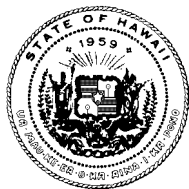


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February 6, 2024

To: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1670 – RELATING TO MOBILE CLINICS.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 8, 2024, 9:45 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides comments on this measure. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not replace or reduce priorities identified in the executive budget and forthcoming Governor's Messages.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to appropriate moneys to the Department of Human Services to purchase, staff, and operate mobile treatment clinics that provide services throughout the night.

Although these mobile treatment clinics may improve access to services such as medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders, several community organizations across the state provide mobile treatment services. DHS respectfully suggests that it may be more efficient to appropriate funds to support existing community-based services versus requiring DHS to purchase and operate mobile clinics. DHS does not have the expertise to set up or operate such mobile clinics.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services
Thursday, February 8, 2024; 9:45 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1670 – RELATING TO MOBILE CLINICS.

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato, 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 THE INTENT** of House Bill No. 1670, RELATING TO MOBILE CLINICS.

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.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the Department of Human Services to purchase, staff, and operate mobile treatment clinics that provide services throughout the night.

Due to advances in technology, health care professionals are able to provide desperately needed services "in the field" and help populations that are greatly underserved. For the homeless and other marginalized groups, a simple cold or a scratch can linger and develop into more serious maladies requiring expensive treatments in the emergency room. These costs go unpaid and ultimately are borne by all of society through higher insurance premium rates, higher treatment costs and greater utilization of social services.

From that context, the use of mobile clinics is potentially a "game-changer" in health care. Professionals are able to go to where the patients are and treat injuries and sicknesses at an earlier stage to prevent them from getting worse and more costly to address.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1670

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This approach is already being taken and used in various communities throughout the State. HPCA members currently utilize mobile clinics to provide primary care services to the underserved.

While we applaud the intent of this measure, we have concerns on how the implementation of services by a State-run mobile clinic will be integrated with those that are already in use. There would be a need to ensure that areas serviced do not overlap or else other equally-needy communities are not left out from these services.

If the intent of this measure is promote the use of mobile clinics in underserved areas, this Committee may want to consider providing DHS the flexibility to contract with nonprofits that already do this to possibly expand service areas and the scope of services provided. Ultimately, that would facilitate the underlying goal of this measure.

With those concerns, the HPCA **SUPPORTS THE INTENT** of this measure and respectfully urges its approval for further discussion.

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.