

Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board

**Before the
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness
Tuesday, February 1, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 1575, RELATING TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS**

Chair Yamane and Members of the Committee:

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

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) expand the scope of practice for physician assistants; and (2) require a sampling of medical records, rather than all medical records, to be reviewed when physician assistants prescribe controlled substances.

The Board supports this bill, as it: (1) broadens physician assistants' scope of practice to provide a wide range of services, which would benefit the citizens of Hawaii; and (2) alleviates the overly burdensome administrative requirement of having a supervising physician review all medical records that contain written orders or prescriptions for controlled substances.

The Board recognizes the important role physician assistants have in healthcare and believes this bill is a step in the right direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HB-1575

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 3:11:06 PM

Testimony for HHH on 2/1/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Bryan Mick (DCAB)	Disability and Communication Access Board	Comments	Yes

Comments:

I am available to answer questions.



**Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness
Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 9:00 A.M.
via Videoconference**

**by
Laura Reichhardt, MS, AGNP-C, APRN
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

Comments on HB 1575

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and members of the House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on **HB 1575 as it pertains to Section 8.**

In Hawai'i, health care professionals are in high demand yet in low supply, particularly on the neighbor islands and in rural and underserved areas of our state. Improving access to care by qualified healthcare professionals is critical to ensuring the people of Hawai'i receive quality healthcare when they are in need and by their preferred healthcare provider.

The Center defers to the profession of Physician Assistants and their regulatory body related to their education, training, and the contents of this bill that address their profession's scope of practice and authorities.

The Center also supports the language as it pertains to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in Hawai'i. This language, as with the other sections of this bill, will enable qualified healthcare professionals to perform services for patients pursuant to their education, training, and licensure.

We commend the State Legislature for identifying solutions to address access to healthcare in Hawai'i. Thank you for providing opportunity to comment on this measure.

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is that through collaborative partnerships, the Center provides accurate nursing workforce data for planning; disseminates nursing knowledge to support excellence in practice and leadership development; promotes a diverse workforce; and advocates for sound health policy to serve the changing health care needs of the people of Hawai'i.

Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 9:00 AM
Via Video Conference

House Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness

To: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair
Representative Adrian Tam, Vice Chair

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

Re: **HB 1575 – Testimony In Support
Relating to Physician Assistants**

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.

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB 1575 which expands the scope of practice for physician assistants and streamlines the process of reviewing records.

The 2021 annual report on findings from the Hawaii Physician Workforce Assessment found that Hawaii has an unmet need for seven hundred thirty-two full-time doctors. The islands of Maui and Hawaii face the most severe shortages, each needing forty per cent more healthcare providers. In contrast, the number of licensed physician assistants has grown by one hundred five per cent on the island of Hawaii, one hundred fourteen per cent on the island of Kauai and thirty-five per cent on the island of Maui.

Utilization of physician assistants provides a viable option to managing both the growing physician shortage and the growing medical demands of the State's aging population. Physician assistants are skilled health care providers trained to take medical histories, perform physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and assist in surgery. Thus, they offer an effective and efficient method of delivering healthcare to our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



To: House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness
The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair
Hearing Date/Time: February 2, 2022, 9:00 a.m.
Place: Via Videoconference
Re: HB 1575, Related to Physician Assistants

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1575, which expands the scope of practice for physician assistants and requires a sampling of medical records, rather than all medical records, to be reviewed when physician assistants prescribe controlled substances.

Hawai`i Academy of Physician Assistants (HAPA) STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB 1575, WITH AMENDMENTS

HAPA is the Hawaii state chapter of The American Academy of Physician Assistants. According to the 2021 annual report on findings from the Hawaii physician workforce assessment report, Hawai`i has an unmet need for 732 full time physicians across the state with neighbor island counties facing the most severe shortages.

Paradoxically, physician assistant practice in Hawaii has grown by 36% over the past five years. This is most noticeable on some of the neighbor islands, where physician assistant presence has grown over 100%.

Notably, physician assistants are one of the three health care professionals (along with physicians and nurse practitioners) authorized by the Affordable Care Act to serve as primary care provider (PCP).

Physician assistants already play an integral role in filling our well-known provider shortage gaps in Hawai`i, but state restrictions on physician assistant practice, some of the toughest in the nation, limit physician assistants from practicing medicine to their highest ability. HB 1575 lowers restrictions and administrative burdens and will help ensure timely quality care for all our populations.

HAPA appreciates the Legislature's passage of Act 181, Session Laws of Hawai`i 2019, which was a monumental bill that modernized physician assistant chart review by collaborating physicians. This has successfully lowered administrative burden for physicians, without compromising patient care. HB 1575 expands the review structure established in 2019 to include physician assistant prescribed controlled substances. Like 2019, we expect this change will continue to prioritize patient care while significantly decreasing physician administrative burden. In addition, HB 1575 will allow physician assistants, like Advanced Practice Nurses (APRNs), to sign temporary disability insurance forms, disability parking permits, Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) forms, and other administrative forms that are time sensitive and critical for patients' quality of life but, are often delayed by the physician shortage.



To ensure continuity of care delivery for patients requiring occupational therapy rehabilitation, **HAPA respectfully requests that HB1575 be amended to include physician assistant authority to sign orders for occupational therapy and plans of care.**

Currently under HRS 453-5.5, physician assistants can sign orders and plans of care for both physical and speech therapies, but arbitrarily, not for occupational therapy. Allowing physician assistants the ability to sign occupational therapy orders ensures that patient access to occupational therapy is timely.

Proposed amendment would add line number (10) to HRS 453-5.5 and read as:

§453-5.5 Physician assistant; authority to sign documents. Any physician assistant who holds a current, valid, and permanent license to practice medicine pursuant to this chapter, and who is under the supervision of a licensed physician or osteopathic physician, shall have the authority to sign the following documents:

- (1) Certification of psychiatric medical condition of the parents of a child applicant for aid from the temporary assistance for needy families program;
- (2) Evaluation forms for Hansen's disease patients;
- (3) Orders for physical therapy and plans of care;
- (4) Pharmacist orders to assist in monitoring and management of anticoagulation anemia and atrial fibrillation;
- (5) Orders for speech therapy and plans of care;
- (6) Applications for bracelets indicating compassionate care only;
- (7) Admissions applications for foster homes;
- (8) Dietary consultations forms; ~~and~~
- (9) Medicaid application forms for nursing care facility admission; and
- (10) Orders for occupational therapy and plans of care.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Hawai'i Academy of Physician Assistants

January 31, 2022

To: Honorable Representative Ryan Yamane - Chair, Health, Human Services & Homelessness
Honorable Representative Adrian Tam - Vice Chair

Hearing: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 - 9:00 a.m.

RE: HB 1575 - Relating to Physician Assistants

On behalf of the Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii (OTAH) we support the intent of HB 1575 - Relating to Physician Assistants which modernized physician assistant scope of practice.

Currently under HRS 453-5.5, Physician assistants are able to sign orders and plans of care for both Physical and Speech therapies, however, not for Occupational Therapy. Occupational Therapy practitioners provide services to both inpatient and outpatients who have sustained a stroke, brain injury, spinal cord injury, hip fractures, amputations, hand & upper extremity conditions. Occupational Therapy practitioners are employed in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, mental health agencies, schools to name a few throughout Hawaii.

We have discussed our suggested amendment with the Hawaii Academy of Physician Assistants (HAPA) and they are in agreement. OTAH would like to suggest an amendment to this bill by inserting after Section 11 Section 12.

CHAPTER 453 MEDICINE AND SURGERY

§453-5.5 Physician assistant; authority to sign documents.

§453-5.5 Physician assistant; authority to sign documents. Any physician assistant who holds a current, valid, and permanent license to practice medicine pursuant to this chapter, and who is under the supervision of a licensed physician or osteopathic physician, shall have the authority to sign the following documents: (1) Certification of psychiatric medical condition of the parents of a child applicant for aid from the temporary assistance for needy families program; (2) Evaluation forms for Hansen's disease patients; (3) Orders for physical therapy and plans of care; (4) Pharmacist orders to assist in monitoring and management of anticoagulation anemia and atrial fibrillation; (5) Orders for speech therapy and plans of care; (6) Applications for bracelets indicating compassionate care only; (7) Admissions applications for foster homes; (8) Dietary consultations forms; and (9) Medicaid application forms for nursing care facility admission and (10) Orders for occupational therapy and plans of care.

By adding this amendment with inclusion of occupational therapy, the consumer can receive complete orders from one referral source. At the present time, the consumer needs to see his/her physician to obtain a referral to Occupational Therapy as orders from a physician assistant is not covered under current regulation under HRS 453-5.5. Thus, the consumer, will experience a delay in receiving services. In some of our hospitals and outpatient facilities, Physician Assistants work alongside the primary physicians and have been writing orders for Occupational Therapy services. However, we have needed to ask that the MD's co-sign orders or additional orders need to be re-written by the primary physician. By adding Occupational Therapy, this would allow our consumers to access OT services in a timely manner and when prescribed by the Physician Assistant. Furthermore, Medicare allows Physician Assistants to prescribe OT

services, but depending on the Medicare fiduciary they reference the individual states statutes.

We request your support to amend HB 1575 by Amending §453-5.5 Physician assistant, and adding section 12) which will allow Physician Assistants to sign Occupational Therapy orders and sign plans of care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brooke Nakamura', followed by the text 'OTD, OTR/L'.

Brooke Nakamura, OTD, OTR/L
Doctorate of Occupational Therapy
President, Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii
(808)542-1882



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

From: Jacce Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 1, 2022

Re: Support for HB 1575: Relating to Physician Assistants

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 comments in support of HB 1575, which would expand the scope of practice for physician assistants. Requires a sampling of medical records, rather than all medical records, to be reviewed when physician assistants prescribe controlled substances. We appreciate the intent of this measure to help bring parity with APRN in scope of practice, supervision, and streamlining of record review process. They continue to play an increasingly important role in expanding physician care – especially on neighbor islands and in rural healthcare settings.

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

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.

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

Before:
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness
The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

February 1, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference

Re: HB 1575, Related to Physician Assistants

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1575, which modernizes the practice of physician assistants.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB 1575.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i is Hawai'i's largest integrated health system that provides care and coverage for approximately 265,000 members. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i believes that physician assistants should be permitted to practice medicine at the top of their training, education and experience. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i appreciates the contributions made by licensed physician assistants and has a great deal of confidence in the quality of health care they provide to our members. Our physician-owned Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group (HPMG) – Hawai'i's largest multispecialty medical group – employs over 650 physicians and licensed medical providers, including over 80 physician assistants. Within the Kaiser Permanente system, physician assistants collaborate with physicians and other medical professionals to provide high quality patient care in a variety of specialties and settings, including: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Dermatology, Orthopedics, Cardiology, Oncology, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Emergency medicine, Nephrology, Occupational Medicine, Vascular, General and Cardiothoracic Surgery, Infectious Disease, Radiology, Urology and Otolaryngology (ears, nose and throat).

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports HB 1575 because it removes barriers for the practice of physician assistants and ensures greater access to health care for Hawai'i residents, especially those who reside on the neighbor islands where the need is greatest. As of 2021, Maui and the island of Hawai'i each needed to increase their number of care providers by a staggering 40%, Kauai by 26%, and Oahu by 15%. Yet since 2016 the number of physician assistants has increased by 105% on the island of Hawai'i, 114% on Kauai, and 35% Maui. Despite increased physician assistant presence throughout the islands, they remain unable to practice at the top of their training and education due to Hawai'i restrictive practice laws. As such, physician

assistants are restricted from being able to adequately meet the healthcare needs for our populations.

HB 1575 builds on the Legislature's previous successes modernizing physician assistants' practice in Hawai'i. In 2019, the Legislature passed Act 181, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2019, modernizing physician assistant chart review by collaborating physicians, which has successfully lowered administrative burden on physicians, without compromising patient care. HB 1575 expands the review structure established in 2019 to include physician assistant prescribed controlled substances. Similar to 2019, we expect this change will continue to prioritize patient care while significantly decreasing physicians' administrative burden. In addition, HB 1575 will allow physician assistants, like Advanced Practice Nurses (APRNs), to sign temporary disability insurance forms, disability parking permits, Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) forms, and other administrative forms that are time sensitive and critical for patients' quality of life but, are often delayed by the physician shortage.

Physician assistants are skilled health care providers and authorized by the Affordable Care Act, along with physicians and APRNs, to provide primary care. They receive rigorous medical training modeled on medical school curriculum which typically includes rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine and psychiatry. In practice, physician assistants routinely take medical histories, perform physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose illnesses, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and assist in surgery. With their skills and training, physician assistants play a critical role on our care delivery teams and are represented in every medical specialty within our medical group. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i continues to focus on recruiting physician assistants because physician assistants possess a skillset and training that allows them to be able to pivot quickly and supply care when and where it is needed most. This has been invaluable during the pandemic when we rely heavily on our physician assistants' unique adaptability to provide care in an ever-changing landscape.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.

January 31, 2022

To: Honorable Representative, Ryan I. Yamane, Chair, Committee on Health Human Services & Homelessness
Honorable Representative Adrian Tam, Vice Chair

Hearing: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 9 AM

RE: HB1575 – Relating to Physician Assistants

I am a retired Occupational Therapist who continues to be interested in healthcare concerns for our consumers. I support the intent of HB 1575 – Relating to Physician Assistants which expands the authorized scope of practice for physician assistants. However, I would like to suggest an additional expansion to the Physician Assistant's scope of practice. Currently under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 453-5.5, Physician assistants can sign orders and plans of care for both Physical and Speech therapies, however, not for Occupational Therapy (OT). Consumers receive OT services in inpatient and outpatient settings because of a stroke, brain injury, spinal cord injury, hip fractures, amputations, hand & upper extremity conditions. Occupational Therapy practitioners are employed in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, mental health agencies, schools, and other settings throughout Hawaii.

Physician Assistants collaborate closely with therapists in many of the above-mentioned settings. However, the current Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 453-5.5 Physician assistants; authority to sign documents, does not allow the Physician Assistant to sign orders or plans of care for OT services. These documents are required for the patient to receive OT services. Thus, I suggest amending HB 1575, by Section 11 after Section 10. To read as follows:

SECTION 11.

Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), CHAPTER 453 MEDICINE AND SURGERY
§453-5.5 Physician assistant; authority to sign documents.


§453-5.5 Physician assistant; authority to sign documents. Any physician assistant who holds a current, valid, and permanent license to practice medicine pursuant to this chapter, and who is under the supervision of a licensed physician or osteopathic physician, shall have the authority to sign the following documents: (1) Certification of psychiatric medical condition of the parents of a child applicant for aid from the temporary assistance for needy families program; (2) Evaluation forms for Hansen's disease patients; (3) Orders for physical therapy and plans of care; (4) Pharmacist orders to assist in monitoring and management of anticoagulation anemia and atrial fibrillation; (5) Orders for speech therapy and plans of care; (6) Applications for bracelets indicating compassionate care only; (7) Admissions applications for foster homes; (8) Dietary consultations forms; and (9) Medicaid application forms for nursing care facility admission and (10) Orders for occupational therapy and plans of care.

By adding occupational therapy to HRS 453-5.5, the consumer will receive orders for all needed services at the time of his/her visit with the Physician Assistant. The consumer need not wait until the order for OT services is either co-signed by the primary physician or the primary physician writes a "new" order. Thus, the consumer will be able to access OT services in a timely manner and when prescribed by the Physician Assistant. Furthermore, Medicare allows Physician Assistants to sign orders and plans of care for OT services, but depending on the Medicare fiduciary, they reference the individual states statutes.

I request your support to amend HB 1575 by adding section 11 which will amend HRS §453-5.5 Physician assistant; authority to sign documents by allowing Physician Assistants to sign Occupational Therapy orders and sign plans of care when needed by the consumer.

If you have any questions, I may be reached at gin575@yahoo.com

Sincerely,



Virginia Tully
Add names and signatures of staff

Erin Nakamura, PA-S

Re: Testimony in support of HB 1575

Dear House of Representatives in the State of Hawai`i,

My name is Erin Nakamura, and I am a current physician assistant student attending Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, class of 2022. I was born and raised in Hawai`i and hope to return to the islands in the future to practice medicine. Therefore, I am writing to express my support for HB 1575.

As a future healthcare provider, I feel that this bill will allow practicing physician assistants greater autonomy. It would also expand patient access to healthcare and help to ease the physician shortage we are currently facing. By broadening the scope of practice of physician assistants, this bill will allow more patients to be able to access the quality healthcare they deserve.

Thank you,
Erin Nakamura, PA-S

HB-1575

Submitted on: 1/30/2022 8:56:15 PM

Testimony for HHH on 2/1/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Bernard Sr Robinson	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Even though I am a licensed physician and member of the Hawaii Medical Association, my testimony is submitted as a private citizen. I have served on the Hawaii Board of Medical Examiners when physician assistants and nurse practitioners first applied for prescription writing privileges. I also hired and trained the first few Hawaii neurosurgical physician assistants beginning in 1984. In those days, there was considerable resistance to the use of any physician extenders. We had physician shortages then that raised comparable practical concerns relative to the limited access of Hawaii citizens to high quality care. Back then, it was clear physician extenders were quite helpful but they could not be used to replace physicians. As a physician extender friendly professional, I know that it is a mistake for Hawaii, the healthcare state, to adopt the false narrative that we can address physician shortages in our state by trying to replace MDs with physician extenders. Legislative efforts can facilitate looking for real solutions to real problems, but legislators cannot improve the physician shortage problem by extending the scope of practice of non-physicians. That is at best an attractive sounding myth. Legislators can find out what makes primary care and specialist physicians choose to leave Hawaii for practice opportunities elsewhere. Legislators can potentially use such knowledge to eliminate MD disincentives and increase MD incentives favorable to MDs coming and / or staying to live and work in Hawaii. I have never met a patient who wanted to be treated by the least trained MD on the team, let alone a non-physician. The scope of training of any MD or DO compared to any physician extender is basically incomparable. The least trained MD after completing college and medical school, spends years in a primary care or specialty training residency program before becoming employable as a licensed - certified practicing physician. Making it legally possible for non-physicians to do traditional physician required work would, in my opinion, expose the state of Hawaii to civil liability for malpractice. I strongly oppose this bill as well meaning but counter productive to the goal of pursuing a healthcare infrastructure for our state that pursues acceptable high quality and sustainable healthcare. Quick fixes as proposed by this and similar bills are basically ill advised and highly likely to make matters worse than they already are.

Sincerely submitted,

Bernard Robinson, M.D.

