completion. 'Imi Ho'ōla not only strengthens our ability to diversify the workforce here in our island state, but is an exemplar for excellence across our nation.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure, provide that its passage does not impact the priorities set forth in the Board of Regents' Approved Budget.

1. Goodfellow et al., *Predictors of Primary Care Physician Practice Location in Underserved Urban or Rural Areas in the United States: A Systematic Literature Review*. *Academic Medicine*, September 2016.

2. *Annual Report of Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project, Report to the 2020 Legislature, December 2019*.

3. Purdy, C. M. *Evaluation of a Post-Baccalaureate Medical Education Program for Disadvantaged Students to Diversify the Healthcare Workforce of Hawai'i (1996-2016)*. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2019.



Papa Ola Lokahi
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION &
HEALTH**

Sen. Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice-Chair

IN SUPPORT
SB 2392 - RELATING TO HEALTH

Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 9:00 AM
Conference Room 229, State Capitol

Papa Ola Lokahi

is a non-profit Native Hawaiian organization founded in 1988 for the purpose of improving the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians and other native peoples of the Pacific and continental United States.

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Sheri-Ann Daniels, EdD

Aloha to the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and members of the committee.

Papa Ola Lōkahi (POL), the Native Hawaiian Health Board established 30 years ago, is in strong support of SB 2392, which would appropriate stipends for 'Imi Ho'ōla students through the program's student support programs administered by the Department of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine.

Papa Ola Lōkahi is authorized by the federal Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (Title 42 USC 122), or NHHCIA, to address the health and well-being of native Hawaiians, which we do through multiple strategies: health policy, research and data, traditional Hawaiian healing, education and training, workforce development, and more. One of our most important initiatives is the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program, which, since 1991, has awarded 294 scholarships to Native Hawaiians in 20 different medical and allied health professional programs.

Increasing the number of Native Hawaiians in the health professions is but a means to the end goal to deliver health care to medically underserved communities that is accessible, affordable and—importantly—acceptable. Data indicates that people who seek health care are more likely to seek it from those with whom they feel comfortable.

Barely a dozen Native Hawaiian physicians were known in 1975. The 'Imi Ho'ōla post-baccalaureate program at the John A. Burns School of Medicine has been critical to supporting kānaka maoli and other underrepresented students in accessing and successfully graduating from medical school, serving a greater purpose to develop a sufficient health workforce that competently cares for medically underserved communities in Hawai'i. Today, there are more than 300 physicians of Native Hawaiian ancestry, but that is still barely 5% of all licensed physicians in the State. More support is needed to achieve parity in the health professions, which will lead to a workforce that is more representative of the Hawai'i's population.

We strongly urge the passage of this bill. Furthermore, we urge the State to provide continuous support for the 'Imi Ho'ōla post-baccalaureate program to assure a competent and relevant health workforce in Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony IN SUPPORT of SB 2392.



'Ahahui o nā Kauka

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'Ahahui o nā Kauka - Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION & HEALTH

Sen. Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair

Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice-Chair

IN SUPPORT

SB 2392 - RELATING TO HEALTH

Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 9:00 AM

Conference Room 229, State Capitol

Aloha to the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and members of the committee.

'Ahahui o nā Kauka, the Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians, is in whole-hearted support of SB 2392, which would appropriate stipends for 'Imi Ho'ōla students through the program's student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine.

The 'Imi Ho'ōla post-baccalaureate program at the John A. Burns School of Medicine has been critical to supporting kānaka maoli and other underrepresented students in accessing and successfully graduating from medical school, serving a greater purpose to develop a robust health workforce that provides competent care to medically underserved communities in Hawai'i.

Eleven physicians were already in practice in 1975 when five kanaka physicians graduated in the first four-year class at the medical school at the University of Hawai'i. In 2001, less than 200 Hawaiian physicians represented 4% of the licensed physicians in Hawai'i. Today, there are more than 300 kauka, many of whom are 'Imi Ho'ōla graduates. However, the percentage over the years has never exceeded 7%. Given the 20+% Hawaiian population in Hawai'i, we have far to go to achieve parity.

Today, more than half are in primary care specialties. There are Hawaiian physicians at community health centers, rural health clinics and the Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems throughout the State. 'Ahahui o nā Kauka was established in 1998 as a network of medical providers that would gather around shared cultural and professional values, and to provide referrals to one another and collaborate to serve Hawaiian communities on all islands in ways that would be acceptable.

'Imi Ho'ōla is hugely responsible for building the Hawaiian medical workforce. To assure a competent health care workforce for the indigenous people of Hawai'i, it is critical that 'Imi Ho'ōla and other programs that develop physicians from underrepresented populations continue.

We strongly urge the passage of this bill. We encourage the State to provide support for the 'Imi Ho'ōla post-baccalaureate program as a line item to assure a competent and relevant health workforce in Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony IN SUPPORT of SB 2392.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

From: Rowena Buffett Timms, Executive Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer, The Queen's Health Systems
Colette Masunaga, Manager, Government Relations & External Affairs, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 10, 2020

Hrg: Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health Hearing; Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 9:00 AM in room 229

Re: **Support for SB2392, Relating to Health**

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a not-for-profit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, 66 health care centers and labs, and more than 1,600 physicians statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB2392, which appropriates funds to support the 'Imi Ho'ola program. 'Imi Ho'ola graduates are living stories and testaments of how excellent doctors, who do not come from affluent backgrounds, have been able to serve communities across the state. If not for the stipends, many 'Imi Ho'ola graduates would have to get part-time jobs to pay for basic necessities like food and rent. This would decrease their chance to pass the program's rigors, to enter medicine and to serve their future patients.

On the Big Island, Dr. Kehua Kong serves as a physician at the Queen's North Hawaii Community Hospital and is a living example of the program's success. Dr. Kong is a proud graduate of the 'Imi Ho'ola program, which allowed her the opportunity to see her aptitude for medicine, and provided crucial training that led to an academic advantage in the first year of medical school.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

The mission of The Queen's Health Systems is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.

Testimony Presented to the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

By
Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, PhD

SB 2392 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the committee:

Mahalo nui for this opportunity to testify in **strong support** of SB 2392, which would appropriate funds for ‘Imi Ho‘ōla student stipends or for other ‘Imi Ho‘ōla student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

I am Dr. Keawe Kaholokula, Chair of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine. However, my testimony here is an individual private citizen and health professional concerned about the significant physician workforce shortage here in Hawaii, especially the need for more primary care physicians. I am also concerned about the cultural competency of our future physician workforce to, effectively, care for our diverse communities and most vulnerable populations across Hawaii. Finally, I am concerned about the significant underrepresentation of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders in the physician workforce here in Hawaii, given that over 30% of all people in Hawai‘i are either Native Hawaiian or from another Pacific Islander group. However, they bear a disproportionate burden of chronic diseases compared to other ethnic groups in Hawai‘i.

The ‘Imi Ho‘ōla Post-Baccalaureate Program is the only pipeline program into medicine that seeks to address all of my concerns. ‘Imi Ho‘ōla is a proven diversity pipeline program that has been in existence for over 46 years. It provides a unique opportunity for socially disadvantaged students to achieve their dream of becoming physicians. A vast majority of ‘Imi Ho‘ōla graduates choose careers in primary care at higher numbers than other JABSOM medical students. They are also more likely to do their residency here in Hawai‘i. If our graduates leave the islands for residency programs on the continental U.S., the chances of them coming back soon after residency are slim. The vast majority of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos who ever graduated from JABSOM with their medical degree entered medical school through ‘Imi Ho‘ōla. Because these students come from diverse social backgrounds, and because of their ‘Imi Ho‘ōla training, their cultural competency in providing patient care is very strong. In short, ‘Imi Ho‘ōla is a necessary and vital pipeline to address our physician workforce shortage, to ensure a diverse physician workforce that reflects and understands our diverse communities, and to ensure bright and passionate Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino students are given an opportunity to achieve their dream of becoming a physician serving our communities.

The stipends provided to ‘Imi Ho‘ōla students allow them to focus on their studies during this one-year intensive program to increase their likelihood of success. These students come from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds so the cost of their education is an issue. The stipends and other supports offered by SB 2392 will ensure that ‘Imi Ho‘ōla students can focus on their studies without financial worries and barriers, which only increase their likelihood of success.

Again, mahalo nui for this opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

February 10, 2020

To: Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health
Re: SB 2392 - Relating to Health

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang and members of the committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to **strongly support** of SB 2392, which would appropriate funds for 'Imi Ho'ōla student stipends or for other 'Imi Ho'ōla student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

I strongly support growing our own healers through Imi Ho'ōla the intent of SB 2392, which would ensure the sustainability of student stipends and other student support for 'Imi Ho'ōla participants. The 'Imi Ho'ōla Post-Baccalaureate Program is a proven diversity pipeline program that provides educational opportunities to disadvantaged students pursuing careers in medicine. Since 1973, 'Imi Ho'ōla (Hawaiian meaning those who seek to heal) has successfully equipped deserving local students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to achieve success in the competitive field of medicine. The literature demonstrates that students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are traditionally underrepresented in medicine are more likely to choose primary care and rural settings in which to practice medicine.¹

Addressing the workforce shortage by producing primary care physicians committed to rural and underserved communities

JABSOM is committed to producing a diverse health care workforce that addresses the health needs of all people of Hawai'i. The Hawai'i physician shortage has created a gap in current services. When applying the national demand model to the Hawai'i, the state indicates a need for 3,483 total FTEs or a shortage of 509. However, when island geography and unmet specialty specific needs by county are examined, the estimated unmet need for physicians increases to 820 FTEs with Primary Care experiencing the largest shortage statewide (300 FTEs needed).² Growing our local physicians has never been more critical and efforts to create a robust physician workforce committed to Hawai'i and its people are vital.

The mission of 'Imi Ho'ōla is to improve health care for Hawai'i and the Pacific by increasing the number of physicians through a program that enhances disadvantaged students' academic and professional readiness for medical school. The program accepts up to 12 students per year and once enrolled, participants gain a conditional acceptance to JABSOM. 'Imi Ho'ōla's success is largely due to the longstanding commitment by the medical school, community supporters, and stakeholders. All 'Imi Ho'ōla faculty positions and operational costs are completely institutionalized within the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). Student stipends in 'Imi Ho'ōla have been generously supported by the Queen's Health Systems for the past 15 years. The current agreement is now in its final year of funding.

To date, 278 'Imi Ho'ōla alumni have successfully graduated from JABSOM. Although 'Imi Ho'ōla is not limited to persons of Hawaiian or Pacific Islander descent, a large number of students from these backgrounds have demonstrated that they are from a

disadvantaged background and are deemed eligible for the program. 'Imi Ho'ōla's contributions to Pacific Islander diversity at JABSOM are significant for 38% of all Native Hawaiians, 34% of Filipinos, 57% of Micronesians, and 89% of Samoan students accessing medical school and successfully graduating from JABSOM through this program.

In a 20 year retrospective study (1996-2016), 'Imi Ho'ōla produced more MDs that remained in Hawai'i for residency (39% vs. 26%) and chose primary care at higher rates compared to JABSOM graduates who did not go through 'Imi Ho'ōla. When combined, 'Imi Ho'ōla significantly produced more MDs who either chose primary care or residency in Hawai'i when compared to non-'Imi Ho'ōla MDs (72% vs 57%). In the study, factors that predicted choosing a primary care practice were female, 1st generation college students, and a higher science GPA. Factors that predict practicing in underserved communities include underrepresented minority and demonstrated commitment to serve.³

'Imi Ho'ōla's contributions are a rarity across the nation

Based on data from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) and the Post Baccalaureate survey conducted in 2017, JABSOM is one of only 45 schools across the nation that have a post-baccalaureate program. Of these schools, only 16 programs consider student groups that are underrepresented in the health professions as a criteria for enrollment and only 6 programs grant admissions to an affiliated medical school upon successful completion. 'Imi Ho'ōla not only strengthens our ability to diversity the workforce here in our island state, but is an exemplar for excellence across our nation.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 3:18:37 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kimberly Yamauchi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of SB 2392** which would appropriate funds for 'Imi Ho'Å• la student stipends or for other 'Imi Ho'Å• la student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

The 'Imi Ho'Å• la Post-Baccalaureate Program is a proven diversity pipeline program that provides educational opportunities to disadvantaged students with ties to Hawaii and the Pacific pursuing careers in medicine. Established in 1973, 'Imi Ho'Å• la (Hawaiian meaning those who seek to heal) has successfully equipped deserving local students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to achieve success in the competitive field of medicine.

The mission of 'Imi Ho'Å• la is to improve health care for Hawai'i and the Pacific by increasing the number of physicians through a program that enhances disadvantaged students' academic and professional readiness for medical school. The program accepts up to 12 students per year and once enrolled, participants gain a conditional acceptance to JABSOM. 'Imi Ho'Å• la's success is largely due to the longstanding commitment by the medical school, community supporters, and stakeholders. This is particularly important to me as I moved here from Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, over 20 years ago. Many of my family and friends must fly off island to receive medical care that is not available on Saipan. 'Imi not only provides its alumni with the basic science skills needed to succeed in medicine but also provides training in professionalism and cultural awareness which is needed to be a compassionate clinician to patients that come from Hawaii and the Pacific. I truly believe in the program and send my family to 'Imi alumni for clinical care.

To date, 278 'Imi Ho'Å• la alumni have successfully graduated from JABSOM. Although 'Imi Ho'Å• la is not limited to persons of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander descent, a large number of students from these backgrounds have demonstrated that they are from a disadvantaged background and are deemed eligible for the program. 'Imi Ho'Å• la's contributions to Pacific Islander diversity at JABSOM are significant for 38% of all Native Hawaiians, 34% of Filipinos, 57% of Micronesians, and 89% of Samoan

students accessing medical school and successfully graduating from JABSOM came through this program.

Kimberly Barnes Yamauchi

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 3:14:19 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Martina Kamaka	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Senators of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health,

I would like to lend my strong support for SB 2392. As a family physician, I am acutely aware of the shortage of physicians in our State. This shortage is even more marked for the communities that are not in urban Honolulu. The 'Imi Ho'ola program has been an important contributor to increasing the numbers of local kids going to medical school, graduating and practicing in Hawai'i. The program is justly proud of the fact that they give students a chance who might ordinarily be overlooked for medical school admission. These are students with great potential but may have difficulty with, for example, taking standardized national exams.

Imi Ho'ola graduates have proven that they can be successful medical students. In addition, the program is known to produce leaders within the John A. Burns School of Medicine, and upon graduation, these students are also leaders in our communities. They are active volunteering and interacting with in our communities, and in turn, are more likely to practice primary care as well as practice in areas of need. However, the students in the program would have a difficult time remaining in the program were it not for the stipends they receive from the program. Since these students are technically post baccalaureate students, they are not eligible for scholarships. These stipends help to pay for the needs of daily life so that the 'Imi Ho'ola students can be freed up to focus on studying which helps assure their successful graduation and their future ability help to take care of, and treat the rest of us.

Sincerely,

Martina L. Kamaka, MD

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 5:19:01 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jayden Galamgam	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hello,

Imi Hoola is a wonderful program for the state of Hawaii. By continuing to support this program, we are continuing to support the training and eventually the health of our community. This program allows students the opportunity to kokua his/her community in the capacity of a physician. Without pipeline program such as this, students from disadvantaged backgrounds may have a more difficult journey (such as financial difficulties) to medicine.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 7:16:52 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nash Witten	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a current third year Family Medicine resident at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine, completed medical school at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, and completed the 'Imi Ho'Å• la Post-Baccalaureate Program prior to medical school. I will be providing primary care at the Kokua Kalihi Valley Community Health Center beginning in July 2020, after completion of residency training.

The stipend I received during my time in the 'Imi Ho'Å• la Post-Baccalaureate Program was critical to my completion of the program and crucial to my becoming a primary care physician in Hawai'i. It provided funds for housing, transportation, and food which I would have otherwise not been able to afford while participating in the post-baccalaureate program. Students in the program are not eligible for student loans as it is not a degree granting program. By supporting the student stipends tax-payers are supporting underserved and underrepresented minorities in their path to becoming physicians who are likely to provide healthcare services to similar populations as to where they came from. Without an extreme physician shortage we especially need more physicians for these populations. Due to this, I strongly support bill SB2392.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 6:10:26 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joey Kohatsu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Joey Kohatsu, and I am a Physician licensed to practice in the State of Hawaii. I am a Primary Care Physician board certified in Internal Medicine and Geriatric Medicine. I am in small group private practice in Honolulu, Hawaii. I am a proud graduate of the Imi Hoola Post-Baccalaureate Program.

I am writing in support of SB 2392 which would appropriate funds for the Imi Hoola student stipends or for other Imi Hoola student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

The mission of Imi Hoola is to improve health care for Hawaii and the Pacific by increasing the number of physicians through a program that enhances disadvantaged students academic and professional readiness for medical school. Imi Hoola currently accepts up to 12 students per year and once enrolled, participants gain a conditional acceptance into JABSOM upon successful completion of the one year program.

To date, 278 Imi Hoola alumni have successfully graduated from JABSOM. Many graduates have chosen to practice in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific. The majority have selected to pursue careers providing primary care services. Several graduates are well-known physician-leaders in the community including: a former director of the state health department, current and former department chairperson at JABSOM, a former chief medical officer and current administrator for a large health care organization.

Imi Hoola's success is largely due to the longstanding commitment by the medical school, community supporters, and stakeholders. Due to the rigors of the intensive one year program, students are discouraged from seeking employment. Students are dependent on financial assistance in the form of stipends to help defray the cost of tuition, books, and living expenses. This financial support allows students to focus on their studies and is critical to their successful completion of the program.

I am eternally grateful for the strong foundation that Imi Hoola laid for my career in medicine. The program truly prepared me for the rigors of medical school and

beyond. I felt equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed in the competitive field of medicine. I shed the label of being disadvantaged. I truly consider it a privilege and honor to be an Imi Hoola alumni.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Joey Kohatsu, MD

Date: February 10, 2020

To: Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee

From: Leah K. Dowsett, MD, FAAP, FACMG
Medical Geneticist, Kapi`olani Medical Specialists

RE: SB 2392 – Relating to Health
Testimony in Strong Support

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the committee,

My name is Leah Dowsett, MD, FAAP, FACMG with Kapi`olani Medical Specialists. I am a Medical Geneticist, and currently am the only one practicing the full spectrum of genetic disorders including inborn errors of metabolism in the state of Hawai`i. I was specifically trained in the evaluation, diagnosis, management, and treatment of inherited conditions in patients across all ages from birth to adulthood. I am able to serve the people of Hawai`i because I was granted acceptance to the John A. Burns School of Medicine upon successful completion of the `Imi Ho`ola Post-Baccalaureate Program.

Of my Hawaiian grandmother's 20 grandchildren, I was the first in my generation to receive a college degree and the only one to go on to pursue higher education. I had my first paid job from the age of 16, and continued to work throughout college and apply to numerous scholarships to help mitigate the cost of my schooling. My educational aspirations would not have been possible without the generous support from this grant. As a past recipient of this stipend, I was so grateful of this support, as it allowed me to focus on my studies and truly immerse myself into preparation for medical school without having to worry about how to cover the cost of educational and personal expenses (for the first time since my first job in High School!) while being in a post-baccalaureate program full-time. Please continue to appropriate funds for `Imi Ho`ola student stipends – it makes a world of difference! It is because of the generosity of grants, stipends, and scholarships that I, as an underrepresented minority, am now able to give back and serve the community in which I live and hope to help my patients thrive.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Maggie Kwock
2nd Year Medical Student, John A. Burns School of Medicine

Wednesday 12, 2020

Support for S.B. No. 2392, Relating to Health

As an Imi Hoola Program graduate, Class of 2018, I strongly support S.B. No. 2392, Relating to Health, which would provide stipends to students enrolled in the Imi Hoola program.

Students accepted into the Imi Hoola Program come from various disadvantaged socio-economic and/or educational backgrounds. Enrolling as a full-time student in the program means giving up prior employment, and the rigors of the program discouraged part-time employment. Stipends provided to those in the Imi Hoola program will help to abate some of the students' and their loved ones' financial burdens, allowing them the precious opportunity to fully concentrate on their studies. This monetary support will especially be valuable for students who have young families. I was fortunate to be a recipient of a stipend provided to Imi Hoola students from The Queen's Health Systems, and my stipend went towards my family's expenses for basic livelihood: food, rent, and transportation.

Hawaii is faced with a severe physicians shortage, especially in primary care providers. The Imi Hoola Program, for the past 40+ years, have been supporting students to succeed in medical school. As many Imi Hoola students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, they are more inclined to fill in the healthcare gaps as primary care providers, simply because they are so grateful and want to give back to their communities in the most direct and positive way. As studies have shown, "In areas of the country where there are more primary care providers per person, death rates for cancer, heart disease, and stroke are lower and people are less likely to require hospitalization.

I respectfully encourage the committee to pass S.B. No. 2392. Supporting the Imi Hoola Program through providing stipends for their students will help to alleviate Hawaii's current physicians shortage and encourage students from all socio-economic classes and backgrounds to pursue their dreams of a medical career. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 6:12:14 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Britney Q	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I would like to submit testimony in FULL SUPPORT of SB2392 because without the 'Imi Ho'ola Program and the Dept. of Native Hawaiian Health I would not be months away from earning the title and responsibility of "Doctor". Some years ago I completed the 'Imi Ho'ola Program as a single mother receiving SNAP assistance. It was always my dream to become a physician so I could help the people of Hawaii. I told myself that when I become a doctor, I will give back to the people and especially serve those who were like me--from Hawaii, a young/single mother, Native Hawaiian, on welfare, etc. Going through the program was rough as the coursework was very difficult (then again learning to become a doctor is difficult), but it was necessary. **Without the financial support via student stipends, there is NO way I would have been able to successfully complete the program--I would have had to continue working full-time to support my family AND study.** Instead, the financial stipend gave me the opportunity to divert 100% of my attentions to learning. Currently, I am a 4th year medical student that will be a Family Medicine (Primary Care) Provider serving the people of Hawaii through excellence in healthcare.

As a State, we are experiencing a shortage of doctors, especially those that provide the first line of defense--primary care physicians. If things do not change, the quality of life and wellness will decline for everyone. While some effects will be quickly evident, others may take years to be fully realized. Recent US Census data shows our island population is increasing for all age groups, but the rate of increase in people aged 65+ is also increasing compared to the rest of the U.S. Older individuals tend to have more health challenges and see doctors more often than other age groups. To balance this current and future demand, we need an equal or larger supply of doctors to meet the need. This is where **financial support of programs that literally "grow local doctors" is critical.**

The 'Imi Ho'ola Program overseen by the Department of Native Hawaiian Health is essential in helping local kids become doctors. The Program is rigorous but necessary in teaching students the skills to succeed in the field of medicine and channeling the grit needed to sustain such a long journey. More than 3 out of 4 students that complete the 'Imi Ho'ola Program are locally practicing physicians and more than half of its graduating students go into primary care (Pediatrics, Adult Medicine, Family Medicine). On these statistics alone, it can be reasoned that the **'Imi Ho'ola Program generates doctors that practice in Hawaii.** The 11-month program is very tough and requires full-

commitment from its students to learn the complex science and medical knowledge in a short amount of time, which is why the Program offers financial support to students so they may focus on the difficult coursework.

It is written that *"a wise man leaves an inheritance for his children's children"*. **Please vote in SUPPORT of SB2392** so that your children's children have: 1) the doctors they need to be healthy now and in the future, and also 2) the chance to become physicians that the State of Hawaii so desperately needs. Thank you for your time in reading my testimony and serving to advise on the presented bill.

Sincerely,

Kanoe

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 12:51:18 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
KSL	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for providing this opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB 2392, which would appropriate funds for the 'Imi Ho'Å• la student stipends or support programs. The program has provided opportunities to many who would have not been selected directly into JABSOM. It has provided students with disadvantaged backgrounds a chance to prove to JABSOM that we are just as capable to have a coveted seat in the next JABSOM class. As an 'Imi Ho'Å• la alumni, I am proud to say that I completed the program, graduated from JABSOM, completed residency on the mainland, became a board-certified physician, and returned home to practice. I am a product of the public school system (President William McKinley High School), completed my Bachelor's and Master's degrees at UH, and was working for the DOH State Laboratories Division when I was accepted into the program. My parents were immigrants who did not speak any English, let alone have college degrees in their native country. They had very traditional values and felt that a daughter did not need higher education, so even obtaining my Master's degree was considered a waste. Entering the program required me to be a full-time student and quit my job. The 'Imi Ho'Å• la Program does not qualify for student loans and I am still in \$200,000 worth of student loan debt just for medical school. Without a steady income, it would have been impossible to survive financially. I am to this day very grateful for the stipend provided during the program that gave me that chance to go back to school and accomplish my dream (thank you Art Ushijima and Queens Health System). You may wonder, wouldn't any parent be proud to have a child in medical school? Not every person in this society has that luxury. My parents were focused on surviving and supporting 4 children. Higher education is a privilege. If I did not have my scholarship from the Ala Moana Lion's Club, I would not have gone to college. If I did not work as a research assistant, I would not have had a tuition waiver for my Master's degree. If I did not have my stipend, I would not have completed the program, graduated from medical school, and become a physician. My father had lung cancer and during my year in the program, he was found to have metastatic cancer to the bone. He passed away days before my final exam and did not live to hear me tell him I made it into medical school. I do not think I could have done it without the stipend. It took the stress of rent and food off my mind, which allowed me to focus on my education and the expected death of my father. It gave me the courage and reminder to keep going because someone I never met had faith in me. I was not lucky enough to have parents who supported me, I was not lucky enough to have parents who spoke English and guide me through schooling, I was not lucky enough to have financial stability, but I was very fortunate have found my 'Imi Ho'Å• la

family who gave me more than I can even imagine. 'Imi Ho'Ā• la is so important to me in so many ways. They were there for the all the joy and sadness that we all experienced in and out of school. It is not just a program for the disadvantaged students, it was a family who supported me financially, emotionally, and intellectually. It is not a program for the Native Hawaiians but a program for all of us who love medicine and Hawai'i. I may not be Hawaiian, but I grew up in Hawai'i and want to serve our community. I may not have the monetary funds, but I do my part by teaching our medical students and residents. Today, I was precepting a group of second year medical students. I checked to see who was in 'Imi after the day was over. One of them was our alumni and you would not have ever guessed. I am so proud to be part of the program that produces hardworking medical students, outstanding residents, and distinguished doctors who are loved by our community. And many of us do serve our community in our own way. So, I implore you to pass the SB 2392 bill and provide the financial support for stipends or program support. I cannot even imagine where I would be if it was not for the program and everything it has done to help me get to where I am. Thank you for your continued support of the 'Imi Ho'Ā• la Post-Baccalaureate Program.

Testimony in Strong Support of SB 2392

Submitted Feb 10, 2020

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong **support** of SB 2392 which would appropriate funds for 'Imi Ho'ōla student stipends or for other 'Imi Ho'ōla student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

It is crucial to support funding for the 'Imi Ho'ōla Post-Baccalaureate Program since this program provides a vital pathway for promising students from disadvantaged backgrounds and people from under-represented communities to succeed and become physicians. Unlike those from more privileged backgrounds, 'Imi Ho'ōla students have had to overcome socioeconomic hardships like poverty or being first in their family to graduate from college. Also 'Imi students face added financial difficulty since they cannot work while they attend 'Imi because it is an extremely rigorous academic program.

However, since it is rigorous, the 'Imi Ho'ōla program prepares students to excel in medical school. Through 'Imi, the very students who face socioeconomic hardships, have become strong leaders and role models in medical school at JABSOM. Overcoming hardships in life teaches 'Imi students resilience and a deep compassion for people who have suffered, so most 'Imi Ho'ōla physicians return to their communities to serve in areas where the healthcare crisis is the greatest in Hawai'i and the Pacific.

My family and friends living in the Neighbor islands and Rural Oahu face a severe shortage of physicians. Without access to primary care physicians, people are forced to wait to receive healthcare, and instead end up with worse illnesses that require expensive Emergency room visits or longer hospitalizations that cost thousands of dollars. By "Growing our own Physicians," the 'Imi program is one solution to our severe shortage of physicians.

While Hawai'i has a severe shortage of physicians, we also have an even more severe shortage of Native Hawaiian physicians. Native Hawaiians are about 24% of the population in Hawai'i, however only 3% of the physicians in Hawai'i are Native Hawaiian physicians. Native Hawaiians suffer the worst health in their own homeland, so we must nurture more Native Hawaiian physicians who are committed to being leaders in improving the health of Native Hawaiians and all those in Hawai'i who lack access to quality health care.

Although admission to 'Imi Ho'ōla is not limited by race or ethnicity, a large number of Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander students are from a disadvantaged background and are eligible to be considered for the 'Imi program. At JABSOM, 38% of Native Hawaiians, 34% of Filipinos, 57% of Micronesians, and 89% of Samoan physicians accessed medical school and

successfully graduated from JABSOM through the Imi Ho`ōla program. 'Imi Ho'ōla's contributions to Pacific Islander diversity at JABSOM are clearly significant.

We need a diverse healthcare workforce to serve Hawaii's diverse people.

If we don't take care of the health of All our people, then all of Hawai'i suffers from economic hardships due to people facing worse illnesses from lack of access to physicians and quality medical care.

To date, 278 physicians are `Imi Ho`ōla alumni who successfully graduated from JABSOM and have cared for thousands of people in clinics and hospitals throughout our islands. We need state funding for `Imi Ho`ōla to continue to "Grow our own physicians and healers."

We must address the health of All Our People of Hawai'i, not just some. I strongly urge you to **pass SB 2392**.

Mahalo nui loa,

Sasha Fernandes

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 12:00:38 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jester Galiza	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health,

I am currently a second-year medical student at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), and it is through the 'Imi Ho'ola program and its stipends that I am able to fulfill my dream of becoming a physician.

I am the product of immigrant Filipino rice farmers and the public education system in Ewa Beach. Statistically speaking, there aren't a lot of people with my background in medical school and in the field of medicine. 'Imi Ho'ola is helping to change that narrative, not just for Filipinos, but also for Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and those from socioeconomic disadvantage. It plays a crucial role in diversifying JABSOM's student population and thus the physician workforce in Hawai'i, with the prospect of one day creating a physician workforce that actually resembles Hawai'i's population.

One challenge that students from socioeconomic disadvantage face is having to balance being a full-time student and working to provide income for themselves and their families. Not to mention the cost of books and other resources, which poses a burden to these students that do not equally affect those with more socioeconomic privilege. As someone who grew up in poverty, the prospect of having to pay for the 'Imi Ho'ola program, the books and resources needed to be successful, my own personal daily living, and supporting my parents with their financial obligations was daunting and stressful. Fortunately, our monthly stipends significantly alleviated that burden. As a result, I was able to focus all of my energy in my academics because I did not have to split my focus between school and work.

All in all, it is because of the 'Imi Ho'ola program, including the stipends that they provided me, that I am able to pursue my dream of becoming a physician for Hawai'i and serving disadvantaged populations. Statistically speaking, only a small percentage of people like me ever make it to medical school and therefore become a physician - and that's a problem. But the 'Imi Ho'ola program is changing that, and I am one of many students who can attest to that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 10:05:55 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kaahukane Leite-Ah Yo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2392 which would appropriate funds for 'Imi Ho'Å• la student stipends or for other 'Imi Ho'Å• la student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

The 'Imi Ho'Å• la Post-Baccalaureate Program is a proven diversity pipeline program that

provides educational opportunities to disadvantaged students pursuing careers in medicine. Since 1973, 'Imi Ho'Å• la (Hawaiian meaning those who seek to heal) has successfully equipped deserving local students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to achieve success in the competitive field of medicine.

To date, 278 'Imi Ho'Å• la alumni have successfully graduated from JABSOM.

Programs like these have not only lead to the succesful training of many doctors and researchers from underserved communities but many of these graduates have gone on to return to their own or other underserved communities throughout the state. As someone from the one of the neighbor islands, programs like imi ho'ola increase my communities chances of recruiting physicians from my community that will stay and give back to my community.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 9:47:26 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elisabeth Seamon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of SB 2392 which would appropriate funds for 'Imi Ho'Å• la student stipends or for other 'Imi Ho'Å• la student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

The 'Imi Ho'Å• la Post-Baccalaureate Program is a proven diversity pipeline program that provides educational opportunities to disadvantaged students pursuing careers in medicine. Since 1973, 'Imi Ho'Å• la (Hawaiian meaning those who seek to heal) has successfully equipped deserving local students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to achieve success in the competitive field of medicine.

The mission of 'Imi Ho'Å• la is to improve health care for Hawai'i and the Pacific by increasing the number of physicians through a program that enhances disadvantaged students' academic and professional readiness for medical school. The program accepts up to 12 students per year and once enrolled, participants gain a conditional acceptance to JABSOM. 'Imi Ho'Å• la's success is largely due to the longstanding commitment by the medical school, community supporters, and stakeholders.

To date, 278 'Imi Ho'Å• la alumni have successfully graduated from JABSOM. Although 'Imi Ho'Å• la is not limited to persons of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander descent, a large number of students from these backgrounds have demonstrated that they are from a disadvantaged background and are deemed eligible for the program. 'Imi Ho'Å• la's contributions to Pacific Islander diversity at JABSOM are significant for 38% of all Native Hawaiians, 34% of Filipinos, 57% of Micronesians, and 89% of Samoan students accessing medical school and successfully graduating from JABSOM came through this program.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 8:59:51 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christina Tse	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health:

I am here to testify in strong support of SB 2392, which would appropriate funds for 'Imi Ho'ōla student stipends. I am currently a second-year medical student at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) and a graduate of the 'Imi Ho'ōla program. It is through the 'Imi Ho'ōla program and its stipends that I now have the privilege to fulfill my dream of becoming a primary care physician in Hawai'i.

I am the product of immigrant Filipino rice farmers and the public education system in Ewa Beach. Statistically speaking, there aren't a lot of people with my background in medical school and in the field of medicine. 'Imi Ho'ōla is helping to change that narrative, not just for Filipinos, but also for Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and in general, those that come from socioeconomic disadvantage. The program plays a vital role in diversifying JABSOM's student population and thus the physician workforce in Hawai'i, with the prospect of one day helping to create a physician workforce that actually resembles Hawai'i's population.

One challenge that students from socioeconomic disadvantage face is having to balance being a full-time student and working to provide income for themselves and their families. Not to mention the cost of books and other resources, which poses a burden to these students that do not equally affect those with more socioeconomic privilege. As someone who grew up in poverty, the prospect of having to pay for the 'Imi Ho'ōla program, the books and resources needed to be successful, my own personal daily living, and supporting my parents with their financial obligations was quite daunting and overwhelming. Fortunately, the monthly stipends we received significantly alleviated that burden. As a result, I was able to focus all of my energy in my academics because I did not have to split my focus between school and work, which I would have normally done in any other situation.

All in all, it is because of the 'Imi Ho'ōla program, including the stipends that they provided me, that I am able to pursue my dream of becoming a primary care physician here in Hawai'i and serving disadvantaged populations much like my own. Statistically speaking, only a small percentage of people like me ever make it to medical school and therefore become a physician - and that's a huge problem. But the 'Imi Ho'ōla program is changing that, and I am one of many students who can attest to that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 8:59:41 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Arlene Kiyohara	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As an 'Imi Ho'ola alum and a 2nd year medical student at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, I can confidently say that the 'Imi Ho'ola program has prepared me well for the challenges of medical school. Becoming a physician has always been a dream for me, however due to financial hardships and lack of support from mentors while growing up, I did not have the privilege to see my true potential as a future physician. I had applied for medical school multiple times, but was rejected because my entrance exam scores and GPA were not competitive enough - although my passion for medicine soared above the others. The 'Imi Ho'ola program believed in me and accepted me to their program. Now, as a medical student, I have the opportunity to become the best physician I can be for my Hawaii community.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 8:57:41 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Vanessa Wong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you to Senators Keohokalole, Chang, Kahele, Kanuha, Kidani, English, Fevella, Ihara, Riviere, ruderman, Shimabukuro, and Thielen for introducing this important bill. My dream of becoming a family physician was realized only after participating in the 'Imi Ho'ola Program and subsequently graduating from the John A. Burns School of Medicine. 'Imi Ho'ola is a rigorous program that requires complete dedication to succeed. As a first generation college student who put herself through school, the financial support via stipends while in 'Imi Ho'ola was incredibly significant. It allowed me to focus on my studies which ultimately led me to successfully complete the program and matriculate into medical school. I have now been of service to the community as a family physician and medical educator for 20 years. Your support of the 'Imi Ho'ola Program and the health of our community is very much appreciated!

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 8:50:32 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dillon Tacdol	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The Imi Ho'ola Program is a post-baccalaureate program that provides students from disadvantaged backgrounds with educational opportunities to aid them in their journey of becoming future physicians. Being a current medical student that has been through the Imi Ho'ola program, I can say that this program truly serves this function and more. It was a rigorous program that challenged me academically and pushed me to my limit. It prepared me well for medical school and for clinical rotations. If I had not received the monthly stipend that is given to student while they are in the program, I would not have been able to focus solely on my school work. With the stipend I was able to pay for my housing (difficult, especially being for a neighbor island), food, books, transportation, and other items needed for daily living. Thank you for your time and consideration for listening to my testimony.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 8:48:14 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kristine Vo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The 'Imi Ho'ola Post-Baccalaureate Program was an arduous journey that tested my mental endurance and grit. I was at school until dusk every day, and at first, even that was not enough to succeed. I felt devastated when I failed my first two midterms, but I knew that these tests did not define my intellectual abilities. Thanks to the amazing faculty and staff, I had the mentorship to help me reflect on my strengths/weaknesses and on how these factors affected my study habits. I learned to adapt, and even now, I continue to adapt based on what I am learning.

The program not only strengthened my foundation in the basic sciences, but it also increased my awareness of health disparities in Hawai'i and the Pacific. A part of our curriculum was to complete a service-learning project in Kalaupapa on the island of Moloka'i. Kalaupapa was the Leprosy Colony in Hawai'i, which served as a natural prison to isolate those diagnosed with Hansen's Disease. The highlight of the project was the ability to share stories and provide entertainment to the remaining residents, nurses, and staff at the Kalaupapa settlement. Our interactions allowed me to better understand the impact of stigmatization in medicine, which has been echoed throughout the years and is still relevant today with diseases such as HIV/AIDs or other conditions that may cause physical disfigurement.

In sum, this program changed my life. It allowed me to hold onto the hope of someday becoming a physician, despite the obstacles I had faced in the past. It also gave me a group of lifelong friends that I can turn to for support throughout medical school. Lastly, it gave me the confidence to succeed in medical school and beyond. The 'Imi Ho'ola Program taught me to think like a doctor in a methodological fashion, rather than just memorizing facts. I hope to prove the success of the 'Imi Ho'ola Program, so that other students like me can have renewed hope of becoming a physician.

- Kristine

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 8:30:10 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Malia Purdy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha mai kōkou!

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of SB 2392 which would appropriate funds for 'Imi Ho'āla student stipends or for other 'Imi Ho'āla student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

The 'Imi Ho'āla Post-Baccalaureate Program is a proven diversity pipeline program that provides educational opportunities to disadvantaged students pursuing careers in medicine. Since 1973, 'Imi Ho'āla (Hawaiian meaning those who seek to heal) has successfully equipped deserving local students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to achieve success in the competitive field of medicine.

The mission of 'Imi Ho'āla is to improve health care for Hawai'i and the Pacific by increasing the number of physicians through a program that enhances disadvantaged students' academic and professional readiness for medical school. The program accepts up to 12 students per year and once enrolled, participants gain a conditional acceptance to JABSOM. 'Imi Ho'āla's success is largely due to the longstanding commitment by the medical school, community supporters, and stakeholders.

To date, 278 'Imi Ho'āla alumni have successfully graduated from JABSOM. Although 'Imi Ho'āla is not limited to persons of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander descent, a large number of students from these backgrounds have demonstrated that they are from a disadvantaged background and are deemed eligible for the program. 'Imi Ho'āla's contributions to Pacific Islander diversity at JABSOM are significant for 38% of all Native Hawaiians, 34% of Filipinos, 57% of Micronesians, and 89% of Samoan students accessing medical school and successfully graduating from JABSOM came through this program.

Mahalo for your time,

Mālia Purdy, PhD

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 8:17:21 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leon Matsuo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2392 which would appropriate funds for 'Imi Ho'Å• la student stipends or for other 'Imi Ho'Å• la student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

I am a graduate of 'Imi Ho'Å• la in 2003. 'Imi Ho'Å• la provided me the opportunity to enter medical school, while receiving the rigorous training and mentorship needed to prepare for the challenges of medical school and beyond. It has also provided me with a stipend while in the program, allowing me the necessary and extensive time needed to focus on my studies and training instead of having to worry about finances and getting a job to make ends meet.

'Imi Ho'Å• la has contributed to increasing the ethnic diversity of JABSOM students, especially Native Hawaiian physicians (of which I am proud to be one) which make up only a small percentage (3.4%) of Hawaii's physicians. Having Native Hawaiian physicians are important as patients better relate to and may be more receptive to advice provide by a doctor from their community and who understands their culture. Patients then are more likely to follow through with recommended care and be on a path to improved health. This is crucial considering Native Hawaiians have some of the poorest heath in a number of chronic diseases of all the ethnic groups, not only in Hawaii, but also in the U.S. as a whole (per a 2017 CDC study).

Participating in 'Imi Ho'Å• la has culminated in the ability to serve as a Native Hawaiian primary care physician in Kona, a place with dire physician shortage. I would not be where I am today if not for 'Imi Ho'Å• la and it's staff. Please support SB 2392.

Mahalo,

Leon Matsuo, MD, Internal Medicine/Pediatrics, Kona, Hawaii.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 8:21:43 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kevin Martinez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

While I am proud of being a first-generation American with Asian Pacific Islander roots and appreciate the education the island has provided, coming from Guam has its drawbacks of limited shadowing experiences, physician shortages, and lack of a medical school. Because I have to seek education in Hawaii with expensive out of state tuition, I have grasped every scholarship opportunity to help pay for my tuition. Knowing full well the difficulties of the journey I would have to take, I have not let these bleak odds deter me from achieving my goal. I have participated in every academic opportunity and community service related to medicine. Amongst the programs I have taken part of was the Imi' Hoola' post-baccalaureate program, which attempts to increase the representation of Pacific Islander physicians.

Prior to Imi' Hoola', I was uncertain of my own capabilities on becoming a capable physician. Despite have the goal in mind and the drive to achieve it, I would often ask myself if I was good enough. Coming from Guam, I was unsure if I would be able to measure up to my mainland counterparts. Through the program, I was able to bolster my skills and learn more about myself - how best I study, what distractions to avoid, my weak subjects, and so much more. I found confidence within myself and even stronger determination.

In addition, as I had no relatives in Hawaii, I came to the island uncertain of how things may unfold. Fortunately, through the program I was able to make 11 life-long friends. Three of these friends are also now my roommates, which helps with the financial situation of being out-of-state.

Ultimately, although the program was exponentially rigorous, with much effort, I was able to matriculate into the John A. Burns School of Medicine. Overall it allowed me to develop constant grit and determination to boldly pursue my goals in medicine.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 8:22:26 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support passing this bill. The hardworking students in the Imi Hoola program deserves the support from the state government. Hawaii needs more doctors to deal with its shortage and students entering this program will help alleviate this problem as they transition to JABSOM afterward.

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 12:52:27 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mele Look	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Honorable Legislators,

I am a researcher in Hawaiian health issues for the last 40 years and am submitting this testimony as an individual in **support** of SB 2392 which would appropriate funds for ‘Imi Ho‘Å• la student stipends or for other ‘Imi Ho‘Å• la student support programs at the discretion of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

The ‘Imi Ho‘Å• la Post-Baccalaureate Program is almost 50 years old, and is copied throughout the world because of its proven effectiveness in successfully training minority and disadvantaged students to become successful medical school graduates.

The mission of ‘Imi Ho‘Å• la is to improve health care for Hawai‘i and the Pacific by increasing the number of physicians through a program that enhances disadvantaged students’ academic and professional readiness for medical school. The program accepts up to 12 students per year and once enrolled, participants gain a conditional acceptance to JABSOM. ‘Imi Ho‘Å• la’s success is largely due to the longstanding commitment by the medical school, community supporters, and stakeholders.

To date, 278 ‘Imi Ho‘Å• la alumni have successfully graduated from JABSOM. Although ‘Imi Ho‘Å• la is not limited to persons of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander descent, a large number of students from these backgrounds have demonstrated that they are from a disadvantaged background and are deemed eligible for the program. ‘Imi Ho‘Å• la’s contributions to Pacific Islander diversity at JABSOM are significant for 38% of all Native Hawaiians, 34% of Filipinos, 57% of Micronesians, and 89% of Samoan students accessing medical school and successfully graduating from JABSOM came through this program.

Sincerely,

Mele A. Look

SB-2392

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 3:37:25 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/12/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Julia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

In strong support. This bill will help the funds needed for students to move forward with the program. The financial health for the students to enroll in the Imi Hoola Program is vital when the cost of living in Hawaii is fatal. They deserve the help they need.