
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that access to health
2 care is often complicated for rural residents. Many of the
3 State's specialty practices are located in the urban portions of
4 Oahu, and many medical specialists are unwilling to practice in
5 underserved rural areas of the State. This inherent barrier to
6 care underscores the severe need for comprehensive health care
7 coordination in rural areas.

8 The legislature further finds that the department of
9 health's office of primary care and rural health, in partnership
10 with community organizations such as Community First, conducted
11 a community health needs assessment for Hawaii island titled
12 "Access to Care -- Health for Our Communities". The assessment
13 analyzed 3,287 resident survey responses and identified delays
14 in health care delivery as residents' greatest obstacle to care.
15 Nearly six in ten respondents reported delays, often due to the
16 limited availability of specialists.

17 The legislature further finds that larger societal
18 concerns, including affordable housing, the State's high cost of



1 living, transportation difficulties, and child care challenges
2 are barriers to care that disproportionately affect residents of
3 underserved rural areas. To ensure health equity, the State
4 must look beyond the symptoms of social determinants of health
5 to address the root causes of negative health outcomes that
6 disproportionately affect rural communities, low-income
7 communities, communities of color, and sexual and gender
8 minorities.

9 The legislature further finds that coordinated efforts at
10 all levels are necessary to examine social determinants that
11 impact a community's access to health care resources and to
12 improve public health. The establishment of a strong health
13 network in underserved areas will allow these areas to
14 efficiently develop health care plans that encompass
15 preventative and primary health care, specialty care, and urgent
16 and emergency care. Comprehensive plans to align health care
17 priorities with existing resources will foster collaboration
18 between providers, avoid service duplication, and streamline
19 care delivery for the State's most vulnerable residents.

20 The purpose of this Act is to require the office of primary
21 care and rural health to oversee and support community efforts



1 to collaboratively address the health and wellness needs of the
2 State's most underserved rural residents and facilitate
3 discussions between key community health and social service
4 organizations to develop plans to address community needs
5 highlighted by the Access to Care needs assessment.

6 SECTION 2. (a) The office of primary care and rural
7 health shall oversee and support community efforts to
8 collaboratively address the health and wellness needs of the
9 State's most underserved rural residents and facilitate
10 discussions between key community health and social service
11 organizations to develop plans that align with appropriate
12 providers' goals and objectives.

13 (b) The office of primary care and rural health shall
14 include a one-time summary of community plans addressing the
15 Access to Care needs assessment with the report that is to be
16 submitted to the legislature prior to the regular session of
17 2024, pursuant to section 321-1.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

18 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



Report Title:

Office of Primary Care and Rural Health; Rural Residents; Family Health Services Division; Department of Health; Report

Description:

Requires the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health to oversee and support community efforts to collaboratively address the health and wellness needs of the State's most underserved rural residents to develop plans that align with appropriate providers' goals and objectives. Requires the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health to include a one-time summary of community plans with the report that is to be submitted to the Legislature prior to the Regular Session of 2024. (CD1)

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