

JAN 21 2022

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MEDICAL FACILITIES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that during the
2 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, Pacific Islander
3 communities have been affected by COVID-19 at higher numbers
4 than any other community of color in the State. Compact of Free
5 Association (COFA) recipients have been particularly adversely
6 impacted. Unfortunately, many COFA recipients have experienced
7 prejudice and discrimination in the health care system and no
8 longer use medical facilities as a first option to treat
9 illnesses, but rather as an option of last resort that often
10 results in a much more severe prognosis than if the patient had
11 received treatment at an earlier stage.

12 The legislature further finds that, with the reinstatement
13 of Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance by the United States
14 Congress on December 20, 2020, COFA recipients are now able to
15 participate in medicaid and will no longer be a part of the
16 largely uninsured population in Hawai'i. In 2018, the United
17 States Census Bureau estimated the number of COFA recipients in



1 the State at approximately sixteen thousand persons. Therefore,
2 investing in programs to bridge the cultural and language gaps
3 between health care providers and COFA recipients, as well as
4 other communities with similar cultural and language barriers,
5 will help to alleviate the financial burden on the State and
6 mitigate revenue loss for medical facilities that provide
7 service and care for individuals who are uninsured.

8 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require that the
9 Hawaii Health Services Corporation convene a task force to
10 facilitate improved, mission-driven hiring and training of
11 culturally-accepted interpreters and to create culturally-
12 accepted educational materials on preventative care and early
13 intervention to assist non-English speaking populations seeking
14 care at Hawaii Health Systems Corporation facilities.

15 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Health Services Corporation (HHSC)
16 shall convene a task force to facilitate improved, mission-
17 driven hiring and training of culturally-accepted interpreters
18 and to create culturally-accepted educational materials on
19 preventative care and early intervention to assist non-English
20 speaking populations seeking care at HHSC facilities. The task
21 force shall include the following members:



- 1 (1) The Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Health
2 Systems Corporation, to serve as chair;
- 3 (2) The Director of Health, or the Director's designee;
- 4 (3) One representative from the Office of Language Access;
- 5 (4) Two members of the Senate, to be appointed by the
6 President of the Senate;
- 7 (5) Two members of the House of Representatives, to be
8 appointed by the Speaker of the House of
9 Representatives;
- 10 (6) Two members of the language interpreters and
11 translator community; and
- 12 (7) Two community health workers.

13 The task force, with the assistance of the HHSC and the
14 Department of Health, shall submit a written report of its
15 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
16 legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior
17 to the convening of the regular session of 2024. The task force
18 shall be dissolved on June 30, 2024.

19 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

20 INTRODUCED BY: 



S.B. NO. 2083

Report Title:

Hawaii Health Systems Corporation; Diversity and Inclusion;
Interpreters; Task Force

Description:

Creates a task force focused on the hiring and training of culturally-accepted interpreters to assist non-English speaking populations seeking care at Hawaii Health Systems Corporation facilities.

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