



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in OPPOSITION to S.B. 858, S.D. 1
RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Hearing Date: March 4, 2021

Room Number: Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Personnel and operational costs required exceed the current departmental
2 budget and does not align with the Governor's Executive Biennium Budget request.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) opposes Senate Bill 858, Senate
4 Draft 1 (S.B. 858, S.D. 1), requiring the DOH to establish a task force to plan the certification
5 and training process for community health workers (CHW) to help address the social
6 determinants of poor health that disproportionately affect low-income, minority populations,
7 which are magnified during times of crisis. The DOH strongly supports the intent of this bill, as
8 it acknowledges the critical role that CHW play in linking communities, particularly rural, low-
9 income, homeless, and immigrant/migrant communities, with critical health care services, which
10 have been significantly altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. S.B. 858, S.D. 1 aligns with
11 ongoing efforts within the Department and with community stakeholders to formalize CHW
12 certification, expand CHW training, and establish a reimbursement process to sustain CHW
13 capacity. The expectations of S.B. 858 are, however, above and beyond the expertise and
14 personnel capacity available to effectively implement the proposed activities.

15 The DOH is committed to maturing the role that CHW have in serving their communities
16 as part of workforce development and improving care. The DOH will support and participate in

1 the existing CHW Ally Group and continue to work towards advancing the educational and
2 professional infrastructure for CHW across the state.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

4 **Offered Amendments:** None



**Testimony to the Senate Joint Committee on Ways and Means, and Commerce and
Consumer Protection
Thursday, March 4, 2021; 9:35 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 0858, SENATE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS.

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Baker, and Members of the Joint Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 0858, Senate Draft 1, RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS, and **proposes an amendment for your consideration.**

The bill, as received by your Committee, would establish a task force to plan the certification and training process for community health workers.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

Community Health Workers (CHWs) have long been active health care providers in rural and underprivileged communities throughout the State. However, because this profession is not licensed by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, in accordance with Section 26H-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, among others, their services are not reimbursable under private nor public insurance. This has greatly diminished the services that they can provide, especially in areas that are experiencing a critical lack of health care professionals to provide basic services for our citizens.

The HPCA asserts that CHWs are well skilled professionals that can perform an array of essential services. However, because CHWs are geared to working in communities and areas that FQHCs are situated, and that in all likelihood, FQHCs will continue to be employing CHWs for their services, **we ask that a representative from the HPCA be added to the Task Force.** That way, the HPCA would be able to participate in the discussion moving forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



HIPHI Board

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*Misty Pacheco, DrPH
University of Hawai'i at Hilo,
Department of Kinesiology and
Exercise Sciences*

*Garret Sugai
Kaiser Permanente*

Date: March 3, 2021

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer
Protection

Re: Support for SB 858, SD1, Relating to Community Health
Workers

Hrg: March 4, 2021 at 9:35 AM via Videoconference

The Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ (HIPHI) **Supports the intent of SB 858, SD1**, which establishes a task force of stakeholders to plan the certification and training process for community health workers and to provide a report to the legislature prior to the 2022 legislative session.

Since 2018, HIPHI has convened a network of community health workers (CHW) from across the state and a network of CHW allies dedicated to supporting CHWs. The long-term goal of most CHWs is to have services provided by CHWs to be reimbursable. This would likely provide for more job stability and better pay for CHWs. However, it is of upmost importance that CHWs are provided the opportunity to weigh in on a certification process prior to its establishment.

We appreciate the Legislature's commitment to community health workers and humbly request that additional CHWs be represented on the task force and to add a representative from the Hawai'i Primary Care Association. It may also be beneficial to include health insurance plans on the task force to ensure that any certification process established would lead to reimbursable services. HIPHI would also like to recommend that a process be put in place to gather additional input from CHWs on any recommendations put forward from the task force.

We defer to the State Department of Health as to their capacity to support the task force and certification program without additional resources. In addition, a task force through legislation may not be necessary, as CHW allies and the CHW network convene voluntarily on a regular basis and plan to make this a priority in the upcoming year.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **SB 858, SD1**.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Yamauchi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessica Yamauchi
Executive Director

ⁱ Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.

1. DATE 3/3/2021

2. ADDRESS TO CHAIR & COMMITTEE

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

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Change, Vice Chair
Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

3. BILL OR RESOLUTION NO., DRAFT NO (if any)

RE: SB 858 SD1

4. DAY AND DATE OF HEARING

Thursday March 4, 2021 09:35am Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

5. INTRODUCTION:

- 1) James E. Jones, Jr.
- 2) SB 585 SD1
- 3) This bill should be amended to change the composition of the Task Force and to better reflect the value of current and future Community Health Workers.

James E. Jones, Jr. I am testifying on behalf of the Community Health Workers Hawaii Assosiation, on the island of O'ahu. I am testifying in opposition of the bill.

6. CONTENT: EXPLAIN REASONS FOR YOUR POSITION. MAY INCLUDE FACTS OR EXPERIENCES

There are Community Health Workers (CHWs) who have been involved in the communities on each island for decades if not, generations. They have invaluable insights, connections and experience in helping their respective communities. They have trust that is built up over time and that should be considered above all else. The Task Force should be comprised of these individuals. Each District or, region should be represented by a CHW whether the CHW has the Certification or, not. CHWs can be nominated and/or volunteer to be a regional representative. As a matter of fact, that is the very process that we are using to build our association. Which is to say, that process has already begun, and it would be efficient to stick with the same template.

The Task Force as constructed will not provide proper representation of our communities. There are multiple entities on the Task Force as it is currently constructed who do not have direct interaction with the community.

It appears that the Department of Health (DOH) lacks the resources and commitment to oversee the Task Force. Without fully committed buy-in from the DOH, I do not foresee the Task Force succeeding.

CHWs should be considered for certification based on the hours of experience that they have gained working in their respective communities. They should be “Grandfathered in” or, given the opportunity to take a test to illustrate their knowledge of the position.

The Task Force should also be comprised of the various health plans on island as they have the means to employ and pay competitive wages to CHWs. In recent years health plans have realized the value the CHWs bring to the plan, the insurance industry, and communities not just in Hawai’i but, all over the nation.

The Task Force should also add community leaders who are providing support and resources to their communities as they have a strong pulse on is needed and can help project future needs.

7. CLOSING

In closing, I strongly oppose the bill as written and the proposed composition of the Task Force. I think the SB 858 should be reconsidered based on the points previously stated. This is a perfect opportunity to get it right from the beginning and create the momentum necessary to get our communities healthy. The Community Health Worker has done tremendous good over the years and can provide even more value if they are properly recognized not just in the communities but, also by those in positions of power as well. Community Health Workers deserve to have a voice as they are connected with the very people that need help. CHWs have a bond like no other and that must be taken advantage of in the most positive way.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony.

8. NAME & CONTACT INFORMATION

James E. Jones, Jr.

jjonesjr4230@outlook.com

Senate District 15

House District 31

LATE

SB-858-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2021 9:38:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2021 9:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dr. Adrienne Dillard, Ph.D., MSW, LSW	Testifying for Kula no na Po'e Hawaii 'o Papakolea, Kewalo, Kalawahine	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

We are in support of SB858 SD1, however, we recommend that the oversight department be either the Department of Labor or Department of Human Services. This bill is about working to determine how to adequately build an adequate Community Health Worker workforce in Hawaii. There are differing opinions as to who should be at the table, however, we believe whatever table should have a 51% representation of Community Health Workers from various levels to determine their fate. Most of the agencies being suggested for the taskforce will not represent what actually is occurring. All of a sudden everyone is using the title of Community Health Workers and their conversations that need to be had differ at various levels.

Once, again this is about ensuring that all those who address the health of their community as their work will be acknowledged as entities pursue fair compensation. Once again, we support this bill and ask that the task force complement be reconsidered to not include so many academics and more community. Mahalo.

CHW, Testimony!

“To your honorable Judge in the decision making for CHW workers and students. It is with great respect and humble appreciation to hear our testimonies. I am a student at Kapiolani, in my last quarter as a CHW student. I have journeyed a long way as a single mother with 5 children living in a shelter due to domestic violence. I was given a second chance to get on my feet by becoming a CHW student and I have learned so much on how to give back to my community and to the less fortunate who I can relate to and share my story with. It is with great hope, I will be a certified CHW worker in a medical care profession with a promising career in support for my family and community. This certification as a CHW has given me the opportunity to expand my horizons and I look forward to making a great impact on my community. I do hope that you would consider CHW to be one of the most needed jobs in the healthcare industry. I was once in need of that opportunity and had it not been for this CHW certification opportunity, I would still be lost and unable to have a stable career to look forward to. Everyone needs a second chance and as you make that decision for us CHW workers, remember that because of your honest decision you will be the bridge to hope that will break the chain of negativity, abuse and lost hope. More lives will be restored, families reunited and most of all your community’s health concerns will be cared for. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify to your loyalty to the legislature and will look forward to making the future a better place starting with you.”

Respectfully,
Florence Tauaefa
(808) 300-6301
Email: ftauaefa@hawaii.edu

SB-858-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2021 1:00:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2021 9:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
R Chung	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Baker, and Members of the Ways and Means and Commerce and Consumer Protection Committees:

I appreciate that the bill has been amended to only require the formation of a task force and that the premature provision requiring the Department of Health to establish certification requirements for community health workers (CHWs) has been deleted.

Students who are currently working toward a CHW certification in the Kapiolani Community College (KCC) CHW certificate of competency program will be immediately and directly affected by the decisions made by the task force. Therefore, students should be represented on the task force. For this reason, I respectfully request that the bill be amended to add to the task force a voting member who shall be a student currently enrolled in the KCC CHW program.

Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony.

March 3,2021

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

The Honorable Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Senator Stanley Change, Vice Chair
Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

RE: SB 858 SD1
Thursday March 4, 2021 09:35am Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, Chair Baker, Vice Chair Change and Committee Members,

My name is Maile Holokai, and I am a community health worker on Maui. I have worked on Maui as a community health worker for the past 4 years. I am in support of the bill with amendments. Creating a task force and the certification process would be beneficial for CHWs in providing opportunities of better pay and job stability.

I would amend the task force to include:

1. Representation from the Medicaid plans because they would be able to provide insight in establishing the certification process for the reimbursement of services provided by the CHW.
2. Representation from staff at UH Maui College and Kapiolani because they have an established certificate program with curriculum. The certification should correlate and build on what has already been established. This would allow for inclusion for those who have already received education that was funded by the DOH.
3. There should also be representation from the already established hui Community Health Worker Hawai'i Association. This network was established in 2018 with the help of Hawai'i Public Health Institute and a network of allies that has helped to support myself as well as others who have already been working as a community health worker. This would provide inclusion for those who should be grandfathered in with the certification process because they have over 20 years of experience working as a CHW and would also provide much insight.

Mahalo for allowing me to voice my support with amendment for SB 858 DS1

Maile Holokai 808-879-8584

SB-858-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2021 9:30:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2021 9:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gracie Flores	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

3/3/2021

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair

Senator Stanley Change, Vice Chair

Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

RE: SB 858 SD1

Thursday March 4, 2021 09:35am Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

This bill should be amended

I am testifying on behalf of the Community Health Workers Hawaii Assosiation, on the island of Hawai`i. I am testifying in opposition of the bill.

The Task Force as constructed will not provide proper representation of our communities. There are multiple entities on the task for who do not have direct interaction with the community.

There are Community Health Workers who have been involved in the community(ies) for decades and have invaluable experience. The Task Force should be comprised of these individuals. Each District should be represented whether the CHW has the Certification or, not.

CHWs should be considered for certification based on the hours that they have worked in their respective communities. They should be "Grandfathered in" or, given the

opportunity to take a test and illustrate the man-hours that they have worked in the position.

Mahalo!

Gracie Flores, Community Health Worker

gracie_flores@uhc.com

808-535-1167

SB-858-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2021 9:31:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2021 9:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melinda Buck	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

March 3, 2021

Senator Donovan M Dela Cruz

Senator Gilbert SC Keith-Agaran

Senator Roslyn H Baker

Senator Stanley Change

Bill SB 858SD1

Date of hearing March 4, 2021 at 9:30 AM

Aloha my name is Melinda Ferreira, I am a Community Health Worker on the island of Oahu and I am testifying opposing of this bill. I have completed the certification program provided through KCC in 2018 and have been employed as a CHW from October 2018.

The task force is missing some representation such as the Medicaid health plan. CHW do not have a voice with the task force listed and I believe that they need to make some changes before they can be made into policy. There should be consideration for those who have been doing community health work for the past decade and be grandfathered in.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

Melinda Ferreira