



**GOV. MSG. NO. 1259**

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

June 27, 2022

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,  
President  
and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki,  
Speaker and Members of the  
House of Representatives  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

This is to inform you that on June 27, 2022, the following bill was signed into law:

SB2624 SD2 HD2 CD1

RELATING TO HEALTH.  
**ACT 158**

Sincerely,

DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

Approved by the Governor

on JUN 27 2022

THE SENATE  
THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE, 2022  
STATE OF HAWAII

**ACT 158**  
**S.B. NO.** 2624  
S.D. 2  
H.D. 2  
C.D. 1

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many Hawaii  
2 residents are unable to obtain timely and appropriate health  
3 care and behavioral health care due to shortages of primary,  
4 specialty, and behavioral health care providers. Vulnerable  
5 residents, including the elderly, and rural residents experience  
6 even greater barriers to health care provider access. These  
7 barriers include issues relating to fixed or limited financial  
8 resources, lack of physical mobility or other disabilities,  
9 cognitive impairment, transportation, and a lack of readily  
10 accessible physicians and other health care providers.

11           Telehealth is a viable solution to maximize existing local  
12 resources and increase patient convenience and compliance.  
13 However, the best available data indicates that the use of  
14 telehealth is limited in the State. No more than fifteen per  
15 cent of practicing providers in the State report a telehealth  
16 experience, even though the State has some of the most  
17 progressive telehealth laws in the nation.



1 Preliminary findings from the 2017 State Telehealth Summit  
2 confirm that provider comfort and patient expectations are the  
3 most significant barriers to greater telehealth adoption.

4 Department of health research, including direct observation of  
5 strong telehealth programs in other jurisdictions, reveals that  
6 staff support is needed to ensure that both the patient and  
7 technology are situated correctly for a telehealth encounter.  
8 Ideally, staff support should be situated at both the health  
9 care provider's and the patient's locations. However, support  
10 staff for the patient is critical when the patient is in a non-  
11 traditional health care setting, including a home, community  
12 center, or school.

13 The legislature further finds that establishing a  
14 telehealth pilot project will help provide the State's health  
15 care providers and patients the benefits of telehealth, increase  
16 provider adoption of telehealth, support health care workforce  
17 development related to telehealth, and evaluate the clinical and  
18 administrative efficacy of various telehealth delivery models.  
19 The legislature notes that establishing a rural health care  
20 pilot project to pay an availability fee to eligible health care  
21 providers servicing rural areas will help encourage providers to



1 prioritize these rural areas. In turn, an increase in provider  
2 prioritization of these rural areas will increase rural  
3 residents' access to previously less-than-accessible medical  
4 specialties.

5 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish and  
6 fund telehealth and rural health care pilot projects.

7 SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall implement a  
8 telehealth pilot project.

9 (b) The telehealth pilot project shall:

- 10 (1) Assist residents at two distinct project sites, both  
11 of which shall have a medically underserved area  
12 designation by the Health Resources and Services  
13 Administration of the United States Department of  
14 Health and Human Services; provided that one site  
15 shall be located in a county with a population of less  
16 than five hundred thousand and the other site shall be  
17 located in a county with a population of more than  
18 five hundred thousand;
- 19 (2) Utilize telehealth as the primary means to deliver  
20 health care; and



1 (3) Include at least one federally-qualified health center  
2 or rural health clinic in each project site.

3 (c) Within six months of the exhaustion of all telehealth  
4 pilot project funds, the department of health shall make  
5 available to the public an evaluation report on the telehealth  
6 pilot project's outcomes, including the quality of care, patient  
7 satisfaction, training and workforce development issues, and the  
8 financial sustainability of telehealth activities.

9 SECTION 3. (a) The department of health shall implement  
10 and administer a rural health care pilot project.

11 (b) The rural health care pilot project shall:

12 (1) Assist residents in three distinct rural areas, one  
13 each on the islands of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai;  
14 provided that the area selected on the island of Maui  
15 shall be in the Hana district;

16 (2) Pay a \$250 availability fee to each contracted  
17 licensed physician or nurse practitioner providing  
18 health care services in one or more of the areas  
19 selected pursuant to paragraph (1); provided that each  
20 physician or nurse practitioner shall practice in a  
21 specialty that is difficult for rural residents to



1 access, including but not limited to cardiology,  
2 gastroenterology, endocrinology, dermatology,  
3 nephrology, and psychiatry; provided further that the  
4 availability fee shall be separate from, and in  
5 addition to, any charges billed by the physician or  
6 nurse practitioner; and

7 (3) Reimburse each contracted physician or nurse  
8 practitioner for any costs, including airfare, lodging  
9 costs, and a per diem, that the physician or nurse  
10 practitioner deems necessary to provide in-person  
11 health care services to patients in the areas selected  
12 pursuant to paragraph (1).

13 (c) Within six months of the exhaustion of all rural  
14 health care pilot project funds, the department of health shall  
15 submit to the legislature an evaluation report on the rural  
16 health care pilot project's outcomes, including the quality of  
17 care, patient satisfaction, training and workforce development  
18 issues, the financial sustainability of the pilot project, and  
19 any proposed legislation.

20 (d) The department of health shall contract with eligible  
21 physicians and hospitals, including but not limited to those



1 within the networks of Hawaii Pacific Health, The Queen's Health  
2 Systems, and Kaiser Permanente, to carry out the rural health  
3 care pilot project.

4 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$100,000 or so much  
6 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the  
7 telehealth pilot project established pursuant to section 2 of  
8 this Act.

9 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
10 health for the purposes of section 2 of this Act.

11 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general  
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$100,000 or so much  
13 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the  
14 rural health care pilot project established pursuant to section  
15 3 of this Act.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
17 health for the purposes of section 3 of this Act.

18 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.



S.B. NO. 2624  
S.D. 2  
H.D. 2  
C.D. 1

APPROVED this 27th day of June , 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David I. Ige". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish under the "I" and "ge".

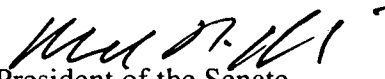
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

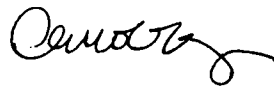


**THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF HAWAI'I**

Date: May 3, 2022  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bill this day passed Final Reading in the Senate of the Thirty-First Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2022.

  
President of the Senate

  
Clerk of the Senate

SB No. 2624, SD 2, HD 2, CD 1

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Date: May 3, 2022  
Honolulu, Hawaii

We hereby certify that the above-referenced Bill on this day passed Final Reading in the House of Representatives of the Thirty-First Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022.



Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker  
House of Representatives



Brian L. Takeshita  
Chief Clerk  
House of Representatives