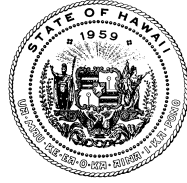


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, MD
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB2597
RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.**

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOLE, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 9, 2022

Room Number: Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** General fund appropriation of \$500,000.
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the Hawaii State Loan
- 3 Repayment Program given its track record of success. Adequate resources to assure the
- 4 program's continuity is in the best interest of Hawaii's communities.
- 5 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Health and
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

By

Jerris Hedges, MD, Dean and
Kelley Withy, MD, Professor, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health,
Hawai'i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Director

John A. Burns School of Medicine

and

Michael Bruno, PhD

Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2597 – RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Chairs Keohokalole and Kim, Vice Chairs Baker and Kidani, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. The John A. Burns school of medicine (JABSOM) **supports** HB 2597 which seeks funding for the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment Program administered by JABSOM, provided that its passage does not replace, or impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Since September 2012, the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment program which is administered by JABSOM has been operating successfully, and has supported 64 recipients in exchange for work commitments in underserved geographic practice areas in Hawai'i. Of the loan repayment participants, 83% have remained in Hawai'i to practice, and 70% have remained at the site where they performed their service. Currently, there are 25 active providers in the program with another 7 waiting for funding.

The Hawai'i State Loan Repayment program leverages public funds and private donations to access matching federal funds through the State Loan Repayment Program of the National Health Service Corps of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Currently, health care professionals who have benefited from the loan repayment program serve on all islands and in the communities of Waimea, Kihei, Wai'anae, Hilo, and Wailuku; at health clinics in Kalihi-Pālama and Kōkua Kalihi Valley; and in public institutional settings at the federal detention center in Honolulu, the Hālawā correctional facility and the Maui County correctional center. Health care professionals who are eligible to participate in the program include physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists, social workers, and many others.

Many Hawai'i residents are unable to obtain timely and appropriate health care due to shortages of primary and behavioral health care professionals in the State. These shortages not only threaten individual health, but also cumulatively affect the State's health care costs. Areas of Hawai'i that have been designated by the federal government as medically underserved have been most significantly affected by shortages of primary and behavioral health care professionals, such as physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and psychologists. Social workers, marriage and family therapists, and nurses are also urgently needed in these areas.

In many cases, the increasingly high cost of education for health care professionals binds graduates to a career path designed to repay often exorbitant student loans. These career paths most frequently lead to professional practice in highly specialized practice in urban areas rather than in general practice on the neighbor islands or in underserved areas of O'ahu where the need is greatest. Furthermore, those states with robust primary health care systems have lower costs and improved patient outcomes. Recognizing this correlation, many states have made the policy decision to dedicate public funds to loan repayment programs to help develop a strong primary health care workforce for underserved areas.

An investment of State matching funds would enable JABSOM to draw as much federal money as possible and allow the program to provide loan repayment to more health care professionals in our ongoing efforts to alleviate the health care professional shortages in Hawai'i.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



February 9, 2022 at 1:00 pm
Via Videoconference

Senate Committee on Health

To: Chair Jarrett Keohokalole
Vice Chair Rosalyn H. Baker

Senate Committee on Higher Education

To: Chair Donna Mercado Kim
Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy
Associate Vice President, Government Affairs
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: Testimony in Support
SB 2597, Relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the health care continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 20,000 people statewide.

We would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to **support** this measure, which would provide funding for loan repayment at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) to support various healthcare professionals who practice in underserved areas. Investing in our healthcare workforce is critical because of the shortage of professionals in several categories in Hawaii, including physicians and other critical allied professionals. This funding will help to alleviate that shortage by creating opportunities directly in the state to train our healthcare workforce. By training professionals in-state, we are more likely to keep them and their skills here, serving patients in Hawaii.

We are supportive of the legislature's efforts to direct funding towards effective and important programs that will help to ensure that residents have access to needed care.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony in support of this measure and funding.

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

Before:
Senate Committee on Health
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Higher Education
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice chair

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

Re: SB 2597, Relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals

Chair Keohokalole, Chair Kim, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2597, which appropriate funds to the department of health to fund the Hawaii state loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns school of medicine of the University of Hawaii at Manoa to provide loan repayment for certain healthcare providers who agree to work in a federally-designated health professional shortage area.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS SB 2597.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i is Hawai'i's largest integrated health system that provides care and coverage for approximately 265,000 members. Each day, more than 4,400 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group physicians and providers come to work at Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i to care for our members at our 20 medical facilities, including Moanalua Medical Center, providing high-quality care for our members and delivering on our commitment to improve the health of the 1.4 million people living in the communities we serve.

Our rural areas continue to be the most underserved populations in Hawaii. Therefore, we **recommend inclusion of areas served by rural health clinics as part of underserved geographic areas.** Hawai'i has a shortage of about 1,000 doctors, and almost all other types of primary care and behavioral healthcare workers. In 2020, approximately 110 physicians were found to have retired, 120 decreased their work hours, and 140 physicians left the state, further contributing to the physician shortage. Without these doctors and other healthcare providers, the people of Hawai'i do not have access to the healthcare they need. The shortage is most acute for those on neighbor islands and underserved areas served by rural health centers. The funding from

this loan repayment program, will create opportunities directly in the state to recruit and retain our physician workforce.

We ask the committees to PASS SB 2597. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Honorable Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Member, Senate Committee on Higher Education

From: Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 9, 2022

Re: Support for SB 2597: Relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals

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 SB 2597, which appropriates funds for the Hawaii state loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine; provided that the funds are matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by a private or another public source.

We support efforts to develop our healthcare workforce given the projected shortage in our state. The 2022 Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment estimated the current shortage for physicians to be over 700. Queen's supports our local medical students and graduates who would like to live and work in Hawai'i through internship and residency programs. In FY 2019 Queen's contributed approximately \$16.4 million in education and training to support current and future health care professionals in the community. The burden of student loans and Hawai'i's high cost of living can act as barrier to attracting and retaining healthcare professionals. This loan repayment program has a record of success in keeping quality health care professionals in our state and we wholeheartedly support funding this program moving forward.

Thank you for allowing us to provide this testimony in support of SB 2597.

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.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**

P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

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

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 SENATE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND HIGHER EDUCATION
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2597

**February 9, 2022
1:00 p.m.
Room 225 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2597.

S.B. No. 2597 appropriates \$500,000 in general funds in FY 23 to the Department of Health for the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment Program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine. The appropriated funds would be subject to a dollar-for-dollar match from a private or another public source.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, 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.



February 9, 2022

To: The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair,
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair,
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair and
Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education

Date: Wednesday, February 9, 2022
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

From: Anne Perreira-Eustaquio, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: S.B. No. 2597 RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

SB2597 proposes to appropriate funds subject to a matching funds requirement for Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine of the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

DLIR supports this measure provided it does not conflict with the priorities identified in the Governor's Executive Budget request.

II. CURRENT LAW

N/A.

III. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL

Reducing the tremendous burden of student debt will encourage more health professionals to continue working in underserved areas and thereby help reduce the pressing need for healthcare workers in those areas.

For this reason, the Department supports this bill as an effective strategy to address shortages in the healthcare workforce in underserved areas, provided sufficient funds are appropriated and its passage does not replace or adversely affect priorities identified in the Governor's Executive Budget request.

SB-2597

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 1:32:12 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/9/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Elena Cabatu	Testifying for East Hawaii Region of Hawaii Health Systems Corporation	Support	No

Comments:

The East Hawaii Region of Hawaii Health System Corporation, which consists of Hilo Medical Center, Hale Ho`ola Hamakua in Honoka`a, Ka`u Hospital, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home, and the East Hawaii Health Clinics, is in **strong support of** SB2597 that appropriates funds for the Hawaii state loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns school of medicine, subject to a matching funds requirement.



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

1360 S. Beretania Street, Suite 200, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

Phone (808) 536-7702 Fax (808) 528-2376

www.hawaiimedicalassociation.org

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Date: February 9, 2022

From: Hawaii Medical Association

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD, Chair, HMA Legislative Committee

**Re: SB 2597 Hawaii State Loan Repayment Program; Health Care Professionals;
John A. Burns School of Medicine; Appropriation
Position: Support**

Currently Hawaii has 3,293 physicians providing care in our state, and there is a statewide shortage of 732 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs), as reported in the 2022 UH Annual Report on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project ¹. Since 2012, support from the Hawaii State Legislature in partnership with JABSOM, HMSA and Queens Medical Center through the State Loan Repayment Program has helped to recruit physicians to Hawaii practice. HMA is grateful for the continued support of this financial assistance program, particularly for needed recruitment to counties like Hawaii and Maui, where provider shortages are the worst at 40%.

It remains an important priority for Hawaii physicians to sustain quality healthcare in Hawaii and maintain the delivery of vital services to our underserved areas, particularly on the neighbor islands. The Loan Repayment Program must be sustained to support young physician trainees and improve our Hawaii physician workforce that remains critically low.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify in support of this measure.

continued

HMA OFFICERS

President – Angela Pratt, MD President-Elect – Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD
Immediate Past President – Michael Champion, MD Treasurer – Nadine Tenn Salle, MD
Secretary – Thomas Kosasa, MD Executive Director – Marc Alexander



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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www.hawaiimedicalassociation.org

REFERENCES

Withy K et al . UH System Annual Report to the 2022 Legislature on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project.

Associated Press. Shortage of Hawaii Doctors Worsens During COVID-19 Pandemic.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/hawaii/articles/2021-01-06/shortage-of-hawaii-doctorsworsens-during-covid-19-pandemic>

Hiraishi K. "Hawai'i Doctor Shortage Worsens Under Pandemic." Hawaii Public Radio. Jan 5, 2021. <https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/post/hawai-i-doctor-shortage-worsens-underpandemic>

HMA OFFICERS

President – Angela Pratt, MD President-Elect – Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD
Immediate Past President – Michael Champion, MD Treasurer – Nadine Tenn Salle, MD
Secretary – Thomas Kosasa, MD Executive Director – Marc Alexander

Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 1:00 PM
Via Video Conference

Senate Committee on Health

To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Higher Education

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: SB 2597 – Testimony In Support
Relating to Loan Repayment For Health Care Professionals**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

I am writing in SUPPORT of SB 2597 which appropriates funds for the Hawaii State Loan Repayment program administered by the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

The continuation of the Hawaii State Loan Repayment program that supports payments of educational debt for primary care and behavioral health physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, psychologists, social workers, licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists and certified nurse midwives who work for non-profit organizations in Health Professions Shortage Areas of Hawaii plays a vital role in addressing the shortage of healthcare professionals in the state. Hawaii has a shortage of almost 750 doctors, and almost all other types of primary care and behavioral healthcare workers. Without these healthcare providers, the people of Hawaii do not have access to the healthcare they need. The shortage is most acute for those on the neighbor islands and those with the least resources. One of the fastest and least expensive methods for recruiting providers is through loan repayment.

JABSOM has successfully administered the program which has helped 64 healthcare providers since the program began in 2012. To date, nearly 2/3 of those providers continue to work in underserved communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony to the Senate Joint Committee on Health and Higher Education
Wednesday, February 9, 2022; 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2597, RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.

Chair Keohokalole, Chair Kim, and Members of the Joint 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** Senate Bill No. 2597, RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (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 appropriate \$500,000 in general funds for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the Hawaii State Loan Repayment Program so long as no funds be released unless matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by funds from a private or another public source.

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.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2597
Wednesday, February 9, 2022; 1:00 p.m.
Page 2

This bill would provide the resources to continue a financial incentive that enhances the quality and stock of Hawaii's future healthcare workforce. Accordingly we commend this effort and wish to participate in any and all discussions concerning workforce development.

For this reason, the HPCA supports 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.

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF HAWAII PSYCHIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

To: Chair Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice-Chair Rosalyn Baker
Chair Donna Kim, Vice-Chair Michelle Kidani
Members of the Committee on Health and Committee on Higher Education

From: Dr. Marva Lawson, Legislative Committee Co-Chair
Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association

Time: 1:00 p.m., February 9, 2022

Re: SB 2597, RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Position: **SUPPORT**

On behalf of the Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association (HPMA) we are writing in support of SB 2597, Relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals. This bill appropriates funds for the Hawaii state loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns school of medicine, subject to a matching funds requirement. We support the legislature's efforts to address a significant shortage of primary and behavioral health care professionals in the State which not only threaten individual health, but the entire State's health care system.

According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), those with mental health and substance use disorders often delay care due to an inability to access psychiatrists. A persistent shortage of psychiatrists contributes to the lack of access across the country. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration, while the supply of adult psychiatrists is expected to decrease 20% by 2030, the demand for their services is expected to increase by 3%, leaving a shortage of over 12,000 fully-trained psychiatrists. In addition to the current and projected physician workforce shortage, the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency has highlighted the need for robust investments to address the nation's critical psychiatric workforce shortage. As noted in this bill, the need for Hawai'i primary and behavioral health care professionals is significant. This bill is an important step toward addressing the health care professional gap.

HPMA is a professional, non-profit corporation serving psychiatrists in Hawai'i. It is organized for the purpose of supporting professionalism in the practice of psychiatry and promoting top quality mental health care. HPMA fulfills a dual role, serving as a state association which focuses on local issues and as a district branch of the APA linking HPMA members with developments in mental health care taking place regionally and nationally.

We thank the Committees for considering this legislation and of our testimony, we are available to provide additional information or answer any questions the committee may have.

Established in 1998, the Hawai'i State Rural Health Association (HSRHA) is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization dedicated to addressing rural health needs across our island state.

~ Working Together To Promote Healthy Rural Communities ~

Executive Board:

Lisa Rantz, Hawai'i
Judy Mikami, Moloka'i
Valerie Janikowski, Lana'i
Cristin Gallagher, Hawai'i

Board At Large:

Kimberly Kobayashi, Hawai'i
Jessie Marques, Ka'u
Kanani Kaye, Kaua'i
Bridget Collins, Kaua'i
Ray Ho, Kaua'i
Laura Reichhardt, O'ahu
Puanani Hee, Kaua'i
Gregg Kishaba, O'ahu
Kelley Withy, O'ahu

Priorities:

Rural Provider Shortages
Workforce Development
Opioid and Substance Abuse
Primary Prevention
Health Equity

Hawaii State Rural Health Association

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Instagram @hawaiiruralhealth
Twitter @HawaiiRural
Twitter @Hawaii_ECHO



February 09, 2022, 1:00 P.M.

Via Video Conference

Senate Committees on Health and Higher Education

To: Senators Keohokalole and Kim, Chairs
Senators Baker and Kidani, Vice Chairs

From: Lisa Rantz
President, Hawaii State Rural Health Association

Re: **Testimony in Support of SB 2597
Relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals**

The Hawaii State Rural Health Association (HSRHA) respectfully submits written testimony in strong support of S.B. 2597.

As a non-profit rural health association, our mission is to advocate for rural health issues and promote communication, education and research of issues related to rural health. Our vision is that we are the collaborative health leader for rural communities in Hawai'i.

This measure will fund out of the general revenues, \$500,000 for FY 23 to the Hawaii state loan repayment program which is administered by the John A. Burns school of medicine, and that these funds require a 1:1 match in order to be expended.

The rural areas of Hawaii have the gravest physician shortages in our state. We also know that the cost of student loans, coupled with the cost of living in Hawaii, feel insurmountable to rural providers. This program recognizes the exceptional work of eligible health care providers, incentivizes them to stay in rural areas in exchange for loan repayment support, and doubles the contribution of the state by requiring matching funds. We also know, from the years this program has successfully been implemented, that these providers become passionate and committed to the communities for which they serve. This program is exceptional.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of the intent and funding of this measure.

SB-2597

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 12:56:49 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/9/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Lynn Murakami-Akatsuka	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Senate Committee on Higher Education,

I storngly support the passage of SB 2597 for our health care professionals to acquire assistance on their loan repayments so that they will continue to remain in the state of Hawaii and continue to provide their skills and expertise to all residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony on SB 2597.

SB-2597

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 6:42:37 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/9/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Colleen Inouye	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Senator Keohokalole, Chair, and the Committee on Health and Senator Mercado Kim, Chair, and the Committee on Higher Education,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of SB2597 which relates to loan repayment for health care professionals. We all know that there are not enough health care professionals to take care of our communities in Hawaii, especially on Maui where I am an OB/Gyn. As a mentor to pre-medical students and their parents, I often hear the comment that the parents are not encouraging their children to become physicians due to the high costs. When I tell them there are programs such as loan repayment, you can see the relief in both the parents and students' faces. Please do not stop this program. It is vital to decrease the economic and financial inequities that occur with many students and families.

Please support SB2597 and thank you for your kind consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Colleen F Inouye MD MMM MS-PopH FACHE FAAPL FACOG

Paige Sumida
1553 Leilehua St.
Hilo, HI 96720



To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Paige Sumida, and I am currently working as a registered nurse at Hilo Medical Center as well as pursuing a degree as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. I am writing in support of the Bill SB 2597, which would appropriate funds for the Hawaii state loan repayment program. By providing a loan repayment program that targets physicians, nurse practitioners, social workers, registered nurses, and therapists, retaining such professionals within communities, especially rural communities, will be possible. It is well known that communities with strong primary care, health prevention, and chronic care management have improved health outcomes. The rural and underserved populations in the State of Hawaii deserve quality care to ensure decreased health complications and improved quality of life. By providing more opportunities for local professionals to remain within their beloved communities and assisting with loan repayment, the quality of care can be enhanced. Too often local healthcare providers want to remain in Hawaii but are unable to do so because of competing salaries or opportunities elsewhere. This financial assistance would be beneficial for vulnerable populations and dedicated healthcare providers alike. I am writing in as a registered nurse, working with rural and underserved populations here on the Big Island. Many of our local primary care providers are retiring or closing their practices, leaving many without primary care providers and thus lack healthcare maintenance. As I pursue my Doctor of Nursing practice at UH Hilo, I continue to work in primary care clinics where vulnerable and rural populations frequent. I see firsthand how important primary care is in preventing hospitalizations or the overuse of the emergency departments. It is through high quality primary care where a rapport between providers and patients can be built and community services can be optimized, that has the biggest impact on one's overall health. There is a need for physicians, community therapists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, psychologists, and registered nurses – especially within rural communities. I greatly support Bill SB 2597, which will have a positive impact on healthcare providers, community members, and overall population health.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Paige Sumida, RN, BSN, CMS-bc