



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 20, 2020

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB 2469 SD1 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

Hearing: Thursday, February 20, 2020, 10:35 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact budget priorities.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to purchase, staff, and operate two mobile clinics to serve homeless individuals, provided that one of the mobile clinics is allocated to the County of Hawaii. The bill requires that matching funds must be provided on a dollar-for-dollar basis for the mobile clinic program.

The Coordinator notes that behavioral health and substance abuse treatment are among the services that may be provided through the proposed mobile clinics. The Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), a 27-member advisory council chaired by the Coordinator, recently voted to prioritize support for behavioral health reforms and programs as part of its 2020 legislative priorities to address homelessness. The delivery of behavioral health services through a mobile clinic will complement and strengthen existing services, particularly in rural areas that lack access to public transportation and are not near a health center.

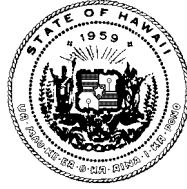
There is a clear and critical intersection between access to healthcare and homelessness, and research has demonstrated the impact that increasing access to treatment for homeless individuals has in improving the overall health of the individual and reducing healthcare costs. For example, an analysis by the University of Hawaii Center on the Family,

based upon reports of 107 Housing First clients participating in the Hawaii Pathways Project, found an estimated healthcare cost savings of \$6,197 per client per month for clients that were housed. See Hawaii Pathways Project Final Report, 2018, University of Hawaii Center on the Family.¹

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator respectfully requests that the Legislature clarify the potential source of matching funds for the proposed mobile clinics.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

¹ See full report at: http://uhfamily.hawaii.edu/publications/brochures/bb9f9_Hawaii_Pathways_Final_Report.pdf



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 18, 2020

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2469 SD1 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

Hearing: February 20, 2020, 10:35 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers comments. DHS appreciates the amendments of the Committee on Human Services authorizing the Department of Human Services to contract with nonprofit medical service providers.

PURPOSE: Appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to purchase, staff, and operate 2 mobile clinics to serve homeless persons; provided that 1 of the mobile clinics shall be allocated to the county of Hawaii. Requires matching funds. (SD1)

DHS acknowledges that homeless individuals may experience high disease burdens and mortality rates. Consequently, homeless individuals are more likely to be frequent users of emergency medical services.

Regarding Section 2, (a)(2), DHS requests clarification regarding what agency or entity will be responsible to secure the match funds. DHS suggests that in the procurement process, applicants identify matching funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis to the amount appropriate by the State. Possible sources of match funds may include county and/or private sources of similar programs.

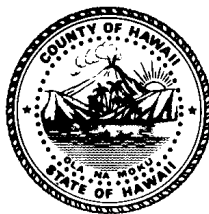
DHS requests further clarification whether it is intended that the \$1 million be matched prior to any distribution of funds appropriated through this measure?

Regarding the purchase of services provided by health care professionals, DHS Homeless Programs Office (HPO) does not currently procure professional medical services, and defers to the Department of Health if the intent is to compensate health care professionals and general funds. However, if health care professionals enroll as Medicaid providers of one or more of the QUEST Integration (QI) plans, it would be possible for providers to bill the individual's QI plans for allowed health care services delivered at the mobile clinic.

DHS HPO currently contracts homeless outreach services with providers statewide. Outreach services may include housing identification, linkages to supportive services, assistance with public benefits, and referrals to healthcare. This bill will complement additional services needed in both continua of care on Oahu and neighbor islands. Furthermore, diverting frequent users of the emergency medical services may result in some savings after evaluation of a mobile clinic.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony of this bill.

REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

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Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740*

February 18, 2020

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL ON SB 2469 SD 1, RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES

Committee on Ways and Means

Thursday, February 20, 2020

10:35 a.m.

Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of SB 2469 SD 1, relating to human services. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Hawai'i County Council, and Chair of the Hawai'i County Council Public Safety Committee.

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for purchasing, staffing, and operating two mobile clinics to serve homeless individuals, providing that one of the mobile clinics shall be allocated to the county with the largest land mass. Homelessness continues to grow and is one of the State's most significant and challenging social problems. Homeless individuals face a wide range of issues, including general health issues, mental illness, and substance abuse. These issues not only affect the homeless but also impact our general population through costs of social and health care services. Mobile clinics offer a variety of free health care services for local homeless resulting in significant cost savings when compared to emergency room visits. The island of Hawai'i is the largest land mass in the State of Hawai'i and a dedicated mobile clinic will assist greatly as this island has greater geographical distances, and many homeless individuals have limited access for health care needs.

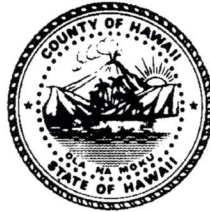
For the reasons stated above I urge the Senate Committees on Ways and Means to support this measure as well. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me @ (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Villegas".

Rebecca Villegas, Hawai'i County Council Member

Harry Kim
Mayor



Roy Takemoto
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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February 18, 2020

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

RE: SB 2469, SD1 Relating to Human Services

I support SB 2469, SD1 as well as any other initiative that can have a positive impact on the homeless population, make their lives a bit easier, and move them toward conventional shelter.

As a neighbor island Mayor, I appreciate the Senate's recognition that homelessness is a statewide problem. A year ago, when testifying on HB 36 and SB 526, I noted that the bills called for two mobile clinics, and that I hoped that one of the two could be earmarked for an ohana zone project on an island other than O'ahu. (It was my understanding that the Executive Committee of the Community Alliance Partners (CAP) was endorsing those bills while making a similar request). I now cannot help but notice that SB 2469, SD1 specifies that one of the mobile clinics would have to be assigned to Hawai'i County. I thank the sponsors for this recognition of our efforts in dealing with the homeless, and I certainly believe that our geography, and our number of homeless, justify such a designation, but I also would understand if your Committee defers to DHS to pick the neighbor island that could most benefit from having such a clinic.

In an event, I ask for a favorable vote on SB 2469, SD1.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Kim
MAYOR



Thursday, February 20, 2020

Senate Bill 2469, SD 1
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i (The Party) stands in support of SB2469 SD1. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for purchasing, staffing, and operating two mobile clinics to serve homeless people, provided that one of the mobile clinics shall be allocated to the county of Hawai'i.

Dozens of families have pitched tents along the streets, and many individuals struggle to survive for long stretches without medical care. Clinics may be the only health care a homeless person receives for months, sometimes even years. This is a major reason why the homeless population on average die decades before people who are housed. Their average age of death is 50. The lack of medical care can be attributable to a number of factors, including but not limited to: (1) being of a transient population, (2) mobility issues getting to clinics, (3) mental illness, (4) severe psychosis, (5) chaos in just finding nutritious food and a place to sleep, (6) uninsured, (7) impoverished, (8) substance and alcohol abuse, and (9) the inability to manage their own lives as necessary to seek medical care.

Queen's Medical Center officials noted 4,000 – 5,000 emergency room visits from the homeless population in 2014. The Honolulu Emergency Services Department, under the direction of Jim Ireland, Director, in an effort to cut taxpayer costs for EMS services to the homeless, started sending paramedics directly to make "home visits" before known homeless "frequent fliers" call for EMS services and treat them on the field rather than at the hospital. It is estimated that these frequent homeless callers cost our taxpayer-funded health care system at least \$3 million a year for ambulance response and trips to the ER. However, based on the transient nature of the homeless population, it may be very difficult to locate these frequent fliers for follow-up visits.

SB2469 SD1, would fill this immediate need for two mobile clinics which will decrease the already high-demand for medical care by paramedics and emergency room doctors, and treat injuries or illnesses at their early stages when the prognoses are easier remedies to manage rather than later which are often the case.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote favorably on this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,



Josh Frost
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee
Democratic Party of Hawai'i



Zahava Zaidoff
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee
Democratic Party of Hawai'i