



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

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

From: Colette Masunaga, Director, Government Relations & External Affairs, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 8, 2021

Re: Comments on SB971: Relating to Emergency Powers

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 comments with concerns on SB971, relating to emergency powers. Specifically, we would appreciate clarification on Section 1, (a) (1) of the bill providing the Governor power to take over and operate public and private medical facilities during a declared state or local emergency. We have concerns regarding the exercising of such powers, circumstances in which they would be utilized, and the duration. During an emergency, Queen's would activate our Hospital Incident Command System protocols and stand-up operations. Our Hospital Incident Command System allows Queen's to streamline emergency management response and recovery capabilities for both unplanned and planned events. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have worked closely with federal, state and local government to ensure medical services were not interrupted and community confidence in our healthcare system remained strong and trusted.

Queen's supports Section 1(a) (2) of the bill which allows hospitals to continue elective surgeries at the hospitals discretion. We believe our Queen's leadership team guided by medically informed policies and procedures are appropriate for ensuring our facility operates at the most effective and safe level during a state or local emergency.

Thank you for allowing us to provide comments on SB971.

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.



February 8, 2021 at 1:00 pm
Via Videoconference

Senate Committee on Health

To: Chair Jarrett Keohokalole
Vice Chair Rosalyn H. Baker

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy
Director of Government Affairs
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: **Submitting Comments**
SB 971, Relating to Emergency Powers

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 healthcare 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **comments** on this measure. First, our members have concerns regarding section (a)(1) of this measure, which would allow the governor to take over and operate both public and private facilities in an emergency. This proposal raises concerns among our members, especially in understanding when this type of power would be exercised, under what circumstances, and what issue is being resolved. Hospitals in the state have worked tirelessly to serve the people of Hawaii through this unprecedented time and have the capability to continue providing essential services during any emergency. Our hospitals prepared for the surge in early 2020 and have maintained a commitment to ensuring that they are following best practices, ever-changing regulations, sourcing PPE, and meeting a high standard of care. These complex decisions are not made lightly and are heavily informed by guidance from many levels of government.

Our members do appreciate section (a)(2) of this measure, which allows a hospital discretion regarding the suspension of elective surgeries to address a facility's capacity. This is a key flexibility for hospitals in any emergency, especially a health-related emergency. We would note that the ability to respond to a surging crisis—or the ability to continue to provide needed care that might not be emergency but that is needed to avoid worse health outcomes—would be extremely helpful in future emergencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Thursday, February 8, 2021 at 1:00 PM
Via Video Conference

Senate Committee on Health

To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Roz Baker, Vice-Chair

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

Re: **Comments**
SB Relating to Emergency Powers

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 write to provide **comments** on SB 971 which authorizes the Governor to ensure the continued operation of medical facilities during times of health or pandemic emergencies and; authorizes hospitals to suspend elective surgeries in order to address bed capacity during the period of emergency.

First, we appreciate the recognition of hospital discretion to determine the suspension of elective surgeries to address operational limits of the facility's bed capacity under Section (a) (2). Successful management and decision making involving the utilization of hospital resources and bed capacity during a pandemic is complex, fluid and requires real time clinically informed guidance. Based on our current pandemic experience, O'ahu and Kaua'i hospitals successfully managed bed capacity through a coordinated effort with the Healthcare Association of Hawai'i members and government partners.

However we do have questions with the power provided to the Governor under section (a) (1) of this measure, which would allow the Governor to take over and operate private facilities in an emergency. We are unclear as to how that power would be exercised and how that power would be implemented and operationalized within a private non-profit health care setting.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.