

Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board

**Before the
House Committee on Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness
and
House Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness
Friday, February 5, 2021
11:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 473, RELATING TO TELEHEALTH**

Chair Ichiyama, Chair Yamane, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ahlani Quiogue, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawaii Medical (Board). The Board supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to authorize the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction, if the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the State.

The Board recognizes that telehealth is: (1) essential to patient care and access to care, both during and outside of a pandemic, to diagnose, treat, and monitor illness; and (2) is a safe mechanism to provide care.

Lastly, the Board appreciates the efforts of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii to clarify the language in Hawaii Revised Statutes section 453-1.3, so that it is clear that a physician-patient relationship may be established via telehealth by a physician licensed to practice medicine in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HB-473

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 5:13:56 PM

Testimony for PDP on 2/5/2021 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lara Bollinger	Together For Our Keiki	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure. I am writing on behalf of [Together For Our Keiki](#), a non-profit, educational advocacy organization based in Hawai'i in SUPPORT OF HB473, which seeks to authorize the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction, if the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the State.

Mahalo for your time,

Lara Bollinger, JD, BCBA, LBA

Vice President & Co-Founder

Together For Our Keiki



February 5, 2021 at 11:00 am
Via Videoconference

House Committee on Pandemic and Disaster Preparedness

To: Chair Linda Ichiyama
Vice Chair Stacelynn K.M. Eli

House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness

To: Chair Ryan I. Yamane
Vice Chair Adrian K. Tam

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy
Director of Government Affairs
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: Testimony in Support
HB 473, Relating to Telehealth

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the healthcare continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities, and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 20,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong **support** of this bill. This bill makes a change to HRS §453-1.3 to clarify that telehealth can be used to establish a physician-patient relationship if the physician is licensed to practice in Hawaii by changing the relevant section of law from a negative statement to a positive one to provide needed clarity and align §453-1.3 with other telehealth allowance throughout HRS.

The pandemic has caused a major shift in how patients receive care by both necessity and preference. Even now, many patients are hesitant to make in-person visits and residents of rural areas may have more limited options on how to access care. Ensuring that a legitimate relationship can be established via telehealth is an important flexibility that has enabled providers to better use telehealth to diagnose, treat, and monitor illnesses that might have otherwise gone unaddressed due to pandemic-related and other barriers. We believe that this simple change to clarify this statute will increase access to care as we continue to fight through this pandemic and beyond.

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

Phone: (808) 521-8961 | Fax: (808) 599-2879 | HAH.org | 707 Richards Street, PH2 - Honolulu, HI 96813

Affiliated with the American Hospital Association, American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living, National Association for Home Care and Hospice, American Association for Homecare, Council of State Home Care Associations, and National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
The Honorable Stacelynn K.M. Eli, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness

The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

From: Jace S. Mikulanec, Manager, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 5, 2021

Re: Support for HB473: Relating to Telehealth

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit 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, and more than 1,500 affiliated physicians and providers 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 HB473, relating to telehealth. This measure addresses the need to eliminate an existing provision under the law (HRS 453-1.3(e)) which prevents physicians from utilizing telehealth modalities to establish a physician-patient relationship. The ability to expand access of medical care via telehealth during the COVID19 pandemic is an important tool in ensuring more members of our community are able to access healthcare safely and responsibly.

Queen's provides a number of telemedicine specialties in areas such as, but not limited to, stroke and neurology, pulmonology, psychiatry, wound care, and critical care. Telehealth programs assist with connecting our four hospitals and allow our health care workers to provide care to patients in their local communities. In particular, Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Queen's has made substantial strides in shifting to telehealth as a modality of quality care for patients. In 2019, Queen's had approximately 1,700 telehealth visits; by comparison in April 2020 we had 13,000 telehealth visits and in September we had 16,000. Furthermore, all of QHS facilities saw increases in the use of telemedicine since the COVID-19 pandemic began with the largest percentage at QHS-Punchbowl.

We concur with the testimony submitted by the Hospital Association of Hawaii and thank you for allowing The Queen's Hospital System to testify in support of HB473.

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.



HB473 Physician Can Use Telehealth

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS:

- Rep Ryan Yamane, Chair; Rep. Adrian Tam, Vice Chair
- Friday, Feb. 5, 2021: 11:00 am: Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB473:

GOOD MORNING CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization of over 30 substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies.

HSAC is in full support that a physician can use Telehealth, especially during a pandemic, without first having a face to face interview.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.



To: House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

Hearing Date/Time: Friday February 5, 11 am

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 473 with Comments

From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and members of the Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness:

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) strongly supports HB 473 which would allow physicians to establish a physician-patient relationship via telehealth and would not require an in-person visit first. During COVID, this is particularly important.

We respectfully ask that you consider adding APRNs to this bill so that their telehealth work also constitutes having a patient relationship.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Administration

640 Ulukahiki Street
Kailua, HI 96734
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www.AdventistHealthCastle.org

February 5, 2021 at 11:00 am

Via Written Testimony

House Committee on Pandemic and Disaster Preparedness

To: Chair Linda Ichiyama
Vice Chair Stacelynn K.M. Eli

From: Kathy Raethel, Adventist Health Castle President

Re: Testimony in Support

HB 473, Relating to Telehealth

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this bill. As we've been impacted by COVID-19, we have seen firsthand results in what Telehealth can accomplish, and believe that offering continued use of these services will be essential in the future of patient care. Our combination of state-of-the-art technology with "state-of-the-heart" care allows us to provide care in a nurturing environment, such as in a patient's home. As we've witnessed success through these remote alternatives, we see this as a viable solution towards accessible healthcare.

Adventist Health Castle is a full-service medical center offering a wide range of inpatient, outpatient, and home-based services. Our health system is one of the largest rural healthcare providers, and we agree with the legislature's support from 2009 advocating for increased access and reduced delays in patient healthcare, "particularly, in rural areas of the State". This virtual model protects high-risk patients and provides an incentive for residents in the state to utilize this affordable and innovative program, and ultimately works in the benefit of our community.

During the last twelve months, our Primary Care offices have seen over 20,103 office visits. 15,345 of these visits were Telehealth related, and constitute for 76% of our overall patients. As we've been impacted by COVID-19, we've been able to see how much of an impact Telehealth options have made in our clients' lives. Thank you for the opportunity to provide supportive testimony for this successful program, which will help the state continue to provide safe and accessible healthcare services Online.

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Manager

Before:
House Committee on Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness
The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
The Honorable Stacelynn K.M. Eli, Vice Chair

House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness
The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

February 5, 2021
11:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference

Re: HB 473, Relating to the Telehealth

Chair Ichiyama, Chair Yamane, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 473, which authorizes the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction, if the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the State.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB 473.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i is Hawai‘i’s largest integrated health system that provides care and coverage for approximately 260,000 members. Each day, more than 4,400 dedicated employees and more than 600 Hawai‘i Permanente Medical Group physicians and providers come to work at Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i to care for our members at our 20 medical facilities, including Moanalua Medical Center, providing high-quality care for our members and delivering on our commitment to improve the health of the 1.4 million people living in the communities we serve.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i supports HB 473 because it clarifies that telehealth can be used to establish a physician-patient relationship if the physician is licensed to practice in Hawai‘i.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, the use of telehealth in Hawai‘i has dramatically increased as telehealth has been critical to limit the risk of person-to-person transmission while helping to avoid overwhelming our healthcare facilities. At Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i, we have seen a dramatic increase in the use of telehealth visits between 2019 and 2020. In 2019, we had approximately 1,000 of our outpatient visits by video. In stark contrast, in 2020, we had approximately 67,000 video visits. We expect this number to continue to increase in 2021.

HB 473 will enable us to establish provider-patient relationships between specialists on Oahu and the mainland and neighbor island members – increasing access without incurring the inconvenience and expense of travel, especially for those specialties with significant provider shortages.

We ask the committees to PASS HB 473 unamended. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



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facebook.com/AARPHawaii

**The State Legislature
House of Representatives
Committee on Pandemic and Disaster Preparedness
Committee on Health, Human Services and Homelessness
Friday, February 5, 2021
11:00 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair

RE: H.B. 473 Relating to Telehealth

Aloha Chairs Ichiyama and Yamane and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a membership organization of people age fifty and over, with nearly 145,000 members in Hawai'i.

AARP Hawai'i supports H.B. 473 which expands access to care and reduces delays by clarifying that a physician-patient relationship may be established via a telehealth appointment.

The recent pandemic has significantly increase the use of telehealth for patients to connect with their physicians for medical consultation and monitoring. This has improved access especially for the kupuna and many others who are homebound; or reside in rural communities and unable to see their physicians in-person. This bill clarifies Section 453.1.3 in the Hawaii Revised Statutes by amending the subsections (e) and (f) to clearly state that "A physician-patient relationship may be established via a telehealth interaction: provided that the physician has a license to practice medicine in Hawaii."

Thank you very much for the opportunity to support H.B. 473

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keali'i Lopez".

Keali'i Lopez, AARP Hawai'i
State Director

Friday, February 5, 2021 at 11:00 AM
Via Video Conference

House Committee on Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness

To: Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Representative Stacelynn K.M. Eli, Vice Chair

House Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness

To: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair
Representative Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 473
Relating to Telehealth**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

I write in support of HB 473 which authorizes the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction when the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the state.

Since 1999, the use and expansion of telehealth services and technology in Hawaii has been recognized as a way to increase access and reduce delays to health care, particularly in rural areas of the. Many of the highest-risk patients reside in Medically Underserved Areas (MUA), are part of Medically Underserved Populations (MUP), or reside in federally-designated health professional shortage areas. Telehealth benefits many in these communities. Elderly, as well as medically- and socially-complex patients often face transportation barriers and difficulty navigating our collective system of health care. These determinants of health, as well as social- or cultural-isolation can often impede seeking care or follow-up after a doctor's appointment or hospitalization. Being able to provide telehealth services at community health centers or in the home has tremendous potential for improving the health of patients, their families, as well as providing cost-savings to the entire health system by avoiding emergency department or hospitalization costs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an increase use of telehealth services. However, the existing state law relating to the practice of telehealth is ambiguous regarding whether a patient can use telehealth to establish a relationship with a physician. This could result in delayed access to care in many instances where access to care could be prudently and appropriately initiated through telehealth.

With the increase in the demand for and use of telehealth to diagnose, treat, and monitor illness, this measure greatly improves the understanding of the doctor-patient relationship when telehealth is utilized.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-473

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 5:11:26 PM

Testimony for PDP on 2/5/2021 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure. I am writing today in SUPPORT OF HB473, which seeks to authorize the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction, if the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the State.

Mahalo for your time,

Amanda Kelly, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA

HB-473

Submitted on: 2/4/2021 7:18:17 AM

Testimony for PDP on 2/5/2021 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ray Ogai	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I support the edits/amendments made, clarifying telehealth may be provided with initial contact via video/audio communications or in person.

Thank you,

Ray O.

HB-473

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 7:30:13 PM

Testimony for PDP on 2/5/2021 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I have been using telehealth since the pandemic started. It is a valuable resource and keeps me safe by not having to go out. Telehealth allows people who would not normally be able to visit their doctors to be evaluated and treated. Please support this measure.



HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS
C O R P O R A T I O N

"Quality Healthcare For All"

LATE

COMMITTEE ON PANDEMIC & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, and HOMELESSNESS

February 5, 2021
11:00 a.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Via Videoconference

**Testimony Providing in SUPPORT of H.B. 473
RELATING TO TELEHEALTH.**

Authorizes the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction, if the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the State.

Linda Rosen, M.D., M.P.H.
Chief Executive Officer
Hawaii Health Systems Corporation

The Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) SUPPORTS H.B. 473.

The neighbor islands have long needed the full array of options to support healthcare services for its communities. COVID-19 widened the consumer understanding and utilization of telehealth, as more recognize the benefits of access to quality care, especially in the rural areas of Hawaii.

Currently, the law is ambiguous. As written, a physician-patient relationship may be established via telehealth if the patient is referred to the telehealth provider by another health care provider who has conducted an in-person consultation and has provided all pertinent patient information to the telehealth provider. H.B. 473 will clarify and simplify this process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee **in SUPPORT** of this measure.



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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LATE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Ryan Yamane, Chair

Rep. Adrian Tam, Vice Chair

Date: February 5, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Place: Videoconference

From: Hawaii Medical Association

Elizabeth A Ignacio, MD, Chair, HMA Legislative Committee

Linda Rosehill, Legislative Affairs

Re: HB 473 - Relating to Telehealth

Position: SUPPORT, WITH COMMENTS

The COVID-19 pandemic of the last year has created a substantial expansion of telehealth within physician practices. According to the American Medical Association, the use of telehealth between physicians and their patients increased an estimated 5,000% over pre-COVID levels, and Hawaii is no exception. It has been established that telehealth can provide safe, effective care when used under proper circumstances, and has been a popular modality among many patients.

Hawaii was a relatively early adopter of telehealth and has had statutory language for well over a decade. The explosion of use offers the opportunity to fine tune current regulation.

The HMA feels strongly that the Hawaii Board of Medicine maintain an avenue of control over all licensed providers under its purview. We feel that caution must be taken when allowing exemptions to Hawaii licensure when caring for Hawaii's residents. As such, we would ask for additional discussion as to the issuance of state licensure exemptions, and limitations as to when care may be rendered across state lines, such as subspecialty care not available on Hawaii.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify on this issue.

HMA OFFICERS

President – Michael Champion, MD President-Elect – Angela Pratt, MD Secretary – Thomas Kosasa, MD
Immediate Past President – Jerry Van Meter, MD Treasurer – Elizabeth A. Ignacio, MD

LATE



Prime Care Services Hawaii, Incorporated

Medicare- certified home health agency

February 5, 2021 at 11:00 am
Via Videoconference

House Committee on Pandemic and Disaster Preparedness

To: Chair Linda Ichiyama
Vice Chair Stacelynn K.M. Eli

House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness

To: Chair Ryan I. Yamane
Vice Chair Adrian K. Tam

From: Beth Hoban, RN, MAOM
Prime Care Services Hawaii

Re: Testimony in Support
HB 473, Relating to Telehealth

Prime Care Services Hawaii is a licensed, Medicare-certified home healthcare agency established in 1994 that provides skilled services to homebound clients in the community. Our patients/clients have difficulty leaving their home due to their health and illness.

The pandemic has caused a major shift in how patients receive care by both necessity and preference. Even now, many patients are hesitant to make in-person visits and residents of rural areas may have more limited options on how to access care. Ensuring that a legitimate relationship can be established via telehealth is an important flexibility that has enabled providers to better use telehealth to diagnose, treat, and monitor illnesses that might have otherwise gone unaddressed due to pandemic-related and other barriers. We believe that this simple change to clarify this statute will increase access to care as we continue to fight through this pandemic and beyond. We have the opportunity to provide supportive testimony for this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong **support** of this bill. This bill makes a change to HRS §453-1.3 to clarify that telehealth can be used to establish a physician-patient relationship if the physician is licensed to practice in Hawaii by changing the relevant section of law from a negative statement to a positive one to provide needed clarity and align §453-1.3 with other telehealth allowance throughout HRS.

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