

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
RELATING TO HEALTH CARE**

RYAN I. YAMANE, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date: 2/15/2022

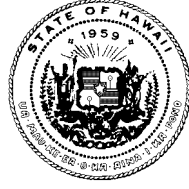
Room Number: Via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Office of Primary Care and Rural Health (OPCRH) staff and its
2 programs are funded solely through federal grants. The Department of Health does not have the
3 resources to implement the request outlined in this measure. The Department requests that
4 passage of any appropriations in this measure does not replace or adversely impact priorities in
5 the Executive Budget request.

6 **Department Testimony:** The Department respectfully offers comments on H.B. 1635, which
7 establishes a rural health task force within the Department of Health to make recommendations
8 on registered nurse recruitment and retention in rural areas of east Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.
9 This measure may not be needed since it duplicates the Hawaii State Center for Nursing (HSCN)
10 efforts. Established by the Hawaii State Legislature in 2003, ACT 198 charges the HSCN to
11 oversee nursing workforce issues. HSCN provides accurate nursing workforce data for planning
12 and promotes a diverse workforce while advocating for health policy to address Hawaii's
13 changing health care needs. HSCN regularly publishes comprehensive reports addressing
14 Hawaii's workforce supply and education capacity on its website. The OPCRH regularly
15 collaborates with HSCN and other health workforce partners such as the Hawaii/Pacific Basin
16 Area Health Education Center and Hawaii State Rural Health Association to coordinate health
17 workforce recruitment and retention initiatives such as Project ECHO Hawaii, Hawaii Health
18 Workforce Summit, Hawaii State Loan Repayment Program, and the Barry Taniguchi Health
19 Professions Subsidy Program.

- 1 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 14, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

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

Hearing: February 15, 2022, 9:00 a.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.

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.

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers
Gabe Johnson
Kelly Takaya King
Michael J. Molina
Tamara Paltin
Shane M. Sinenci
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura



Director of Council Services
Traci N. T. Fujita, Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

February 11, 2022

TO: Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair

DATE: February 11, 2022

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. 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 SUPPORT this measure 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.

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LĀNA`I COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

P. O. Box 630142
Lāna`i 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 11, 2022

Representative Ryan Yamane
Chair, House Committee on Health, Human Services
and Homelessness
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Honolulu, Hawaii. 96813
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

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

Dear Chair Yamane:

My name is Diana Shaw and I am the Executive Director of Lāna`i 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`i, 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

E Ola nō Lāna`i
LIFE, HEALTH, and WELL-BEING FOR LĀNA`I

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 important 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:

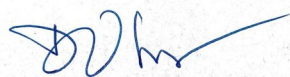
Malama I Ke Ola Health Center;
Molokai Community Health Center;
Lānaʻi Community Health Center; and
Hana Health.

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,



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



**Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness
Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 9:00 AM
by
Laura Reichhardt, MS, AGNP-C, APRN
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

Comments on HB 1635

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and members of the House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness, thank you for the opportunity for the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing to provide **comments on HB 1635**.

If enacted, this measure will 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.

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. Therefore, the Center respectfully feels that the work, as it relates to research and recruitment and retention, is being undertaken and currently involves the partners named in this task force.

The Center for Nursing was established by Act 198, SLH 2003, with legislative mandates to: 1) Collect and analyze data and prepare and disseminate written reports and recommendations regarding the current and future status and trends of the nursing workforce; 2) Conduct research on best practices and quality outcomes; 3) Develop a plan for implementing strategies to recruit and retain nurses; and 4) Research, analyze and report data related to the retention of the nursing workforce. In addition, the Center maintains a Governor-appointed Advisory Board, which today includes a member from Hilo serving in the nurse executive role and a member from Maui serving in the nurse educator role.

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 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, and the Hawai'i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center, among 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)

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.

- Expansion of nurse residency program to all counties in the state (2020)
- Funding secured to increase nurse residency program participation by neighbor island and rural nurses (2020)
- 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)
- Addressing practice barriers that impede nurses' ability to provide needed care to their patients (2009-present)
- Convene the APRN policy and practice taskforce which includes representatives of each County with work focusing on issues such as ensuring nurses understand the history and laws in Hawai'i as they relates 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 Kaua'i 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 the 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. 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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fax 808.248.7223

February 11, 2022

Representative Ryan Yamane
Chair, House Committee on Health, Human Services
and Homelessness
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Honolulu, Hawaii. 96813
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

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

Dear Chair Yamane:

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. 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.

**Testimony to the House Committee on Health, Human Services
and Homelessness**

Tuesday, February 15, 2022; 9:00 a.m.

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

Representative Linda Clark
Senator Lynn DeCoite



**Testimony to the House Committee on Health, Human Services and Homelessness
Tuesday, February 15, 2022; 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

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

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, 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

Tuesday, February 15, 2022; 9:00 a.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.

The HPCA commends the introducer for this bill and wishes to participate fully to this endeavor because we have three (3) FQHC member organizations situated in this area: Lanai Community Health Center, Hana Health, and **Molokai Community Health Center**.

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.

In light of this, as a friendly amendment, the HPCA requests that Molokai Community Health Center be added to the list of rural health care facilities invited to participate.

With this amendment, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

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.



February 11, 2022

Representative Ryan Yamane
Chair, House Committee on Health, Human Services and Homelessness
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Honolulu, Hawaii. 96813
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

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

Dear Chair Yamane and Vice Chair Tam:

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.

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 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.

*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>*



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 include all FQHC's in Maui County, with the addition of both Malama I Ke Ola Health Center and Molokai Community Health Center as task force members.

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
Helen Kekalia Wescoatt, Molokai Community Health Center
Diana Shaw, Lanai Community Health Center
Cheryl Vasconcellos, Hana Health

Representative Linda Clark
Senator Lynn DeCoite

*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://molokaichc.org>*

**Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness**

**Hearing: February 15, 2022 @ 9:00AM
State Capitol, via Videoconference**

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



HB1635 RELATING TO HEALTH CARE

Chair Ryan Yamane, Vice Chair Adrian K. Tam, and members of the House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness for this opportunity to provide comments on HB1635 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 and 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 that focus on the need 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.

Thank you for 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

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

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

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

Date: February 15, 2022

Re: In support of HB 1635: 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, 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.

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.



Hawaii State House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness
Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 9:00 am
via Videoconference

HB1635 Relating to Health - SUPPORT

Good morning, Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam and members of the House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness. My name is Jocelyn Saccamago and I serve as the Regional Vice President for Hawaii and Guam of Liberty Dialysis. We are an affiliate of Fresenius Kidney Care.

Liberty Dialysis stands in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1635 Relating to Health Care.

As a provider of healthcare services in the rural areas of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai, we have experienced first-hand the many challenges of recruiting and retaining registered nurses to care for patients. Hawaii, like the rest of the nation, is faced with a nursing shortage and the pandemic of the past two years has exacerbated this shortage. Shortages in any area of healthcare – whether it be in a hospital or outpatient or specialty setting – affects all providers in healthcare because each of our patients utilize services from multiple providers. Depending on traveling nurses is not always practical nor is having multiple employers continuing to go after the same pool of nurses that is too small, and quite candidly stretched too thin, to meet all of our needs.

Maui's rural areas are faced with unique challenges in attracting and retaining registered nurses. The island geography and accessibility of these areas makes it difficult to find staff who are open to relocating and/or commuting. Yet, these areas are often the places that require consistent and well skilled nurses the most. Public health nurses are vital connections to the community and health promotion activities. Registered nurses for clinics, hospitals, and specialty settings like our dialysis clinics are similarly critically needed to maintain the health of families and persons living in these communities.

The Task Force that this bill proposes will be key to developing solutions that benefit these communities. We stand ready to join together with our colleagues to help develop strategies and solutions for growing a viable workforce of registered nurses in the rural areas of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.

Liberty Dialysis Hawaii strongly urges you to please pass this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.



February 14, 2022

MAIN CLINIC
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(808) 871-7772
FAX (808) 873-6320

Representative Ryan Yamane
Chair, House Committee on Health, Human Services
and Homelessness
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Honolulu, Hawaii. 96813
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

SATELLITE CLINICS

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

KA HALE A KE OLA
RESOURCE CENTER
670-A WAI'IALE DRIVE
WAILUKU, HI 96793

Dear Chair Yamane:

NA HALE O WAINE'E
HOMELESS RESOURCE
CENTER
15 IPU 'AUMAKUA
LAHAINA, HI 96761

My name is B.J. Ott, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) providing essential primary care to patients on the island of Maui. I am testifying in SUPPORT of this bill and respectfully request an amendment.

Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center has served the people of Maui for the past thirty years. Most of our clients are at or below the federal poverty level and receive health care as Medicaid recipients. Because of the special needs and challenges facing this population, Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center 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 work closely with Hāna Health, Hui No Ke Ola Pono, Maui Health Systems, Hale Makua, Imua Family Services, Maui District Health Office, Maui Boys & Girls Club, and Maui Economic Concerns of the Community to ensure seamless transitions of care, education, and outreach throughout the island. Our services include a street medicine program that brings healthcare and enrollment services to homeless encampments as well.

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 important proposal.

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

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

Our three 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 Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center and Molokai Community 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.

With this amendment, Mālama I Ke Ola 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 bj@ccmaui.org or 808-872-4018.

Very Truly Yours,



B.J. Ott, CEO
Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center

C: Helen Kekalia, Molokai Community Health Center
Diana Shaw, Lanai Community Health Center
Cheryl Vasconcellos, Hana Health

Representative Linda Clark
Senator Lynn DeCoite