

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on  
Higher Education

February 11, 2021

By

Jerris R. Hedges, MD

HB 1024 – RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Chair Kim, Vice-Chair Kidani and members of the committee:

My name is Jerris Hedges and I serve as the dean of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

I am writing in opposition to SB 1024 which seeks to establish a cannabinoid medicine program within the University of Hawai`i to be administered by JABSOM.

JABSOM already employs faculty with expertise in substance use, which includes marijuana, THC and cannabinoids. JABSOM has both an Addiction Psychiatry fellowship and a separate fellowship in Addiction Medicine. JABSOM has an existing curriculum throughout all four years of medical school, and its residency and fellowship programs, which addresses substance use, chronic pain management, management of side effects of chemotherapy, and medical cannabis. The curricular content includes cannabis and cannabinoid products. Continuing education offerings by JABSOM and other accredited continuing education providers in Hawai`i have been provided and will be modified as new evidence or policies which impact patient care in Hawai`i are forthcoming.

In light of the curriculum and other faculty activities already in existence, which provide education and training in cannabinoids, we believe that creating another separate course of study in cannabinoid medicine would duplicate JABSOM's current educational efforts in the field. Given ongoing financial and operational challenges during the pandemic, implementation of the current bill would needlessly consume additional resources. For these reasons, I respectfully oppose SB 1024.

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



**Akamai Cannabis Clinic**  
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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 1024  
RELATING TO EDUCATION

By  
Clifton Otto, MD

Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 11, 2021; 3:05 PM  
State Capitol, Room 229, Videoconference

**Strong Support**

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

[SB1024](#) would create a Cannabinoid Medicine Program within the University of Hawaii System (UH) to be administered by the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

With nearly 30K registered medical cannabis patients and a state-regulated Medical Cannabis Program that is over twenty years old, a Cannabinoid Medicine Program at JABSOM is long overdue.

UH and JABSOM leadership need not fear having a Cannabinoid Medicine Program under their administration. Any research that the Dean believes may jeopardize federal funding because of the current conflict with the federal regulation of marijuana can still be limited under the discretionary provisions provided by the Medical Cannabis Testing and Research Program [statute](#).

In addition, nothing in this bill diminishes the Dean's authority over the activities of JABSOM programs, to include a new Cannabinoid Medicine Program. The Dean could allow this program to provide much needed cannabis medical expertise to the medical school, healthcare professionals in the community, and the general public, as well as the Office of Medical Cannabis Control and Regulation.

However, if JABSOM feels that the current conflict with the federal regulation of marijuana would prevent implementation of a Cannabinoid Medicine Program, then the following amendment to this bill should be considered:

SECTION 2b. Hawaii Revised Statutes, part IX. Medical Use of Cannabis, Chapter 329, is amended by adding the section to read as follows:

**“§329-132 State Authorization.**

The department of health shall submit to the administrator of the United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, Diversion Control Division:

(1) An application for immediate relief pursuant to title 21 Code of Federal Regulations section 1307.03 to the Office of Diversion Control. This application shall state that part IX of chapter 329, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and chapter 329D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, create an exemption from federal drug laws and do not create any positive conflict pursuant to title 21 United States Code Annotated section 903; and that the federal scheduling of marijuana does not apply to the state authorized use of cannabis. The application shall also include a proposed rule containing the following: "The listing of marijuana as a controlled substance does not apply to the state authorized use of marijuana, and persons using marijuana in compliance with state law are exempt from registration"; and

(2) A petition for permanent relief pursuant to title 21 Code of Federal Regulations section 1308.43. This petition shall state that part IX of chapter 329, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and

chapter 329D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, create an exemption from federal drug laws and do not create any positive conflict pursuant to title 21 United States Code Annotated section 903; and that the federal scheduling of marijuana does not apply to the state authorized use of cannabis. The petition shall also include a proposed rule containing the following:

"The listing of marijuana as a controlled substance does not apply to the state authorized use of marijuana, and persons using marijuana in compliance with state law are exempt from registration."

Aloha.

To: Senate Committee on Higher Education  
From: Wendy Gibson-Viviani RN/BSN  
RE: **SB1024** – in **Support**  
Hearing: Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 3:05 P.M.  
Conference Room 229

Aloha Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT OF SB1024** to establish a cannabinoid medicine program and pursue research and education related to the authorized use of cannabis for medical purposes. I believe it is long overdue and greatly needed. More cannabis research is ALWAYS needed--in addition to the more than 30,000 studies already done.

I am Wendy Gibson-Viviani, an active member of the American Cannabis Nurses Association and Cannabis Nurses Network, a Cannabis Nurse Educator and a medical cannabis patient advocate. I have worked as a healthcare professional in Hawaii for 28 years.

I was a member of the ACT 230 Medical Cannabis Oversight Working Group: Sub-Committee on Education in 2016-2017. The ACT 230 Working Group identified a great need for medical cannabis education, especially amongst healthcare professionals. We recommended that the Universities in the State of Hawaii should consider including the study of cannabis and cannabinoids in the curriculum of medical, nursing and pharmacy programs. We also recommended establishing and supporting (with funding), a Coalition for Medicinal Cannabis Research and Education.

In ACT 230, to the extent permitted by federal and state law . . .and certification by the DOH:

- The University of Hawaii may conduct research on the efficacy of medical marijuana use, its health outcomes and social impacts, and related safety issues
- The University of Hawaii may establish medical marijuana testing and research programs that qualify as commercial enterprises of the university under section 304A-113 that provide services to state-approved medical marijuana dispensaries, including assessment of marijuana plant cannabinoid content and concentration, purity of manufactured marijuana products, or additional tested requested by the department of health.
- It allows UH to charge and collect fees and establish new commercial enterprises.
- It does not require the university to engage in any activity that might jeopardize its eligibility to receive any form of state or federal assistance or benefit. [L 2016, c 230, §21; am L 2017, c 170, §2].

- The full text can be found in HRS 304A-1865:  
[https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol05\\_Ch0261-0319/HRS0304A/HRS\\_0304A-1865.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol05_Ch0261-0319/HRS0304A/HRS_0304A-1865.htm)

As noted in SB862 (In 1999), the legislature found that “allowing the medical use of marijuana could **promote Hawaii** as being an **international center for medical treatment and research**”. I share that vision.

**SB1024** could help fill many gaps in knowledge about the safety and efficacy of the many types of cannabinoid medicines. And, research done in Hawai'i could prove to be helpful to millions of medical cannabis patients nationwide, not just the 30,000 patients in Hawaii.

Research and education could help provide valuable **information to healthcare professionals and patients** regarding titrating doses, selecting products and avoiding the unwanted side effects. Research and education could also help provide better guidelines for patient care in multiple healthcare settings, such as hospitals where patients are routinely deprived of their medicines while in-house.

SB1024 could help our dispensaries and patients with product testing. It could help **lighten the load on the Department of Health** by providing more labs for testing, a standardization of analytical testing methods and oversight of compliance.

A program based at UH/JABSOM would be an ideal place to start. In November of 2017, JABSOM, held its first-ever, Continuing Medical Education (CME) session on Medical Cannabis. Thousands of studies have been done since then and need to be included in current cannabis education in Hawai'i. As the use of medical cannabis gains ever more credibility and accrues more evidence worldwide, it is vital that JABSOM continues and steps up a program to educate their constituencies with the latest information and research on this cutting-edge medicine.

One **essential part of SB1024** is the inclusion of a physician who is a certified cannabinoid medicine specialist. Please consider these ideas when making your decisions about passing SB1024.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my ideas,

Wendy Gibson-Viviani RN/BSN

Cannabis Nurse Educator

Member: American Cannabis Nurses Association and Cannabis Nurses Network

[Wendygibson9@gmail.com](mailto:Wendygibson9@gmail.com)

**SB-1024**

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 12:04:06 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/11/2021 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha HRE Committee Chairs,

I am writing in SUPPORT OF SB1024 to establish a cannabinoid

medicine program and pursue research and education related to the authorized use of

cannabis for medical purposes. I believe it is long overdue and greatly needed. More cannabis

research is ALWAYS needed--in addition to the more than 30,000 studies already done.

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)