



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

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

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOOLE, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 17, 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 (S.B.) 858  
4 requiring the DOH to establish a certification process, oversight board, task force, and  
5 reimbursement process for services performed by community health workers (CHW). The DOH  
6 strongly supports the intent of this bill, as it acknowledges the critical role that CHW play in  
7 linking communities, particularly rural, low-income, homeless, and immigrant/migrant  
8 communities, with critical health care services, which have been significantly altered due to the  
9 COVID-19 pandemic. S.B. 858 aligns with ongoing efforts within the Department and with  
10 community stakeholders to formalize CHW certification, expand CHW training, and establish a  
11 reimbursement process to sustain CHW capacity. The expectations of S.B. 858 are, however,  
12 above and beyond the expertise and personnel capacity available to effectively implement the  
13 proposed activities. Additionally, the DOH does not generally provide oversight for professional  
14 certification or licensing, nor does the DOH provide or have the resources to develop a return-  
15 on-investment analyses. These challenges create concerns about the feasibility of effectively  
16 implementing the activities in the proposed timeline.

17 The DOH is committed to maturing the role that CHW have in serving their communities  
18 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



## HIPHI Board

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Exercise Sciences*

*Garret Sugai  
Kaiser Permanente*

*Catherine Taschner, JD  
McCorriston Miller Mukai  
MacKinnon LLP*

Date: February 15, 2021

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

Re: Comments for SB 858, Relating to Community Health Workers

Hrg: February 17, 2021 at 1:05 PM via Videoconference

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The Hawai'i Public Health Institute<sup>i</sup> (HIPHI) provides **Comments on SB 858**, which requires the Department of Health to establish a certification process, oversight board and reimbursement process for services performed by community health workers. This bill also establishes a task force of stakeholders 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 utmost importance that CHWs are provided the opportunity to weigh in on a certification process prior to its establishment.

HIPHI supports the creation of a task force but is concerned that the establishment of a certification process may be premature. The work of the task force will be critical to determining the next steps for a certification process, oversight board and reimbursement process.

It may 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.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on **SB 858**.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Yamauchi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jessica" and last name "Yamauchi" clearly legible.

Jessica Yamauchi  
Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/14/2021 11:10:27 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ilima DeCosta	Testifying for Hui Malama Pono Hawaii Foundation	Support	No

Comments:

15 February 2021

To: Senators Roslyn Baker and Jarrett Keohokalole, Committee on Health

From: Ilima DeCosta, Community Health Worker Trainee, Hui Malama Pono Hawaii Foundation

Re: SB 858 - Relating to Community Health Workers

Dear Senators Baker and Keohokalole,

Mahalo for your service to the community and for the opportunity to submit this testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 858, which will provide a path to certification and a reimbursement process for services rendered by Community Health Worker.

After seven months of training to become a certified Community Health Worker, I and my classmates at KCC are preparing for the practicum portion of our program. We know that Hawai'i lacks adequate medical and behavioral professionals, and we know that, despite Hawai'i's relative low rates of uninsured, Community Health Workers are an essential bridge to existing gaps in the current healthcare system.

These are the main reasons why you should support SB 858:

1. **Alleviating medical and behavioral health provider shortages:** Community Health Workers are able to provide support to beleaguered medical practices by providing essential health education related to tobacco cessation and diabetes, as well as support social service programs that are currently struggling to keep up with the demands placed on our behavioral healthcare system by the pandemic conditions.
2. **Utilizing an underutilized resource:** Community Health Workers have been an underutilized health resource and SB 858 seeks to correct this lack of utilization by creating a pathway for certification and reimbursement of services rendered by Community Healthcare Workers.

3. **Developing stable funding sources:** Historically, organizations such as IHS have relied on donations and grants to fund Community Health Worker positions, however donations and grants are limited and unreliable. SB 858 seeks to provide a stable funding source via insurance reimbursement of the essential healthcare services provided by Community Health Workers.
4. **Increasing access to healthcare at a lower cost means access to healthcare for more individuals:** Developing stable funding sources to support Community Health Worker services will increase access to healthcare for many of Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations. Lowering the costs will mean more persons will be served with the same finite community healthcare dollars.
5. **Increasing tax proceeds based on reimbursed services:** Stable funding sources will lead to increased tax revenues based on the services rendered. SB 858 would create another, perhaps unintended, benefit – that of increasing tax revenues based on reimbursement for services.

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 7:32:44 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jessanie Marques	Testifying for Kau Rural Health Community Association, Inc	Support	No

Comments:

TO: Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair Health Committee and Committee Members

As the executive director of Kau Rural Health Community Association, Inc. (KRHCAI) a community based 501 C (3) Non Profit Organization, I have been selected as Hawaii's "Covid 19 Community Engagement Liaison" by the National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW) and Morehouse School of Medicine; received funding from the National Covid 19 Response Network (NCRN) : Community Bridges Program; and invited to serve on NCRN the board of directors and a member of NACHW.

KRHCAI also, received funding from the UHM/JABSON Hawaiian Studies "ULU Network" to promote Covid 19 Vaccine education/information forums and community outreach; serve on POL Covid 19 3 R Committee; and sub contracted by UHM/JABSON: Brystal Meyer Squibb Foundation's Telehealth project on Pacific Islanders living in Oceanview, Ka'u.

In 2017 KRHCAI established a pilot CHW Program and graduated 10 adults, of which some were employed at Okutsu Veterans Home in Hilo, Kau Hospital Rural Health Clinic, Bay Clinic, Inc., became Caregivers of kupuna, and continued education at UH/ Hawaii Community College Associates program and Practical Nursing Program. In 2020 there were eight students enrolled in UHKapiolani / UHMaui Community College Community Health Worker Certification Program, funded by Dept. of Health and Papa Ola Lokahi, of which five were from Kau. KRHCAI strategy has been to "grow our own" workforce of CHWs and build a health career pathway network to serve our rural underserved community.

KRHCAI board of directors, staff, CHWs and members, support SB 858, because it acknowledges CHWs, proposes to establish a certification process, an oversight board and reimbursement process for services performed by CHWs.

Mahalo for providing KRHCAI this opportunity to share our affiliations, accomplishments and vision in support of CHWs.

KRHCAI urge the Senate Health Committee Chair and Committee members to support the passage of SB 858.



**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 12:52:49 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Stacyn Sakuma	Testifying for Kau Rural Health Community Association, Inc.	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Stacyn Sakuma, I was born and raised in Kau and a graduate of Kau Rural Health Academy: Community Health Workers Program (2018); and presently serve on Kau Rural Health Community Association Inc. (KRHCAI) board of directors as president. I am in testifying in support of SB 858: Relating to Community Health Workers.

Many families especially Kupuna living in our rural underserved, remote and economically distressed community have limited access to healthcare, healthcare resources, specialists transportation, affordable medical insurance, medications and home care services. This limited access of health care services put Kupuna at a greater risk of falling, injury, Covid 19, being treated in the emergency room and hospitalization.

As a member of KRHCAI, a CHW and employed as the Recreation Director at Okutsu Veteran's Home in Hilo, I am glad to see that SB 858 will establish a certification process, an oversight board and a multiple sources of payment to CHWs.

CHWs are a valuable members of our community, public health, and the network of community healthcare resources, especially because the live in our community, and know the people in our community and are trusted.

On behalf of KRHCAI board of directors and staff, I urge the Senate Health Committee Chair and Committee members to support passage of SB 858. Mahalo for providing me to share my comments. Please feel free to call me, should you have any questions.

**TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB 858 – RELATED TO COMMUNITY HEALTH  
WORKERS**

Mabuhay,

As a pediatrician and medical director at 3 different community health centers in Hawaii, I have worked with community health workers for my entire 40-year career. They are our “*interface*” between our patients and the providers. Community health workers are able to get to know the people, places, resources, needs and threats in a way that no other health care worker can assess.

I have relied on community health workers to enable the homeless, track down non-compliant patients, check on the elderly and intervene during family emergencies. I teach my pre-med students that the most important thing you need to have with a patient is “trust”. Only with trust will the patient feel free enough to tell the truth and only with trust will the patient be fully compliant with the treatment. Many times, the community health workers act as a bridge to build that trust between the patients and myself.

I fully support SB858. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Salamat,

*Dr. Ric*

Ricardo C. Custodio, M.D., M.P.H.

Tenured Associate Professor of Health Science, UH West O'ahu

Co-Lead / Co-Faculty, DOH-UH Community Contact Tracer Training Program

Practicing Pediatrician and Former Medical Director, Kalihi-Palama Health Center

Reede Scholar in Minority Health Policy, Harvard Medical School

Address: 91-1001 Farrington Highway, Kapolei, HI 96707

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Phone: 808-799-8634

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 11:14:32 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Krystalyn Boh Gascon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**My name is Krystalyn Gascon and I was born and raised in the District of Kau (Pahala); and presently enrolled at the UHKapiolani Community College: CHW Certification Program; UH Hawaii Community College Practical Nursing program; and graduate of UH Hawaii Community College Certified Nurse Assistant program. I am in support of "SB 858 :Relating to Community Health Workers".**

**I support SB 858 because it addresses consideration for: 1) A certification process with at least two tiers of CHWs which should be designated based on work or education experience; 2) an oversight body to oversee CHWs and provide input to the legislature; 3) A retroactive certification process for CHWs who have completed at least 80 hours of training and 2,000 hours of experience prior to the establishment of a certification program; and 4) multiple sources of payment to CHWs.**

**To avoid economic and social disparities it would be beneficial to: 1) Research of other state Certification Process on the mainland, i.e. CMS/Office of Minority Health National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW); 2) Include a representative of CHWs from each County on the oversight body that provide input to the legislature; 3) Include recommendations from the University of Hawaii School of Public Health / Community Colleges, Dept. of Health, Health and Human Services / Medquest, Healthcare Providers, CBOs / FQHC's, Healthcare systems, and National Association of Community Health Workers regarding the retroactive certification process; and 4) seek input on multiple sources of payment to CHWs, from the Dept. of Labor and Industrial Relations Agency, CMS/Medicare/Medicaid, National Association of CHWs/ Workforce Policy Committee and the Dept. of Regulatory Agency.**

**As a member of Kau Rural Health Community Association, Inc. (and a CHW) I'm glad to be able to advocate and participate in this civic engagement process. SB 858 lays the foundation for KRHCAI (and other CBOs ) to establish a Workforce of Community Health Workers. Thank you for providing me this opportunity to share my comments and suggestions.**

**I sincerely urge Sen. Jarret Keohokalole, Health Committee Chair and committee members to support passage of of SB 858: Relating to Community Health Workers.**

**LATE**

My name is Resa Salmo, I was raised in Pahala on the Big Island of Hawaii, and graduated from Kau Rural Health Academy: Community Health Workers Program in 2018. I have end stage kidney disease and on dialysis. I've been a caregiver of my 77yr. old father who has numerous medical conditions i.e. Kidney Cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. I am in support of SB 858: Relating to Community Health Workers.

I support of SB 858: Relating to Community Health Workers, because as a dialysis patient, caregiver, and CHWs living in a rural underserved, geographically isolated community I have experienced the limited access to healthcare providers, specialists, insurance, financial assistance, technology, home and community services for the elderly, medication, transportation, outreach and follow up care. With limited access Kupuna are at a greater disadvantage of receiving access to timely and life-saving healthcare services..

Community health workers not only live in the community, they are trusted by the community, understand the culture and are able to communicate with the patients (whereas, often times doctors, nurses and social workers have a difficult time understanding the different languages and local expressions).

As a member of Kau Rural Health Community Association Inc., and graduate of Kau Rural Health Academy: Community Health Workers Program, I'm glad to be an advocate and participant of this civic engagement process that will help lay the foundation to establish a Workforce of CHWs in Kau.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share my personal experiences as a CHW and Caregiver, and hope the Senate Health Committee, Chair and Members will support passage of SB 858: Relating to CHW.

**LATE**

My name is Daniel Mokiao and I am a graduate of Kau Rural Health Academy: Community Health Worker Program. I lived and worked in Pahala and Volcano, and am a caregiver of my partner who is on dialysis and diagnosed with end stage kidney disease. I also, took care of a family member who was homeless and on drugs. I am in support of SB 858: Relating to Community Health Workers.

I support SB 858, because I believe its about time that CHWs to be acknowledged as part of the public health team and healthcare delivery system. KRHCAI's strategy to establish a Workforce of CHWs in the rural underserved community like Kau, is an essential part for future generations to be able to work in their community, enroll in continuing education and training, seek higher education, and establish a sustainable workforce.

Support and access to continuing education & training, certification, higher education and reimbursement would establish a sustainable workforce in Kau and help build the capacity to "grow our own" healthcare career pathway network.

With Covid 19, many kupuna are at a higher risk and CHWs could help with contact tracing, data collection/input, outreach, community engagement/education/informational forums, coordinating and volunteering to assist with pre-registration / VAMs registration, and Point of Distribution Pod Clinics.

As a member of Kau Rural Health Community Association Inc. (KRHCAI), I'm glad to be able to advocate, participate in this civic engagement process and support SB858: Relating to Community Health Workers.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my experiences and comments, and urge the Senate Health Committee Chair and committee members to support the passage of SB 858.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health  
Wednesday, February 17, 2021; 1:05 p.m.  
Via Videoconference**

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

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the 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 **COMMENTS** on Senate Bill No. 0858, RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would:

- (1) Establish a certification process, an oversight board, and a reimbursement process for services performed by community health workers to help address the social determinants of poor health that disproportionately affect low-income, minority populations and that are magnified during times of crisis; and
- (2) Establish a task force to plan the certification and training process.

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.

**Testimony on Senate Bill No. 0858**  
**Wednesday, February 17, 2021; 1:05 p.m.**  
**Page 2**

With regard to enacting the regulatory scheme proposed in this bill, we defer to your wisdom on the best approach in expanding the reach of CHWs throughout the State. 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 this bill would also establish. That way, we can 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](mailto:eabe@hawaiiipca.net).



**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/13/2021 10:17:22 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Liliana Napoleon	Testifying for Hawaii Public Health Institute	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha. Here is my testimony in support of SB858. As a former patient navigator assistant director with the CMS demonstration, I have seen and experienced first hand the enabling outcome of the services that goes into the profession of Community Health Workers. My support and dedication to the Community Health Worker movement and profession is in perpetuity. I humbly ask for your collective support of the SB858 bill.

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 11:42:38 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Claudia Hartz	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I'm a Community Health Worker and I oppose SB858. The bill was not thought out completely and has many missing pieces.

Currently there is a certification program within our Community Colleges therefore there is not a need for Dept of Health to reinvent a certificate program. The hours listed on the bill does not match the hours required with the community colleges CHW program.

Reimbursemet for CHW work is not listed on the bill. CHW's like myself work for non-profit organizations and depend on grants to continue doing our work. This bill lacks the reimbursement for CHW's.

The bill also lacks the voice of CHW's, like myself.

Thank you,

Claudia P. Hartz, CHW

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/12/2021 3:57:45 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Chantal Keliioomalu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chairs

I am in strong support of SB 858.

I am a Community Social Worker in a Native Hawaiian homestead and I work hand in hand with CHW's. This is a role that has been historically largely volunteers or underpaid positions. These are the people that serve their communities and without them I would not have the opportunity to do what I do.

I live in one homestead and work in another--during the COVID pandemic both had the opportunity to distribute meals and food boxes. The one with CHW's was ready to hit the ground running, was efficient, had more opportunities to continue pandemic services, and has continued to serve in multiple capacities throughout the pandemic. The other one did do meals and food distribution but were figuring it out as they went, had limited opportunities and stopped serving in that capacity months ago.

The difference was vivid and highlighted the need for communities to have people consistently working with and in them--when a crisis hits, it is not the time to invent the wheel--the CHW role fills those needs during normal times and crisis'.

Mahalo for your consideration in solidifying the critical CHW training and paid positions.

## Support for S.B. 858, RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

I am Ruixue Zhang, a medical student who lives in West Ewa Beach. I am supporting this bill regarding the Department of Health to establish a certification process, oversight board, and reimbursement process for services performed by community health workers.

My family lives in rural area, my mom has low-income, who does not speak fluent English either. My dad is a new immigrant just moved to Hawaii last year, who does not have insurance. Both of them had trouble getting access to healthcare before COVID and this became even harder after COVID. Many families living in rural areas comprise diverse communities, including low-income, underserved rural areas, all ethnicities, children, adults, families, elderly individuals, uninsured individuals, homeless individuals, immigrants and migrant worker. the need for community health workers to bridge communities and systems of care is greater than ever. Increasing the number of community healthcare workers and standardizing their certification and training will help address these issues.

As a medical student myself, it is heartbreaking to see theses underserved population being forgotten. Their health is just as important as those that are not in an underserved community. We need to work together and bring more healthcare workers to the rural area and establish some kind of reimbursement process for community health workers who help to address this poor health situation in rural and underserved communities.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to support S.B 858.

Sincerely,

Ruixue Zhang  
91-907 Iwikuamoo St, Ewa Beach HI 96706  
(808)-220-5288

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 11:42:38 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Claudia Hartz	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I'm a Community Health Worker and I oppose SB858. The bill was not thought out completely and has many missing pieces.

Currently there is a certification program within our Community Colleges therefore there is not a need for Dept of Health to reinvent a certificate program. The hours listed on the bill does not match the hours required with the community colleges CHW program.

Reimbursemet for CHW work is not listed on the bill. CHW's like myself work for non-profit organizations and depend on grants to continue doing our work. This bill lacks the reimbursement for CHW's.

The bill also lacks the voice of CHW's, like myself.

Thank you,

Claudia P. Hartz, CHW

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 12:40:31 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Loren	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

As a community health worker, I oppose this bill because

- 1) There's already a certificate program within our community colleges.
- 2) The bill does not state reimbursement.
- 3) The bill does not give CHWs a voice.

Thank you for your time considering my pint of view!

Mahalo nui,

Loren L.

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 12:55:35 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Puni Kekauoha	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Senate Health Committee,

My name is Puni Kekauoha. I am the Associate Director of Kula no na Po`e Hawaii (KULA). KULA is a native Hawaiian beneficiary serving organization that exists to promote cultural, educational, environmental and health equity for all. KULA primarily serves the residents of the Hawaiian Homestead Region of Papakolea.

I stand in strong support of SB858, RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS. Where in which the Department of Health will be required to establish a certification process, oversight board, and reimbursement process for services performed by community health workers. SB858 requires the Department of Health, supported by a task force of stakeholders, to provide a report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the start of the 2022 legislative session.

This piece of legislation was presented by the people of Ka'u in order to exercise their civil right to engage in the legislative process, and civic engagement by recognizing the value and contributions of their Community Health Workers. They seek to have their CHW's fairly recognized and compensated for their tireless work and contributions to the families in the district of Ka`u.

This is a purely Ka'u initiated and Ka'u driven attempt to participate in our legislative process. They are well aware of the parties who were not bought in to this legislation and ask all to remain open and allow this bill to be the frame in which can serve to support Community Health Workers across our islands. Mahalo for your time and support. E Malama Pono.

**LATE**

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 1:45:30 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
R Chung	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Chair Baker, and members of the Senate Committee on Health:

1. As a student in the KCC community health worker (CHW) certificate program, I look forward to working in the CHW field and helping clients take charge of their health. KCC has been doing an admirable job of attracting students to participate in the CHW certificate program in order to fill a gaping need in our healthcare system. Students in the KCC program include those who are new to the CHW field, like myself, and those who have been successfully working for years as CHWs prior to the fairly recent establishment of the KCC program.

2. The KCC program and CHW field are worthy of strong support and funding by the Legislature and DOH. It is a profession that, if thoughtfully expanded in the State, can dramatically improve patient care, health outcomes, and overall quality of life, while significantly reducing healthcare costs.

3. While I appreciate the intent of the bill, especially the provision that proposes to fund CHW work using federal dollars (which would greatly benefit rural communities having fewer healthcare resources), I respectfully pose the question of whether the bill's certification component would amount to a duplication of efforts by KCC and DOH. The KCC certificate of competency is already a form of certification recognized by employers. As a student who has invested hundreds of hours in this program of study thus far, my hope is that the formal DOH certification process referenced in the bill -- if implemented -- would be fully aligned with the CHW competencies and skill set that has already been identified by KCC and is being taught in the program (as opposed to creating barriers to certification of students who have already completed, or who are close to completing, the KCC program). Moreover, I would hope that a retroactive certification requirement, if enacted, would not have the effect of suddenly rendering unemployed the many persons who already work in a CHW capacity and who provide much-needed outreach and navigational support to patients and care teams, simply because no form of CHW certification existed in the State prior to establishment of the KCC certificate program several years ago.

4. It is my hope that, before allowing the bill to move through the legislative process, a determination is first made as to whether the provisions requiring certification and



establishing the task force are concepts that KCC and DOH fully support and that are actually necessary at this time. Given that the existing KCC program is already a path to certification to work in the CHW field, the bill may be redundant and may have unintended adverse consequences for the CHW profession and for patients and clients who currently rely on regular interaction with CHWs.

Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony.

**LATE**

**SB-858**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 4:10:10 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/17/2021 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tetine Sentell	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Community health workers are one of the most important providers of care in the health system in Hawai'i. They help to ensure that health care and health information are understandable, culturally-relevant, and accessible to all populations and locations in our state and they connect individuals to community resources to address social determinants of health and reduce health disparities. Community health workers have worked tirelessly in the COVID-19 pandemic to support the health and well-being in many of our most vulnerable communities, including those in rural areas. Community health workers have the experience, knowledge, and trust to meet patients' complex, diverse health needs across languages, health risks, ages, and communication preferences.

Legislative initiatives that establish and support community health workers as a professional workforce and that build consistent funding mechanisms are needed, especially legislative efforts such as this that are envisioned and driven by community health worker leaders to address identified community needs. To continue the momentum, resources and collaborative efforts such as a task force with diverse stakeholder representation and time to plan are essential.

I am a professor at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and Chair of the Office of Public Health Studies. These comments reflect my personal opinions and not those of my employer. I am also part of a research team that has provided landscaping evidence around activities, roles, and legislative pathways for the community health worker workforce in Hawai'i. Some of this work was consolidated in a Special Issue from 2018: [Community-Clinical Linkages Within Health Care in Hawai'i](https://hawaiijournalhealth.org/past_issues/HJMPH_Jun19.Suppl1.pdf)  
[https://hawaiijournalhealth.org/past\\_issues/HJMPH\\_Jun19.Suppl1.pdf](https://hawaiijournalhealth.org/past_issues/HJMPH_Jun19.Suppl1.pdf)

For those who study health disparities and health literacy as I do, the need for community health workers was already clear, and has only become more so in the pandemic. This is a workforce to grow, support, and nurture in our state.

Creating legislation, career, and funding pathways driven by the vision of community health worker leaders that can support, develop, compensate, and grow community health worker careers are vital steps to keep our communities healthy. Thank you for working on collaborative legislative efforts to address this very important topic.



**LATE**

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

Michelle Pang

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

Support for S.B. No. 858 Relating to Community Health Workers

My name is Michelle Pang. I was born and raised in Pearl City and am a first year medical student at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I strongly support S.B. No. 858, Relating to Community Health Workers, which requires the Department of Health to establish a certification process, oversight board, and reimbursement process for services performed by community health workers.

Having grown up in Pearl City, I was fortunate to have had access to quality healthcare. As I became older, I learned about the various challenges of those in underserved communities. My desire to advocate for underserved populations played a significant role in my desire to attend medical school. Since beginning my first year at JABSOM, I have had the opportunity to volunteer with the Hawaii H.O.M.E Project, a student-run free clinic staffed by volunteers that travels to various sites across Oahu, many sites in rural areas. This experience has allowed me to be more aware of the numerous health and social disparities that people of rural communities face, especially in Hawai'i. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these disparities, not only due to food insecurity, housing challenges, and loss of jobs, but also with the transition of health services to Telehealth services.

Though organizations such as H.O.M.E Project are an asset to these communities, there is still much to be done in order to improve access to healthcare services to families in rural areas. Community health centers are essential to this process. It is therefore important to establish processes which ensure delivery of quality care by community health centers.

Especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative of the Department of Health to establish certification processes, oversight board, and reimbursement process for services performed by community health workers.

Thank you for the opportunity to write this testimony in support of S.B. No. 858.

Sincerely,



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