

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony COMMENTING on HB1892
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

REP. RYAN I. YAMANE, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 1, 2022

Room Number: Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** Unspecified general fund appropriation.
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the intent of this measure,
- 3 which is to extend to kupuna more resources that enable online connections. This bill highlights
- 4 the "digital divide" driven by age and lack of familiarity with technology, for which there should
- 5 be a public discussion.
- 6 However, there are many logistical issues that would need to be addressed, should this measure
- 7 advance, including infrastructure upgrades and security arrangements, as well as questions about
- 8 liability in case of information breach and physical safety of kupuna.
- 9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, &
HOMELESSNESS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1892

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

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on House Bill (H.B.) No. 1892.

H.B. No. 1892 requires the Department of Health (DOH) to establish a pilot program to provide free external wireless broadband internet access in parking lots adjoining DOH buildings in each county to elderly residents; requires DOH to provide elderly residents assistance and training in signing up for and using electronic and internet-based healthcare services; and appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds in FY 23 to DOH to provide wireless broadband internet access in each county.

B&F notes that the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

DAVID Y. IGE
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Statement of
MIKE MCCARTNEY
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 329

In consideration of

HB1892

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers comments on HB 1892 that requires the Department of Health (DOH) to provide to elderly residents free wireless broadband internet access in parking lots adjoining DOH buildings in each county.

Over the course of the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the need for broadband access for all of Hawai'i's residents, whether that be at home or at anchor institutions. The University of California San Francisco offers this definition: Anchor institutions are place-based, mission-driven entities such as hospitals, universities, and government agencies that leverage their economic power alongside their human and intellectual resources to improve the long-term health and social welfare of their communities.

When considering internet access at anchor institutions like the DOH, it is important to consider:

- Access for all, including kūpuna, citizens with disabilities and non-English speakers;
- Support for the Internet service delivery, including end user support; and

- Internet access provided in DOH public lobbies and designated outdoor areas, including proper signage and instruction.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness
Tuesday, February 1, 2022; 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1892, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

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. 1892, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH., and offers **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS** for your consideration.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's FQHCs. FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines 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 require the Department of Health (DOH) to appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2022-2023, to establish a pilot program that would provide free external wireless broadband internet access in parking lots adjoining DOH buildings in each county to allow elderly residents access internet-based healthcare services.

Hawaii has long been at the forefront of integrating newer technologies into daily life. One example of this is Hawaii's Telehealth Law which has served as a model across the United States. Yet, it was only after COVID struck our islands that this law became fully integrated into daily life.

Today, it is common practice to ZOOM or SKYPE with your health practitioner instead of physically going to the provider's office for a visit. When COVID first hit our islands, many health providers had to limit the number of patients that could be serviced in-person because of a scarcity of Personal Protective Equipment, restrictions in the gatherings of groups, and the need for changes to the physical arrangement of examination rooms and other diagnostic facilities.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1892
Tuesday, February 1, 2022; 9:00 a.m.
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For people with adequate broadband access, telehealth was a lifeline for the provision of essential primary health care services. Yet, health care facilities in rural areas experienced the same problems when COVID hit. They too had to limit the number of patients they could see. But because these communities lacked adequate broadband access, they were effectively cut off from primary care. Many were forced to bear their maladies until it became necessary to go to the emergency room.

The Governor had suspended statutes during the pandemic that prohibited the use of standard telephonic service in telehealth has temporarily eased this inequity. For those without adequate broadband, they were able to obtain basic primary care services over landline telephones. While neither adequate, tenable, nor fair to the thousands of citizens who lack broadband access, at least these unfortunate citizens could call their health care providers and obtain some services even if they could not use a computer or smart phone. Unfortunately, for persons covered by private insurance, this no longer is an option because the Governor's suspension of those statutes expired on August 6, 2021.

In light of this, the HPCA views the lack of broadband access in rural areas as an issue of social equity. In this day and age, everyone should have equal access to health care. Telehealth was envisioned as the means of leveling the field between urban and rural areas. The lack of broadband ensures that urban and rural communities remain unequal.

For that reason, the HPCA respectfully requests that the word "elderly" be stricken from the bill. While the HPCA agrees that many who do not have access to broadband are the elderly, this is not the only demographic cohort that is disadvantaged in this way.

With this amendment, and as a member of the Broadband Hui, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this bill.

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.



Committee on Health, Human Services and the Environment
Chair Ryan I. Yamane, Vice Chair Adrian K. Tam

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

HB 1892 RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Committee Members:

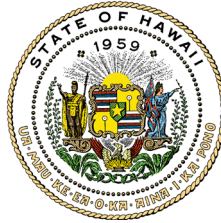
The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports the intent of this bill which would require the Department of Health to provide elderly Hawaii residents free wireless broadband internet access in parking lots adjoining Department of Health buildings in each county.

This pilot program would no doubt improve access to telehealth visits and scheduling appointments for the target population. It is especially important that training for this target group is part of the plan for the pilot; otherwise, the “take-up” rate could be disappointing. Additional details are needed to assess plans for this project such as hours of operation, internet security and reliability of the broadband provider. It is our hope that these plans could be developed during the next few months.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

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**Testimony COMMENTING on HB1892
Relating to the Department of Health**

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS
REPRESENTATIVE RYAN YAMANE, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE ADRIAN TAM, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: February 1, 2022
9:00 a.m.

Room Number: 329
Via video conference

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health, provides comments on HB1892, Relating to the Department of Health.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates an unspecified amount from the general
4 revenues of the State for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the Department of Health to provide wireless
5 broadband internet access in each county.

6 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Health to
7 establish a pilot program that would provide elderly residents free wireless internet broadband
8 access, so they may access internet-based healthcare services, in parking lots adjoining
9 Department of Health buildings in each county. This measure will provide elderly residents, who
10 don't have or cannot afford internet access, another free resource to access broadband internet
11 for vital healthcare services.

12 **Recommendation:** EOA realizes the digital divide is driven by age. We recommend that the bill
13 should focus on planning and studying the liability and feasibility of this project.

1 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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The State Legislature
The House Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness
Tuesday, Feb 1, 2022
9:00 a.m.

TO: The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair
RE: H.B. 1892, Relating to Department of Health

Aloha Chair Yamane and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a membership organization of people age fifty and over, with over 140,000 members in Hawai'i. **AARP supports the intent of H.B 1892** which requires Department of Health (DOH) to provide free wireless broadband internet access at their facilities statewide.

The recent pandemic has significantly increased the demand and use of broadband for communication across all sectors, and throughout our communities statewide. Students are engaged in distance learning for their schoolwork, businesses for e-commerce transactions and patients have become more reliant on telehealth to connect with their physicians for medical consultation and monitoring. The heavy demand for broadband access has amplified the weakness in our broadband infrastructure especially in rural communities, and other underserved or unserved areas in the State. AARP supports efforts that will expand digital equity and access to ensure that all individuals and communities have access to information and modern communication technologies.

To assist Department of Health in developing this initiative, we respectfully recommend the following amendments that may provide more structure to this project:

A. Include planning provisions for the Department of Health to:

1. Identify and establish external wi-fi connection for public use at DOH health facilities for both indoor and outdoor access.
2. Research internet service providers that will be able to provide service to those specific sites.
3. Address privacy concerns and compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) as well as physical security for the public users in the DOH parking lot.

4. Explore accommodation for adults/seniors who can't drive, people with disabilities, non-English speaking users, and those who can't afford own devices and need a loaner.
5. Coordinate free tech support service onsite, phone, as well as classes/workshops that assist and teach the public including older adults how to use their devices, set up medical appointments/telehealth visits, and search for health-related information and vital records.
6. Identify feasible DOH location sites, costs to install the broadband infrastructure, connectivity, and equipment, need for digital devices for staff and public use, propose staffing at each DOH site, identify and target potential users for tech support and wi-fi, marketing, and other program incidentals.
7. Develop the tech support program framework; identify staffing needs, partners and providers that can assist in successfully implementing the program.
8. Ensure that there is sufficient funding to hire/contract a project planner or team to conduct the research, feasibility and planning to develop this broadband project for the Dept of Health, as well as funding for the program's initial startup and implementation.

Having a well-developed plan will better position the Department of Health to be successful in providing this important broadband service in the community and can serve as best practice for other state agencies to replicate. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on **H. B 1892**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keali'i S. López". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "K".

Keali'i S. López
State Director