

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 1635 H.D. 1
RELATING TO HEALTH CARE**

REPRESENTATIVE SYLVIA LUKE, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: 2/24/2022

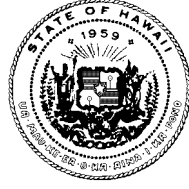
Room Number: Via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) will need a staff position or funds to
2 contract with a consultant to support the convening and facilitation of a rural health task force.
3 The Office of Primary Care and Rural Health is funded solely through federal grants. The
4 Department requests that passage of any appropriations in this measure does not replace or
5 adversely impact priorities in the Executive Budget request.

6 **Department Testimony:** The Department appreciates the intent of H.B. 1635 H.D. 1, which
7 establishes a rural health task force within the DOH to make recommendations on registered
8 nurse recruitment and retention in rural areas of east Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. This measure
9 may not be needed since it duplicates the efforts of the Hawaii State Center for Nursing (HSCN).
10 The Department does not have the expertise and/or resources to implement the request as
11 outlined in this measure which includes a needs assessment at each rural health care facility;
12 managing the ratio of registered nurses to patients in each rural health care facility;
13 recommendations for affordable workforce housing; surveying telehealth demand; identifying
14 travel nurse options; analyzing nurse retention impact on rural health care facilities, researching
15 best practices on retaining registered nurses; and preparation of a legislative report. Additionally,
16 there may be insufficient time to convene the task force, develop actionable recommendations,
17 propose legislation, and complete the report by the end of December 2022.

18 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 22, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1635 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH CARE.**

Hearing: February 24, 2022, 2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the measure's intent, provides comments, and requests an amendment.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish the rural health task force within the department of health to make recommendations on registered nurse recruitment and retention in rural areas of east Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. Effective date, July 1, 2060 (HD1). The HD1 amended the measure by defecting the effective date and making technical amendments.

The Department recognizes the challenges of rural health care and that nurses provide much of the health care in rural settings. However, while DHS provides access to health care coverage to many Hawaii residents through the State's Medicaid program, QUEST Integration, and participates with hospitals and nursing facilities in fiscal sustainability programs, DHS does not generally have the expertise, nor is it engaged in the recruitment of registered nurses, accountability and management of registered nurse retention, and facility-specific needs. Therefore, DHS respectfully requests an amendment deleting DHS as a member of this task force.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.
by
Laura Reichhardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

Comments on HB 1635, HD1

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity for the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing to provide **comments on HB 1635, HD1**. If enacted, this measure would create a task force that includes the directors or designees of health and of human services, representatives of the department of health's public health nursing section and office of primary care and rural health, and representatives from health care facilities from Hāna, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i.

The Center for Nursing has prioritized the needs of rural communities in Hawai'i. As such, recent research findings, programs, plans, and strategies for recruitment and retention have focused on increasing the impacts on nurses residing on neighbor islands. *The Center respectfully positions that the work, as it relates to workforce research and statewide recruitment and retention, is being undertaken and currently involves many partners named in this task force. Noting this, the Center also recognizes the need for work that focuses on unique needs of geographically remote areas of our state and commends the community health centers and partners in being champions for nursing workforce development in their communities.*

Among the many working groups that the Center convenes or participates in, there are representatives from all counties and islands. In addition, the Center actively collaborates with entities including the Department of Health's Office of Primary Care and Rural Health and Public Health Nursing Branch, the MedQUEST division of the Department of Health, the Hawai'i Board of Health, the Hawai'i State Rural Health Association, the Healthcare Association of Hawai'i Health Workforce Initiative, the Hawai'i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center, and others.

Recent accomplishments and undertaking of this diverse array of partners, as convened by or in participation with the Center for Nursing, includes, but is not limited to:

- Research:
 - Snapshot of nurses working in rural and underserved areas (2021)
 - Research on intent to leave and wellbeing of nurses (2021)
 - Report and infographics on nursing workforce supply by County (2017 and 2019)
- Recruitment and retention:
 - Increase in nurse residency program participation by neighbor island hospitals by 150% (2021)
 - Expansion of nurse residency program to all counties in the state (2020)
 - Secured funding to increase nurse residency program participation by neighbor island and rural nurses (2020)

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.

- Efforts to address delays in recent graduates from nursing programs in accessing the entry-to-practice NCLEX exam due to the pandemic, which included advocacy to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the Hawai'i State and County travel exemption divisions, and the Governor to create license waivers for new graduates to enable their contribution to nursing practice in the state (2020)
- Collaboration with community partners and education providers which led to first CAN program on Lāna'i since 2016 (2021)
- Weekly calls with Chief Nursing Officers statewide to address emerging and urgent needs related to nursing workforce recruitment, retention, staffing, and care standards (2021-present)
- Address practice barriers that impede nurses' ability to provide needed care to their patients (2009-present).
- Convene APRN practice and policy taskforce, which includes representatives of each County with work that includes ensuring nurses understand history and laws in Hawai'i as it related to APRNs (2012-present).
- Education capacity
 - Memo to Board of Nursing and literature review on simulation use in education to support nursing education during the pandemic; use of simulation particularly impacted community colleges which are the only in-person nursing education programs on Maui and Kauai Counties (2020).
 - Inquiry into faculty and instructor recruiting challenges across all schools of nursing that identified the greatest number of nurses needed, in aggregate, from schools of nursing across the neighbor islands (2019-present)
- Nursing professional development
 - Established first statewide nurse evidence-based practice program in the nation, and convened the first rurally-located workshop and internship in 2016. (2012-present)
 - Launched academic progression in nursing program in nursing. Neighbor island nurses have increased their education preparation from 59% in 2017 to 63% in 2021 on Hawai'i County, 45% in 2017 to 61% in 2021 on Kaua'i County, and 49% in 2017 to 63% in 2021 on Maui County (2012-today).
 - Launched a nursing certification program to decrease the costs and incent nurses to become nationally certified in their specialty area; this program targeted neighbor island residents and nurses employed outside of hospitals (2020).

The Center is committed to continuing the collaborative work and efforts to research nursing as well as explore recruitment, retention, education, and nursing professional development needs for nurses. We take particular joy in the work that focuses on the rural areas of our state. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information as it relates to your decision making 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.

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David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
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WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

February 23, 2022

TO: Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair

DATE: February 23, 2022

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB 1635, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure, with proposed amendments. The purpose of this measure is to establish the rural health task force within the Department of Health to make recommendations on registered nurse recruitment and retention in rural areas of East Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I would like to request your consideration in amending the bill to include representation on the rural health taskforce from Maui County's four federally qualified health centers (FQHCs): Malama I Ke Ola Health Center, Molokai Community Health Center, Lāna'i Community Health Center, and Hana Health.

I **SUPPORT** this measure, with proposed amendments, for the following reasons:

1. There is a vital need for healthcare workers in rural areas of East Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.
2. These communities will benefit from the implementation of the task force's solutions and recommendations regarding the recruitment and retention of registered nurses in rural areas.
3. The task force will be composed of health experts from the related communities.

For the foregoing reasons, I **SUPPORT** this measure, with proposed amendments.



Clinic
4590 Hāna Highway
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Administration
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Hāna, Maui 96713
tel 808.248.7515
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February 22, 2022

**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 p.m.**

RE: HB NO. 1635, HD1, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE.

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair, Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee;

My name is Cheryl Vasconcellos and I am the Executive Director of Hana Health a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) providing essential primary care to patients residing in one of the most remote locations in the state. I am testifying in SUPPORT of this bill and respectfully request an amendment.

Hana Health has served the people of Hana, Maui for almost twenty-five years. We are the only primary health care provider in the district requiring that we provide urgent/emergent care 24/7 in addition to routine health, dental and behavioral health services. The majority of our patients are low-income Native Hawaiians. Due to the special needs and challenges facing this population, as well as the difficulties experienced in providing care in this remote, isolated region, Hana Health has also focused on addressing the social determinants of health in order to impact the health care outcomes of our patients.

We experience firsthand how the lack of an adequate supply of competent and trained health care professionals in the State has exacerbated the cost and demands we face in providing essential care for patients.

In Maui County, the four FQHCs work in tandem in support of our mission to service the people of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. We are:

Malama I Ke Ola Health Center;
Molokai Community Health Center;
Lanai Community Health Center; and
Hana Health.

Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 pm.
Page 2

Our four FQHCs provide essential support to one another in meeting the enormous needs that are placed on us. We stand together committed in doing this crucial work and respectfully request this Committee to add Malama I Ke Ola Health Center and Molokai Community Health Center as task force members.

With this amendment, Hana Health respectfully asks that this measure be approved.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 808-248-7515, extension 26.

Very Truly Yours,



Cheryl Vasconcellos
Executive Director

cc: B.J. Ott, Malama I Ke Ola Health Center
Helen Kekalia, Molokai Community Health Center
Diana Shaw, Lanai Community Health Center

Senator Lynn DeCoite
Representative Linda Clark

LĀNA'Ī COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

P. O. Box 630142
Lāna'ī City, HI 96763-0142



Phone: 808-565-6919
Fax: 808-565-9111
dshaw@lanaicommunityhealthcenter.org

The Community is our Patient -- men, women, children, uninsured, insured!

February 22, 2022

Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 p.m.

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1635, HD1, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE.

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair, Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Diana Shaw and I am the Executive Director of Lāna'ī Community Health Center (LCHC), a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) providing essential primary care to patients residing in one of the most remote locations in the state. I am testifying in SUPPORT of this bill and respectfully request an amendment.

LCHC has served the people of Lāna'ī, for over 15 years. Many of our patients are at or below the federal poverty level; in addition, a large number receive health care as Medicaid recipients. Because of the special needs and challenges facing this population, LCHC has had to establish strong links throughout the community to provide for not only their immediate health needs, but also address the social determinants of health that drastically impact the health care outcomes of our patients.

We experience firsthand how the lack of an adequate supply of competent and trained health care professionals in the State has exacerbated the cost and demands we face in providing essential care for patients. Because of this, we want to thank the introducer, newly-appointed Representative Linda Clark for submitting this very im-

E Ola nō Lāna'ī
LIFE, HEALTH, and WELL-BEING FOR LĀNA'Ī

portant proposal.

In Maui County, the four FQHCs work in tandem in support of our mission to service the people of Maui, Molokai, and Lānaʻi . We are:

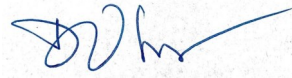
Malama I Ke Ola Health Center;
Molokai Community Health Center;
Lānaʻi Community Health Center; and
Hana Health.

Our four FQHCs provide essential support to one another in meeting the enormous needs that are placed on us. We stand together committed in doing this crucial work and respectfully request this Committee to add Malama I Ke Ola Health Center and Molokai Community Health Center as task force members.

With this amendment, LCHC respectfully asks that this measure be approved.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 808-565-6919 or by email, dshaw@lanaihealth.org.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. M. V. Shaw', is positioned above the printed name.

D. M. V. Shaw, PhD, MPH, MBA, FACMPE
Executive Director

cc: B.J. Ott, Malama I Ke Ola Health Center
Helen Kekalia, Molokai Community Health Center
Cheryl Vasconcellos, Hana Community Health Center
Representative Linda Clark
Senator Lynn DeCoite



MOLOKAI OHANA HEALTH CARE, INC.

M O L O K A I
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

February 22, 2022

Representative Sylvia Luke
Chair, House Committee on Finance
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii. 96813
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1635 HD1, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE.

Dear Chair Luke:

My name is Helen Kekalia Wescoatt. I am the Chief Executive Officer of Molokai Community Health Center (MCHC). We are the only Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) located on Molokai and one of four FQHC's in Maui County. MCHC provides primary care, dental services, mental health services, and care enabling services to patients on Molokai, regardless of their ability to pay for such services. I am testifying in **SUPPORT of this bill and respectfully request an amendment.**

MCHC has served the people of Molokai for sixteen years. Over half of our patients are low-income Native Hawaiians and today we proudly serve 40% of the total Molokai population. Due to the special needs and challenges facing this population, as well as the difficulties experienced in providing care in this remote, isolated region, Molokai Community Health Center has also expanded services to addressing the social determinants of health in order to impact the health care outcomes of our patients ranging from the island's largest on-site food pantry to offering mobile in-person primary care and soon specialty care via telehealth services in our mobile unit, complete with our own broadband capabilities, for our most rural neighborhoods.

In 2021, MCHC received Community Health Quality Recognition from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) for our contribution to COVID-19 vaccination administration for our community. To date, MCHC has administered the COVID-19 vaccine to 42% of the eligible Molokai population, regardless of their patient status at the Center. Alongside this effort, MCHC has been at the forefront of providing both antibody and now antiviral treatment to all qualifying individuals on Molokai and is the only Provider on the island offering consistent access to this treatment. Our response to the needs of the community and ensuring equitable access to all Molokai residents has largely been made possible by our Registered Nurses leading on the front-lines. Our Registered Nurses are a vital component through this public health emergency and a vital component in primary care when we begin to move out of this pandemic and into a new norm of primary care that embraces telehealth, mobile care delivery and home-based care – care that meets our patient where they are at.

*Mission: To provide and promote accessible comprehensive individual and community health care
to the people of Molokai with respect and aloha.
Visit us at <http://molokaicbc.org>*



MOLOKAI OHANA HEALTH CARE, INC.

M O L O K A I
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Because of this, we want to thank the introducer, newly-appointed Representative Linda Clark for submitting this very important proposal.

In Maui County, the four FQHCs work in tandem in support of our mission to service the people of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. We are:

Malama I Ke Ola Health Center;
Molokai Community Health Center;
Lanai Community Health Center; and
Hana Health

Our four FQHCs provide essential support to one another in meeting the enormous needs that are placed on us. We stand together committed in doing this crucial work.

It is our understanding that it was an oversight by Rep. Clark that Molokai Community Health Center and Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center were not included as members of the Task Force. Because we four FQHCs work as a team, I respectfully request this Committee to add Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center and Molokai Community Health Center as members. Rep. Clark supports this amendment as well.

With this amendment, Molokai Community Health Center, respectfully asks that this measure be approved.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 808-660-2630.

Very Truly Yours,

Helen Kekalia Wescoatt
Chief Executive Officer

cc: B.J. Ott, Malama I Ke Ola Health Center
Diana Shaw, Lanai Community Health Center
Cheryl Vasconcellos, Hana Health
Representative Linda Clark
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita

*Mission: To provide and promote accessible comprehensive individual and community health care
to the people of Molokai with respect and aloha.
Visit us at <http://molokaicbc.org>*



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1635, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE.

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1635, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE, and offers a **PROPOSED AMENDMENT** for your consideration.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would establish a Rural Health Task Force (Task Force) within the Department of Health (DOH) to prepare and develop solutions and make recommendations regarding rural areas of east Maui, Molokai, and Lanai, with specific emphasis on the recruitment and retention of registered nurses.

The State of Hawaii is experiencing a severe shortage of health care professionals in the workforce, especially in rural areas. Recent studies note that the current shortage of physicians is at 20% of the total full-time equivalent positions throughout the State. The shortage is especially severe in the fields of primary care, infectious diseases, colorectal surgery, pathology, general surgery, pulmonology, neurology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, family medicine, cardiothoracic surgery, rheumatology, cardiology, hematology/oncology, and pediatric subspecialties of endocrinology, cardiology, neurology, hematology/oncology, and gastroenterology.

Physicians are not the only professionals in high demand. The same also applies to registered nurses.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1635, House Draft 1
Tuesday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 p.m.
Page 2

This bill would provide the DOH with assistance from the health care providers in east Maui, Molokai, and Lanai in developing tangible action steps to assist with the recruitment and retention of registered nurses in these areas.

Prior to this hearing, we asked the introducer why Molokai Community Health Center was not included as a member. (**See**, page 2, lines 7-9 of the bill). The Representative's staff assured us that this was an oversight due to the Representative's recent appointment to the Office, and that it was the Representative's every intention for Molokai Community Health Center to be included as a member of the Task Force.

It should be noted that Molokai Community Health Center is one of only five organizations providing primary care on the Island of Molokai, and that it serves 40% of that island's population.

If it is the intention of this Committee to promote a meaningful discussion on the health care needs in this region, it will be very difficult to do so without Molokai Community Health Center as an active participant in that discussion.

When the HPCA previously submitted testimony on this bill and its companion, Senate Bill No. 3180, we constrained our previous recommendation to the membership of FQHCs that were physically situated on Lanai, Molokai, and **East** Maui, as specified in the bill. However, after discussing the matter with all of the CEO's of area FQHCs, we note that four FQHCs work together as a team to provide primary care to the people of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai, in their entirety. They are:

Malama I Ke Ola Health Center;
Molokai Community Health Center;
Lanai Community Health Center; and
Hana Health.

Because of this, the HPCA respectfully asks that membership for the Task Force be expanded to also include Malama I Ke Ola Health center, and Molokai Community Health Center. That way all FQHCs providing services in the area will be able to participate

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

**Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance**

**Hearing: February 24, 2022 @ 2:00 PM
State Capitol, via Videoconference**

By Hawai'i – American Nurses Association (Hawai'i-ANA)



HB1635, HD1 RELATING TO HEALTH CARE

Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice Chair Kyle T. Yamashita, and members of the House Committee on Finance for this opportunity to provide comments on HB1635, HD1 Relating to Health Care.

We are Hawai'i - American Nurses Association (Hawai'i-ANA) and we speak for over 15,000 Registered Nurses in our state. We are in a situation of high demand and low supply, particularly on the neighbor islands, in rural and underserved areas of Hawai'i. This measure would create a task force that includes the directors or designees of health and of human services, representatives of the department of health's public health nursing section and office of primary care and rural health, and representatives from health care facilities from Hana, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i.

Hawai'i-ANA continues to work with other nursing organizations and stakeholders, including the partners named in this taskforce, and the Board of Nursing and Hawai'i State Center for Nursing. We are committed to continuing this collaborative work and efforts to research nursing as well as explore recruitment, retention, education, and nursing professional development needs for nurses, in particular for Registered Nurses in rural and underserved areas of our state. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information as it relates to your decision making on this measure.

Hawai'i-ANA appreciates your continued support for measures that address the need to recruit and retain healthcare professionals especially in our rural communities.

Contact information for Hawai'i – American Nurses Association

President: Katie Kemp, BAN, RN-BC
hawaii-ana.org

[president@hawaii-](mailto:president@hawaii-ana.org)

Executive Director: Dr. Linda Beechinor, APRN-Rx, FNP-BC
executivedirector@hawaii-ana.org

phone (808) 779-3001

500 Lunalilo Home Road, #27-E

Honolulu Hawai'i USA 96825



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Finance

From: Janice Kalanihuia, President, Molokai General Hospital – The Queen's Health Systems
Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 24, 2022

Re: In support of HB 1635 HD1: Relating to Health Care

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 testimony in support of HB 1635 HD1, which establishes the rural health task force within the department of health to make recommendations on registered nurse recruitment and retention in rural areas of east Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. Since 2019, Hawaii has experienced more than 900 nurses leaving the workforce due to the rise of Covid-19, cost of living, and the lack of affordable housing; this shortage has impacted our rural communities the most. We appreciate the legislature taking this proactive approach to help address our current nursing workforce shortage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1635 HD1.

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.

February 23, 2022

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

Re: HB1635 HD1: Relating to Health Care

Hearing date: 2/24/2022 at 2:00 PM In House Conference Room 308 Via Videoconference.

From: Xzandra Medeiros

Aloha,

I am Xzandra Medeiros and I am a student that is currently pursuing a degree in Social Work at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am submitting my testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB1635 HD1. The purpose of this measure is to get health care providers(registered nurses) to work in rural areas of East Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. I support this measure because it is important to have Health Care available to people in areas that may not have enough support or help. I am from Honolulu, Hawaii and we have access to various Health providers here. It would be great if other islands were able to have the same access we do. It would help other communities by being accessible to health care. It would also take some pressure off of health care workers already working in the area if there is any. Another reason is that it will help employ people who are looking for work that is closer to home or work in general.

Thank you for giving me the time and opportunity to testify in support of HB1635 HD1: Relating to Health Care.

Mahalo,

Xzandra M