
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:

9 (1) Require that the Hawaii Health Services Corporation
10 convene a task force to facilitate improved, mission-
11 driven hiring and training of culturally-accepted
12 interpreters and to create culturally-accepted
13 educational materials on preventative care and early
14 intervention to assist non-English speaking
15 populations seeking care at health care facilities;
16 and .

17 (2) Appropriate funds to support the work of the task
18 force.

19 SECTION 2. (a) The Hawaii Health Services Corporation
20 (HHSC) shall convene a task force to facilitate improved,
21 mission-driven hiring and training of culturally-accepted



1 interpreters and to create culturally-accepted educational
2 materials on preventative care and early intervention to assist
3 non-English speaking populations seeking care at health care
4 facilities. The task force shall include the following members:

- 5 (1) The Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Health
6 Systems Corporation, to serve as chair;
- 7 (2) The Director of Health, or the Director's designee;
- 8 (3) The Director of Human Services, or the Director's
9 designee;
- 10 (4) One representative from The Queen's Health Systems,
11 who shall be invited to participate by the chair;
- 12 (5) One representative from the Office of Language Access;
- 13 (6) Two members of the Senate, to be appointed by the
14 President of the Senate;
- 15 (7) Two members of the House of Representatives, to be
16 appointed by the Speaker of the House of
17 Representatives; and
- 18 (8) Four Compact of Free Association community leaders,
19 who shall be invited to participate by the chair.

20 (b) The members of the task force shall not be compensated
21 for their service on the task force but may be reimbursed for



1 reasonable expenses, including travel expenses, incurred for
2 serving on the task force. No member shall be made subject to
3 chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, solely because of that
4 member's participation as a member of the task force.

5 (c) The task force, with the assistance of the HHSC and
6 the Department of Health, shall submit a written report of its
7 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
8 legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior
9 to the convening of the regular session of 2024. The task force
10 shall be dissolved on June 30, 2024.

11 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
13 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to
14 support the work of the task force established in section 2.

15 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii Health
16 Systems Corporation for the purposes of this Act.

17 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;
18 provided that section 3 of this Act shall take effect on July 1,
19 2022.



Report Title:

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

Description:

Creates a task force focused on the hiring and training of
culturally-accepted interpreters to assist non-English speaking
populations seeking care at health care facilities.
Appropriates funds. (SD1)

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not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

