



DIRECT FROM DONOVAN ...

STATE SEN. DONOVAN DELA CRUZ

Making Health Care Easily Accessible Via Telehealth

Access to effective health care remains a serious concern for many in Hawai'i. There is a shortage of health care professionals in the state, which is most severe in rural areas.

Telehealth provides access to health care remotely by means of telecommunications.

It is a proven way to facilitate timely access to quality health care, improve health outcomes, reduce the incidence of avoidable urgent and emergency care, and ensure equitable distribution of health care providers to patients who would not otherwise have

access to medical services.

Since Wahiawā is a rural area with an aging population, I introduced legislation last year that provides health care services to residents in rural and medically underserved areas by establishing a telehealth pilot project. The pilot project has exposed health care providers and patients to the benefits, efficacy and delivery methods of telehealth. It also has expanded telehealth adoption rates in the state by increasing confidence in telehealth services in the health care industry.

The Legislature ultimately

included \$180,000 in the state budget for the pilot project that designated Wahiawā Center for

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Community Health as one of the areas of focus. Telehealth access benefits Wahiawā through outreach and home

visit possibilities. For patients who lack mobility, telehealth is a proven way to facilitate

timely access to health care.

As a result of the pilot project, the Legislature established telehealth promotion as a state

policy this past legislative session. The governor signed SB 1246 into law as Act 139. This policy helps to address these issues by making telehealth promotion a state policy, establishing the State Telehealth Advisory Council to advise the governor in the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to establish telehealth as a high-quality and cost-effective means of accessing health care.

I am proud telehealth is now going to be more accessible statewide as a direct result of the progress we have made in Wahiawā.

Contact state Sen. Donovan DeLa Cruz (District 22 – Mililani Mauka, Launani Valley, Wahiawā, Waipi'o Acres, Wheeler, Whitmore Village) at 586-6090, sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov or in person at Room 208 at the state Capitol.

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