

Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection
and
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Wednesday, February 24, 2021
9:15 a.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 970, S.D. 1, RELATING TO TELEHEATH**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Baker, Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committees:

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

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

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

The Board respectfully requests that the Committee amend this measure on page 2, line 20, to read “for any authorized purpose, including consultation with a medical provider” This amendment would limit any ambiguities that may exist regarding telehealth and administering, prescribing, or dispensing controlled substances.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
and the

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 9:15 a.m.

By

Jerris R. Hedges, MD, Dean
Lee Ellen Buenconsejo-Lum, MD, FAAFP
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & DIO
John A. Burns School of Medicine
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 970 SD1 – RELATING TO TELEHEALTH

Chairs Baker and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Chang and Keohokalole, and members of the committees:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **strong support** of SB 970 SD1, which authorizes the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction when the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the state.

This bill amends language in HRS §453-1.3 to clarify that a physician-patient relationship may be established via telehealth, provided that the physician has a license to practice medicine in the State of Hawai'i. During the onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic, it was found that this language needed to be clarified in order to align with other statutory telehealth provisions that already allow for the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction; thus, it was addressed in the Governor's emergency proclamation and temporary waivers. This bill is needed to codify the changes permanently in law and align with other existing HRS allowances.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an increased use of telehealth services. However, the existing state law relating to the practice of telehealth is ambiguous regarding whether a patient can use telehealth to establish a relationship with a physician. The provision for establishing a physician-patient relationship via telehealth is now a common practice in the US and significantly aids in expanding access to health care services especially for patients and families who live in rural areas and/or are otherwise unable to receive the care they need.

Since 1999, the use and expansion of telehealth services and technology in Hawai'i has been recognized as a way to increase access and reduce delays to health care, particularly in rural areas of the. Many of the highest-risk patients reside in Medically Underserved Areas, are part of Medically Underserved Populations, or reside in federally-designated health professional shortage areas. Telehealth benefits many in

these communities. Elderly, as well as medically- and socially-complex patients often face transportation barriers and difficulty navigating our collective system of health care. These determinants of health, as well as social- or cultural-isolation can often impede seeking care or follow-up after a doctor's appointment or hospitalization. Being able to provide telehealth services at community health centers or in the home has tremendous potential for improving the health of patients, their families, as well as providing cost-savings to the entire health system by avoiding emergency department or hospitalization costs.

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

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.



SB970 SD1

RELATING TO TELEHEALTH

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka ‘Oihana Kālepa a me ka Ho‘omalū Mea Kemu
Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka Ho‘okolokolo

Pepeluali 24, 2021

9:15 a.m.

Lumi 229

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment Committee will recommend that the Board of Trustees **SUPPORT** SB970 SD1, which aims to expand access to healthcare by clarifying that a physician-patient relationship may be established via a telehealth appointment. **The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially increased the demand for telehealth services to diagnose, treat, and monitor illness, particularly for patients in rural, Native Hawaiian communities; this measure will help to address this increased demand, by clarifying whether and how such services may be delivered.**

OHA has made a longstanding and continued commitment to improving the quality of life of Native Hawaiians, including through its most recent strategic priority of Maui Ola (Health).¹ OHA therefore supports efforts to improve healthcare services for Native Hawaiians, and to address the barriers many may face in seeking to access to healthcare.

OHA notes that access to primary health care and mental health services is a key need in our rural communities, many of which have large Native Hawaiian populations.² Innovative strategies are necessary to address this need, such as by facilitating telehealth services that would allow physicians to provide basic health and medical care, nutritional services and education, cardiometabolic disease care, and behavioral and mental health interventions in isolated, rural communities across Hawai‘i.³

Expanding access to quality healthcare by clarifying that a physician-patient relationship may be created via a telehealth appointment will help to increase Native

¹ For more on OHA’s commitment to Health in the Native Hawaiian community, please visit <https://www.oha.org/health>.

² Mele A. Look, et al., “Assessment and Priorities for Health & Well-being in Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Peoples,” University of Hawai‘i, Department of Native Hawaiian Health, John A. Burns School of Medicine (2013), available at https://www2.jabsom.hawaii.edu/native/docs/community/DNHH_Assessment&Priorities_Report_2013.pdf (last accessed February 21, 2021).

³ *Id.*

Hawaiians' access to services and reduce delays in receiving care, particularly for rural communities in critical need.

Accordingly, we urge the Committees to PASS SB970 SD1. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 9:15 AM
Via Video Conference

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

To: Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

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

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 970, SD1
Relating to Telehealth**

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

HPH writes in strong support of SB 970, SD1 which authorizes the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction when the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the state. *HPH supports the amendment proposed in the testimony offered by the Healthcare Association of Hawaii.*

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



February 24, 2021 at 9:15 am
Via Videoconference

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

To: Chair Rosalyn H. Baker
Vice Chair Stanley Chang

Senate Committee on Judiciary

To: Chair Karl Rhoads
Vice Chair Jarrett Keohokalole

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

Re: Testimony in Support
SB 970 SD 1, Relating to Telehealth

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

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

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

We would note that the House companion bill, HB 473 HD 2, included an amendment that would be inserted on page 2, line 20, that makes the change in red:

(f) [~~A physician-patient relationship may be established via telehealth if the patient is referred to the telehealth provider by another health care provider who has conducted an in-person consultation and has provided all pertinent patient information to the telehealth provider.~~] Once a [~~provider-patient~~] physician-patient relationship is established, a patient or physician licensed in this State may use telehealth for any [~~purpose,~~] allowable purpose in accordance with the law, including consultation with a medical provider licensed in another state, authorized by this section or as otherwise provided by law."

We are open to this friendly amendment.

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

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Manager

Before:
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary
The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

February 24, 2021
9:15 a.m.
Via Videoconference

Re: SB 970 SD1, Relating to the Telehealth

Chair Baker, Chair Rhoads, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 970 SD1, which authorizes the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction, if the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the State.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB 970 SD1

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

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports SB 970 SD1 because it clarifies that telehealth can be used to establish a physician-patient relationship if the physician is licensed to practice in Hawai'i.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, the use of telehealth in Hawai'i has dramatically increased as telehealth has been critical to limit the risk of person-to-person transmission while helping to avoid overwhelming our healthcare facilities. At Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i, we have seen a dramatic increase in the use of telehealth visits between 2019 and 2020. In 2019, we had approximately 1,000 of our outpatient visits by video. In stark contrast, in 2020, we had approximately 67,00 video visits. We expect this number to continue to increase in 2021.

SB 970 SD1 will enable us to establish provider-patient relationships between specialists on Oahu and the mainland and neighbor island members – increasing access without incurring the inconvenience and expense of travel, especially for those specialties with significant provider shortages.

We concur with the amendment being offered by the Department of Public Safety Narcotics Enforcement Division to amend Section 2 of SB 970 SD1 to limit the use of telehealth to any “allowable” purpose under State law.

We ask the committees to PASS SB 970 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



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**The State Legislature
The Senate
Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Committee on Judiciary
Wednesday, February 24, 2021
9:15 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair
The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair

RE: S.B. 970. SD 1 Relating to Telehealth

Aloha Chairs Baker and Rhoads and Members of the Committees:

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

AARP Hawai'i supports S.B. 970, SD 1 which expands access to care and reduces delays by clarifying that a physician-patient relationship may be established via a telehealth appointment.

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

Thank you very much for the opportunity to support S.B. 970, SD 1.

Sincerely,

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

Keali'i Lopez, AARP Hawai'i
State Director



SB970 Physician Can Use Telehealth

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION,

- Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Chair; Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH,

- Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair; Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

Wednesday Feb 24, 2021: 9:15: Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB970 SD1:

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

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

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



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary

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

Date: February 24, 2021

Re: Support for SB970, SD1: Relating to Telehealth

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 1,500 affiliated physicians and providers statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB970, SD1, relating to telehealth. This measure addresses the need to eliminate an existing provision under the law (HRS 453-1.3(e)) which prevents physicians from utilizing telehealth modalities to establish a physician-patient relationship. The ability to expand access of medical care via telehealth during the COVID19 pandemic is an important tool in ensuring more members of our community are able to access healthcare safely and responsibly.

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

We concur with the testimony submitted by the Healthcare Association of Hawai'i and thank you for allowing The Queen's Hospital Systems to testify in support of SB970, SD1.

The mission of The Queen's Health Systems is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.



February 2, 2021

AWAITING COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 970

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 970, which clarifies that a patient-practitioner relationship may be established during a telehealth appointment.

The ATA is the only national organization completely focused on advancing telehealth. We are committed to ensuring that everyone has access to safe, affordable, and high-quality care whenever and wherever they need it. This empowers the health care system to provide services to millions more patients every year in an efficacious manner. The ATA represents a broad and inclusive coalition of technology solution providers and payers, as well as partner organizations and alliances, working to advance industry adoption of telehealth, promote responsible policy, advocate for government and market normalization, and provide education and resources to help integrate virtual care into emerging, value-based modalities.

Senate Bill 970 serves as an important and rational expansion of Hawaii's state telehealth policy. The proposed legislation revises Hawaii's code covering the practice of telehealth, making clear that patients and practitioners are permitted to establish relationships via telehealth encounters. This policy is consistent with the 2014 Federation of State Medical Board's "Model Policy for the Use of Telemedicine Technology in the Practice of Medicine."

Across the United States, patients and consumers are seeking more cost-effective and efficient ways to access the health care they need. More recently, innovative telehealth technologies have enabled practitioners and patients to interact with each other at any place and any time from the comfort and safety of their private residences throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Using appropriate technologies to eliminate barriers to access to health care is an effective means to expand access to health care, especially for the unserved and underserved.

The ATA applauds the legislature's efforts to expand Hawaiians' access to affordable, quality health care. Senate Bill 970 takes the important step of permitting practitioners to establish a valid professional relationship with patients through the use of the appropriate telehealth technologies. So long as the patient has consented to the use of telehealth as an acceptable mode of delivering health care services and the patient and practitioner have identified themselves and disclosed the appropriate credentials, a practitioner and patient should not be prevented from establishing a professional relationship through appropriate technologies.



Again, we thank you for your support of telehealth in Hawaii. In the context of the ongoing health crisis, it is essential that Hawaii residents have safe and efficacious access to the health care they need and deserve. We urge you and your colleagues to pass Senate Bill 970 in the interest of expanding Hawaiians' easy and efficient access to affordable, quality health care. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful in your efforts to advance common-sense telehealth policy in Hawaii. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further the telehealth industry's perspective, please contact me at kzebley@americantelemed.org.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Zebley".

Kyle Zebley
Public Policy Director
American Telemedicine Association

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii

P.O. BOX 283 PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
Tel / Fax: 800.385.2454



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

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Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 9:15 AM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

From: Brian Hauser
Advocacy Coordinator

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 970
Relating to Telehealth**

My name is Brian Hauser and I am the Advocacy Coordinator for Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH). AILH is an established grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii. We have been serving Hawaii since 2009. One of our five core services is advocacy, to inform and advocate for change in an effort to increase equality and inclusion for the disability community.

We are writing in support of SB 970, which authorizes the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction if the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the State of Hawaii.

AILH serves people with all types of disabilities throughout the State of Hawaii. 20.2% of adults in Hawaii have some type of disability, with 4.9% of said adults having difficulty with independent living, such as visiting a doctor's office. With our consumers being in a high-risk category, with the majority of our consumers lacking accessible transportation, this option promotes independent living with multiple resources.

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii

P.O. BOX 283 PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
Tel / Fax: 800.385.2454



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dara Fukuhara

Vice Chair

Zora Shove

Treasurer

Todd Rohm

Member

Scott Suzuki
Teresa Bryant

In addition, AILH has a TeleConnect program where we provide devices that are capable of performing telehealth, as well as connectivity. Our program allows our organization to promote healthy living in the people we serve. Our belief is that having the option of a telehealth interaction, even from the initial visit, will foster greater independence for persons with disabilities throughout the state of Hawaii.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB970. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please feel free to email me at brianh@alohailhawaii.org.

Mahalo, Brian



HIPHI Board

Kilikina Mahi, MBA
Chair
KM Consulting LLC

Michael Robinson, MBA, MA
Immediate Past Chair
Hawai'i Pacific Health

JoAnn Tsark, MPH
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Medicine, Native Hawaiian
Research Office

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Center

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Kaholokula, PhD
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Native Hawaiian Health

Mark Levin, JD
William S. Richardson School
of Law

Rachel Novotny, PhD, RDN, LD
University of Hawai'i at
Mānoa, College of Tropical
Agriculture and Human
Resources

May Okihiro, MD, MS
John A. Burns School of
Medicine, Department of
Pediatrics

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

Garret Sugai
Kaiser Permanente

Date: February 22, 2021

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

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: Support for SB970, SD1, Relating to Telehealth
Hrg: February 24, 2021 at 9:15 AM via Videoconference

The Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ (HIPHI) offers testimony in **Support of SB 970, SD1**, which authorizes the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction, if the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the State.

HIPHI supports increased access to healthcare services through telehealth services. Telehealth is especially beneficial for neighbor islands and rural areas. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need and use of telehealth services. This bill would provide needed clarity that telehealth can be used to establish a physician-patient relationship as long as the physician is licensed to practice medicine in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB970, SD1.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jessica Yamauchi'.

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.

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Wednesday, February 24, 2021
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: Support for SB 970 SD1 Relating to Telehealth

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and distinguished committee members. My name is Kira Rapozo I am currently a MSW Student at the Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health at U.H Manoa. I am testifying in strong support of SB 970 that would authorize the establishment of a physician-patient relationship via a telehealth interaction, if the physician is licensed to practice medicine in the State. During this time of Covid 19 access to health care for our kupuna and people who reside in rural communities have become limited. My mother who is 70 years old and has multiple health problems utilizes telehealth to meet with her PCP. She needed to see a specialist and was told that she needed to establish care in person for her first visit. My mom was concerned with being around people who also would be waiting in the clinic because she did not want to get sick as her immune system is comprimised, for this reason my mom put off meeting with the specialist. By not being able to establish new physician care through using telehealth many of our kupuna are not having access to the medical care that they need. Passing SB 970 will help to give patients in Hawaii the opportunity to have access to health care during these uncertain times.

Mahalo Nui for the opportunity to testify

Kira Rapozo
Kira Rapozo

SB-970-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2021 2:45:44 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/24/2021 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bernard Sr Robinson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha! As a physician, I think that establishment of telehealth patient - physician relationships should be made easier, not harder. I do feel that physicians and other healthcare professionals be properly licensed and vetted to properly protect the public from fraudulent schemes. I also think that bonafide patient physician services need to be properly recognized by third party payors whether they be via in person or telemedical sessions.

Sincerely,

Bernard Robinson