



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY
ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HCR 0059-HD1
RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING ONGOING COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS
TO IMPLEMENT A STATEWIDE STRATEGY TO ELIMINATE
VIRAL HEPATITIS TYPES A, B, AND C IN HAWAII**

**SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOOLE, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH**

Hearing Date: 4/9/2021

Room Number: Video Conference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Testimony:** Thank you for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of
3 HCR59, which requests that the Legislature “recognizes and supports ongoing collaborative
4 efforts by state agencies and private organizations to implement the ‘Hep Free 2030’ statewide
5 strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis types A, B, and C in Hawaii” by convening informational
6 briefings on the status of the strategy’s implementation.

7 Hawai‘i has one of the highest incidences and mortality rates in the country for liver cancer,
8 primarily due to viral hepatitis. To address this public health priority, the department has
9 partnered closely since 2011 with a wide array of state and community partners as a member of
10 the Hep Free Hawai‘i coalition. The department has an advisory role in the development and
11 implementation of “Hep Free 2030: The Hawai‘i Hepatitis Elimination Strategy 2020-2030” to
12 ensure alignment with recommendations and priorities of the department, the U.S. Centers for
13 Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the
14 World Health Organization. Furthermore, the Hawai‘i “Hep Free 2030 Strategy” is the first in
15 the nation to commit to eliminating hepatitis A, B, and C, positioning the State and the
16 department as thought leaders and innovators in public health.

- 1 As such, the department submits this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of H.C.R. 59 so that the
- 2 Legislature can formally recognize the successes of ongoing public-private partnerships in public
- 3 health and to continue to learn more about the importance of viral hepatitis elimination for
- 4 Hawai'i.

- 5 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 59, HD 1

TO: Chair Keohokalole, Vice-Chair Baker, & Health Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Grants, Development & Policy Manager

DATE: April 9, 2021 (1:10 PM)

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** HCR 59, HD 1, which recognizes and supports ongoing collaborative efforts to implement a statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis A, B, & C in Hawaii. There are up to 63,000 people in Hawaii possibly affected with hepatitis B or C, contributing to one of the highest rates of the liver cancer in the nation.

HHRC and its partner organization, [Hep Free Hawaii](#), publicly released “[Hep Free 2030](#)” on July 28, 2020, World Hepatitis Day. Shortly before the release of the strategy, [the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared viral hepatitis a “winnable battle,”](#) making it a national public health priority where significant progress can be made in relatively short timeframe.

The strategy outlined in Hep Free 2030 is the product of an ongoing collaboration of over 90 organizations, including the Harm Reduction Services Branch of the Hawaii State Department of Health, and has the formal support of Lieutenant Governor Green and U.S. Senators Hirono and Schatz.

The vision of the strategy includes the integration of culturally appropriate services within a comprehensive system of care and promoting the core values of *harm reduction*, *social justice*, *intersectionality*, and *aloha*. This vision is congruent with the vision of the [National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan](#), which promotes “access to high quality health care and curative treatments, free from stigma and discrimination.”

HHRC’s mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

To: Senate Committee on Health
Hearing Date/Time: Friday, April 9, 2021 1:10 PM
Re: Testimony in Support of HCR 59
From: Heather Lusk, Hep Free Hawaii

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

Hep Free Hawaii strongly supports HCR 59 (SCR 178) this recognizes and supports the ongoing collaborative efforts to implement a statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawaii. This resolution specifically supports the “*Hep Free 2030*” statewide strategy which will be the first elimination strategy in the nation to address hepatitis A, B and C.

Hawaii has one of the highest rates in the U.S. of liver cancer which is directly related to our disproportionately high rates of hepatitis, esp. hepatitis B, in the islands. HFH and its close to 100 community partners developed the “*Hep Free 2030*” strategy over the past two years and has been working to implement micro-elimination strategies, such as the Hepatitis ECHO Project launched in January 2021, to move towards no new infections and supporting those living with chronic hepatitis access to life-saving care. The vision of the strategy includes the integration of culturally appropriate services within a comprehensive system of care and promoting the core values of *harm reduction, social justice, intersectionality, and aloha*.

HFH is a coalition of local, national, and global partners dedicated to increasing awareness of and access to viral hepatitis and harm reduction services throughout the islands. Born out of a partnership of the Hawaii Department of Health and the Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center, Hep Free Hawaii and its close to 100 community partners are dedicated to making Hawaii “Hep Free”.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please visit www.hepfreehawaii.org for more info!

In July 2020, we transitioned from our previous [2018-2020 Strategic Plan](#) to [Hep Free 2030: The Hawaii Hepatitis Elimination Strategy 2020-2030](#). Together with 120 active partners over 12 months of planning, we identified these five Priority Areas to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawai'i by 2030:

1. Awareness and Education
2. Access to Services
3. Advocacy at All Levels
4. Equity in Everything
5. Data-Driven Decision-Making

Join our efforts to make #HepFree2030 a reality!



HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 8:52:50 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Peter Tuiolosega Silva	Testifying for Hawaii Island HIV/AIDS Foundation	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

Hawaii is the first state in the county to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B and C and given our very high rates of liver cancer (because of high rates of hepatitis), I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Peter Silva,

Executive Director

Hawaii Island HIV/AIDS Foundation

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2021 4:48:28 PM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Maddalynn Seseapasara	Testifying for HHHRC	Support	No

Comments:

Hawai‘i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) strongly supports HCR 59, HD 1, which recognizes and supports ongoing collaborative efforts to implement a statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis A, B, & C in Hawai‘i. There are up to 63,000 people in Hawai‘i possibly affected with hepatitis B or C, contributing to one of the highest rates of the liver cancer in the nation.

HHRC and its partner organization, Hep Free Hawai‘i (HFH), publicly released “Hep Free 2030” on July 28, 2020, World Hepatitis Day. Shortly before the release of the strategy, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared viral hepatitis a “winnable battle,” making it a national public health priority where significant progress can be made in relatively short timeframe.

The strategy outlined in Hep Free 2030 is the product of an ongoing collaboration of over 90 organizations, including the Harm Reduction Services Branch of the Hawai‘i State Department of Health, and has the formal support of Lieutenant Governor Green and U.S. Senators Hirono and Schatz.

The vision of the strategy includes the integration of culturally appropriate services within a comprehensive system of care and promoting the core values of harm reduction, social justice, intersectionality, and aloha. This vision is congruent with the vision of the National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan, which promotes “access to high quality health care and curative treatments, free from stigma and discrimination.”

HHRC’s mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai‘i and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Maddalynn Sesepasara

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 59, HD 1

TO: Chair Keohokalole, Vice-Chair Baker, & Health Committee Members

FROM: Aaron Ruddick
Medical Case Manager

DATE: April 9, 2021 (1:10 PM)

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** HCR 59, HD 1, which recognizes and supports ongoing collaborative efforts to implement a statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis A, B, & C in Hawaii. There are up to 63,000 people in Hawaii possibly affected with hepatitis B or C, contributing to one of the highest rates of the liver cancer in the nation.

HHRC and its partner organization, [Hep Free Hawaii](#) (HFH), publicly released “[Hep Free 2030](#)” on July 28, 2020, World Hepatitis Day. Shortly before the release of the strategy, [the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared viral hepatitis a “winnable battle,”](#) making it a national public health priority where significant progress can be made in relatively short timeframe.

The strategy outlined in Hep Free 2030 is the product of an ongoing collaboration of over 90 organizations, including the Harm Reduction Services Branch of the Hawaii State Department of Health, and has the formal support of Lieutenant Governor Green and U.S. Senators Hirono and Schatz.

The vision of the strategy includes the integration of culturally appropriate services within a comprehensive system of care and promoting the core values of *harm reduction*, *social justice*, *intersectionality*, and *aloha*. This vision is congruent with the vision of the [National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan](#), which promotes “access to high quality health care and curative treatments, free from stigma and discrimination.”

HHRC’s mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



DATE 7 April 2021

To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health

Re: Strong Support of HCR 59, HD1 (HSCR1562) RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING ONGOING COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT A STATEWIDE STRATEGY TO ELIMINATE VIRAL HEPATITIS A, B, AND C IN HAWAI'I

Hrg: 9 April 2021, 1:00 pm Via Videoconference

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 400 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is advocating for equity in all policies.

HPHA strongly supports HCR 59, to implement a statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis A, B and C in Hawai'i. Viral hepatitis A, B and C have been long-term public health issues that result in serious morbidity and mortality among infected individuals. In 2013, viral hepatitis was the leading cause of death worldwide with a death toll that exceeded that from HIV, tuberculosis or malaria [1]. The majority of the burden is due to advanced liver disease from hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV specifically is the top indication for liver transplant and a leading cause of liver cancer in the U.S. and HBV is the leading cause of liver cancer world-wide. The risk of transmission of hepatitis A (HAV), B and C varies among different populations. However, a commonality between each of these three infections is the disproportionate burden of infection among vulnerable populations such as the homeless, individuals impacted by substance abuse (specifically IV drug use as a main risk factor for HCV transmission), and foreign-born populations from HBV endemic countries. Acute HAV and HBV infection can be prevented with vaccination. Chronic HBV and progression of liver disease can be managed by proven treatments and routine screening for liver cancer. Acute HCV infection can be prevented by programs such as safe needle exchange. Chronic HCV infection can be cured by new treatments that offer a high success rate. Equally vital to prevention and management is screening for chronic HBV and HCV as a large percentage of individuals with HBV or HCV infection are unaware they are infected. Individuals with chronic HBV or HCV are often asymptomatic until they encounter symptoms of advanced liver disease.

Both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), have called for the eliminate hepatitis B and C worldwide by 2030 and have published detailed and evidence-based strategies for prevention and management [1,2]. These strategies include vaccination efforts (applicable to HAV and HBV); harm reduction programs for persons who inject drugs (most applicable to HCV); and screening and treatment (applicable to HBV and HCV).



The elimination of viral hepatitis A, B, and C is a top public health priority both nationally and globally. It is imperative that action is taken and proven evidence-based strategies are deployed to eliminate viral hepatitis A, B and C in Hawai'i. HPHA strongly supports HCR 59.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Leocadia Conlon'.

J. Leocadia Conlon, PhD, MPH, PA-C
Legislative Committee Co-Chair
Hawaii Public Health Association

References:

1. World Health Organization. *Combating Hepatitis B and C to reach elimination by 2030*. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/206453/WHO_HIV_2016.04_eng.pdf;jsessionid=3D3313A564F45D1D27CDA4273DDA80FE?sequence=1
2. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Progress Toward Viral Hepatitis Elimination in the United States, 2017*. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/policy/pdfs/nationalprogressreport.pdf>

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 10:04:59 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jill	Testifying for MAF	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new Hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with Hepatitis A, B and/or C.

Hawaii is the first state in the country to have its elimination strategy encompass Hepatitis A, B and C and given our very high rates of liver cancer (because of high rates of Hepatitis), I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

As an employee of a health services organization, I can attest to the incredible work being done by Hep Free Hawaii. Please support their efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Mahalo

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 12:24:49 PM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Yulia Muzychenko	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Oppose in case it will start any kind of mandatory prescription or immunization for the population. No mandatory treatment, only at will treatment with real informed consent of any side effects listed on actual immunization inserts and drug inserts

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 3:45:04 PM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tiare Sua	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

Hawaii is the first state in the country to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B and C and given our very high rates of liver cancer (because of high rates of hepatitis), I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 5:39:09 PM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Naoky Chih SU Tsai	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

As a practicing **transplant hepatologist** of the only liver transplant program in our state, I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C. This will significantly reduce the personal tragedy and society burden in our community. I have seen first hand that the need for risky and expensive transplant procedure has decreased significantly since effective treatment and management of hepatitis have been available. Now the key is to prevent the infection and identify these patients as early as we can. And this bill will definitely help us to reach that goal.

Hawaii is the first state in the county to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B and C and given our very high rates of liver cancer (because of high rates of hepatitis), I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2021 6:19:38 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Beatrice Zovich	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

Hawaii is the first state in the county to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B and C and given our very high rates of liver cancer (because of high rates of hepatitis), I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2021 8:09:54 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha HTH Committee,

As a public health professional and concerned citizen, I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HCR59, which requests the Legislature to recognize and support hepatitis elimination in Hawai'i, as detailed in the Hep Free 2030 strategy.

Hawai'i has one of the highest rates of liver cancer in the country, mostly due to hepatitis. The CDC recently recommended that all adults get tested for hepatitis C, which means that hepatitis in Hawai'i affects all communities. Many of the communities most affected by hepatitis (people who are houseless, people who are foreign born, people who are incarcerated) are also disparately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, this resolution would support a community-driven strategy to support communities to eliminate hepatitis and related harms.

Please support HCR59.

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 8:36:25 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dr. Christina MB Wang	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

Hawaii is the first state in the country to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B and C and given our very high rates of liver cancer (because of high rates of hepatitis), I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger. Prevention and appropriate treatment prevents costly outcomes such as hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Dr Christina MB Wang

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 8:53:05 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melissa Bumgardner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

I have had the great privilege of working with Hep Free Hawaii and patients living with chronic hepatitis C infection in the past several years. We have an unprecedented opportunity to completely eradicate these infectious sources of liver disease in our community. HCR59 gives strength and momentum to the efforts currently underway in the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Dr. Melissa Bumgardner, Director of Pharmacy Services, West Hawaii Community Health Center

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 9:30:09 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Judy Strait-Jones	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a public health educator and long term resident of Hawaii, I am in STRONG SUPPORT of a state-wide strategy to eliminate hepatitis A, B and C in Hawaii.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 9:42:40 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brooks King	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59, which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

Hawaii is the first state in the country to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B, and C, and I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Brooks King

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 9:48:36 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nara E Sitachitta	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

Hawaii is the first state in the county to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B and C and given our very high rates of liver cancer (because of high rates of hepatitis), I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 9:49:59 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Daniel Saltman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

With current medications, hepatitis C can be **cured** in upwards of 95% of patients treated. It is a realistic goal to eliminate hepatitis C in the state of Hawaii by 2030.

This goal is shared by the World Health Organization. Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden and the United Kingdom should reach the targets by **2030**. In the U.S., Connecticut, South Carolina and Washington—are set to reduce new infections by 80% and **eliminate hep C by 2030**.

Hawaii is the first state in the county to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B and C. Because of high rates of hepatitis, we have high per capita rates of liver cancer. I support this broad strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

With state government to pursue this target, we can build upon the progress made during Covid to streamline and integrate our systems of health care. Hepatitis C is an excellent model for this because the diagnosis, treatment and management of this condition is well-defined and straightforward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

Daniel Saltman, MD FACP

Associate Clinical Professor, Dept. of Internal Medicine, John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawaii

Director, Project ECHO: Hawaii Learning Groups

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 9:55:49 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
thad higa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fully support any and all efforts to reduce and eliminate hepatitis through vaccines, testing, education, training programs, and care services. I support this as a basic human decency that should be afforded to everyone in facing preventable infections, and I support this in defense of all underprivileged, historically marginalized and oppressed communities fighting this. We are way overdue to eliminate hepatitis. LEGISLATE THIS

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 10:21:00 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cindy Nawilis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Cindy Nawilis and I'm a resident living in Makiki neighborhood of Homolulu. I fully support this bill to promote collaborative efforts among public and private entities in achieving important public health measures, especially to eliminate viral hepatitis. I believe the HEP Free 2030 goal and framework is measurable, actionable and very much deserving of wide spread support.

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 10:57:52 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Abitbol	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and members of the committee:

I am writing in **strong support** of HCR 59, which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B, or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

Viral hepatitis is an immediate health crisis that puts the lives of our community at risk. Legislative support is necessary to ensure a safe and healthy Hawaii for all generations. We have the ability to effectively eradicate this threat from our community, but we need the support of our legislators and community leaders.

Hawaii is the first state in the county to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B, and C. Given our very high rates of liver cancer (because of high rates of hepatitis), I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 10:42:28 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melissa Machida	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of HCR 59 which highlights the Hep Free 2030 elimination strategy as a roadmap to move towards no new hepatitis A, B or C infections in Hawaii and to increase access to testing and care for those living with hepatitis B and/or C.

Hawaii is the first state in the county to have its elimination strategy encompass hepatitis A, B and C and given our very high rates of liver cancer (because of high rates of hepatitis), I applaud this strategy to make our communities healthier and stronger.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Melissa Machida, Pharm. D.
Times Clinical Pharmacy Manager

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 11:38:37 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Staley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I **strongly support** HCR 59, HD 1, which recognizes and supports ongoing collaborative efforts to implement a statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis A, B, & C in Hawai'i. There are up to 63,000 people in Hawai'i possibly affected with hepatitis B or C, contributing to one of the highest rates of the liver cancer in the nation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 12:24:31 PM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
marc rocheleau	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To whom this concerns, I am voicing my support of this bill to keep funding in place for the treatment of viral hepatitis and HIV treatment and prevention. As a local born and raised in the state I am very concerned at the potential outcomes if the funding for these programs is no longer supported. I am in the healthcare landscape for my profession and I see first hand daily what the primary and secondary circumstances are for the patients whom suffer from these diseases. It is hard enough to adequately care for this population and the organization's whom are involved are doing an amazing job at lowering the disease prevalence in the state because of the support they've received, which helps reduce transmission and further spreading of disease. Because of the substance abuse problems that are present in the state if we let our guard down with regards to treatment and engaging with this patient population it will only create exponential healthcare problems for us locally years later which will further stress our healthcare systems. Please consider these ideas when final decisions are made, thank you for taking a moment to read my testimony.

LATE

HCR-59-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 9:37:10 PM

Testimony for HTH on 4/9/2021 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rob Guzman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am strongly in support of HCR 59 and urge our legislature to pass this bill.

For over 9 years I tested 700-800 people per year for Hepatitis C strictly on neighbor islands and provided medical case management to those testing positive. I personally was conducting roughly 1/5th of all Hepatitis C rapid testing statewide, testing more people than several agencies contracted by the State to do this work. Every year I saved lives by getting people to test and learn they were infected, and ultimately getting them cured, which also helps minimize spread.

Unfortunately the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division of the Department of Health (DOH) effectively eliminated my position last July by letting my former employer literally replace my services with an inaccurate YouTube video. They were also allowed to use my salary and travel expenses to fund executive salaries (at a nonprofit serving mostly homeless people under a former corporate lobbyist as CEO making over 1/4 million dollars per year, no less).

That DOH allowed this to happen without any repercussions for my former employer (despite them being contractually obligated to provide these specific services on neighbor islands), makes clear Hawaii needs far more organization in addressing Hepatitis C, along with A & B.

All are quite easy to prevent and Hepatitis C is cured with as little as 8 weeks of daily pills. By some measures, Hawaii is worse off than nearly all states in terms of per capita Hepatitis B and C. Even though we've had repeated recent Hepatitis A outbreaks, few have been vaccinated to prevent it and it is not mandatory for employment in food service or for school enrollment.

We are fortunate to have incredible Hepatitis warriors at DOH and State-funded nonprofits and many committed public health workers ready and willing to provide increased services such as Hepatitis testing, vaccination, education, and treatment. As a former infectious disease epidemiologist, I understand this more than most. I urge you to empower these individuals and organizations to greatly reduce the burden of morbidity and mortality from these infectious diseases.

Sincerely,

Robert Guzman, MPH