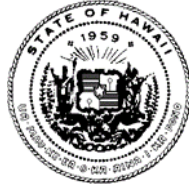


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWÉ KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 22, 2023

TO: The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HCR 203/ HR 207 - REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.**

Hearing: March 23, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) offers comments.

PURPOSE: This resolution requests that DHS Med-QUEST Division (MQD) take steps necessary to ensure that adequate provider rates are established for applied behavioral analysis services (ABA); to assess current reimbursement rates for ABA; and to submit a report of its findings and recommendations on appropriate reimbursement rate increases, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2024.

MQD can assess reimbursement rates for ABA services and submit a report on its findings to the Legislature no later than twenty days before the convening of the Regular Session of 2024. As background, when the Medicaid reimbursement rates were developed for ABA, MQD analyzed other payers of Tri-Care and available commercial rates and matched them. Currently, the primary utilized service code is differentiated by the provider level, e.g., Licensed and Board Certified Behavioral Analyst, Board Certified Assistant Behavioral Analyst,

or Registered Behavioral Technician. This ABA rate paid by MQD continues to be equivalent to Tri-Care for two of the three providers. Additionally, a brief review of several other states' Medicaid fee schedules for ABA showed that Hawaii rates tend to be higher than most and about the same as others. A more comprehensive analysis can be conducted as it is well understood that all health care providers face challenges, including those providing ABA services, particularly on the neighbor islands.

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

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 7:27:50 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Applied Behavior Analysis is a very specialized skill performed by highly trained professionals. It is the most effective way to assist people on the autism spectrum. In Hawaii there is currently a shortage of such professionals. Providing appropriate compensation would certainly be one way to attempt to effectively address this.



3/21/23

Re: HCR 203/HR 207- REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.

I support bills HCR 203 & HR 207 which aim to ensure that Med Quest provider rates are raised for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Services. As a service provider for ABA, I have been considering changing my profession as my company is unable to reimburse me enough for me to make a living with prices rising everywhere. In order to continue to provide good care for our clients, the rates need to be raised.

Aloha,
Hannah Greenwood, BCBA, LBA

Written Testimony

House Committee on Human Services

Thursday, March 23, 2023 / 9:00 am
Conference Room 329, Hawai'i State Capitol

By

Christine K. Walton, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA
President, Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc.

HCR 203/HR 207 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and members of the committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HCR203/HR 207** which appropriates funding for Med-Quest division for non-covered or under-covered behavioral health services for med-Quest beneficiaries.

I am the President of Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc., a Kaka'ako-based clinic that has been serving people with autism for over 15 years. At our clinic, we provide applied behavior analysis (ABA), which is a medically necessary, empirically validated treatment approach for children diagnosed with autism and other related disorders. Since the passing of Luke's Law in 2015, which requires health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism, there has been no change to the Medicaid fee schedule for ABA.

The operational costs of running a clinic have increased significantly since 2015. Specifically, costs related to rent, health insurance for employees, the IRS standard mileage reimbursement rate for employees who commute to the families' homes or other community sites, have all increased.

As a direct result of no increases to the Medicaid fee schedule for ABA, we have been struggling with hiring. Interviewees request competitive wages, comparable to school-based services which reimburse at a higher rate. We not only struggle with recruiting the best providers, but also in retaining our most qualified providers, where several have relocated to the mainland where the cost of living is lower and fee schedules are higher. We are simply not able to serve clients due to the challenges of recruiting and retaining providers, resulting in a current wait list for services of approximately 3 years. While the passage of Luke's Law was a monumental advancement in securing services for the people of Hawai'i, it is not

impactful if those it was meant to ensure services for cannot find providers.

In conclusion, in order to provide medically necessary services, funding for Med-Quest division for non-covered or under-covered behavioral health services for Med-Quest beneficiaries must be increased.



3/21/23

Re: HCR 203/HR 207- REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.

I support bills HCR 203 & HR 207 which aim to ensure that Med Quest provider rates are raised for Applied Behavior Analysis Services.

The bills HCR 203 and HR 207 will allow the clinic I work for to increase my wage so that I can keep working as an RBT (Registered Behavioral Technician). I love my job but it is not a livable wage. There is much to do as an RBT. I spend more hours working than I am being paid to work. Between preparing and cleaning up after the clients, creating materials, inputting data and writing notes to insurance, if I have a child with challenging behavior that I must keep a close eye on, I am not able to complete everything I need to complete within the billing hours. Working in this field can be emotionally and physically taxing but nevertheless, our work is a necessity for our community as a whole.

Increasing wages for RBT's on the island would help RBT's continue doing their job without having to work a second job and undoubtedly bring more RBT's into the field which would increase the amount of families able to get the behavioral services they need. I urge you to support the bills HCR 203 and HR 207 to help families with children with autism get the quality services they need and help those who work in the applied behavior analysis services get the wage they need to survive. Passing the bills HCR 203 and HR 207 will allow positive change in our communities for generations to come.

Aloha,
Valerie Eshelman

Valerie Eshelman

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 9:30:53 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Palumbo	Pakolea Support Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a cofounder of a non profit ABA organization, Pākōlea Support Services on Kauai. Over half of our clients have Med-Quest insurance. We are a small clinical based company providing medically necessary services to special needs children. In order to provide the best quality care, retain staff, and act in the best interest of our clients we must have higher provider rates from insurance companies. I highly support this bill. Please pass this bill. Thank you!



Committee on Human Services

Thursday, March 23, 2023

9:00 a.m.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

SUPPORT HCR 203/HR 207 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Association for Behavior Analysis (HABA) we thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HCR 203/ HR 207 which requests the department of human services Med-QUEST division take steps necessary to ensure that adequate provider rates are established for applied behavior analysis services. Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a medically necessary service provided for QUEST beneficiaries under the age of 21 with an autism diagnosis for intensive behavioral therapy (IBT), as mandated by section 1905(r) of the Social Security Act for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT). Autism is classified as a mental health condition, included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) and ABA treatment is the leading behavioral health treatment to ameliorate symptoms associated with this diagnosis and focuses on improving independence and decreasing the level of supports and services needed over the lifetime.

Providers across the state have reported they are not able to meet the needs of QUEST members largely due to difficulty hiring and retaining providers given our high cost of living and the demand for increased wages. Reimbursement rates for QUEST services were set in 2015 and have not increased, creating a hardship for behavioral health providers. This has resulted in significant delays for beneficiaries to access services, as well as not being able to meet the full service needs for children and families in our state.

Below market reimbursement rates—the current reimbursement rate for Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) is below market rate in Hawaii. The American Medical Association (AMA) Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) codes for ABA services are carrier priced, meaning the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\) Medicare Physician Fee Schedule \(MPFS\)](#) does not currently set rates for our services. **This means that other measures that are focused on bringing Medicaid payments to 100% of Medicare (like SB397 SD2), would not include ABA services.** This has resulted in a lack of parity for these intensive behavioral health services in our state.

Other payors in the state, including the Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Health (DOH) Development Disabilities Division (DDD) pay higher rates for these services, with a difference of \$25 per hour for DOE neighbor islands and \$19.45 for DOH-DDD respectively.

Other states, with lower costs of living, have increased their reimbursement rates over the years while the QUEST reimbursement rates have remained the same. A sample of Medicaid state rates for RBTs is included in Table 1.

Funder	RBT rate per hour
Alaska Medicaid	\$76.08
Arizona Medicaid	\$81.48
Nevada Medicaid	\$52.04
Oregon Medicaid	\$55
Hawai'i Medicaid	\$50

Table 1. Medicaid rates in other states for comparison with links to state fee schedules.

Waitlist for services, limited provider network—QUEST beneficiaries are too often faced with a lack of access to services across the state, especially on neighbor islands. Providers report having to maintain waitlists, with families sometimes waiting for years to access their medically necessary behavioral health treatment. Research demonstrates that early intensive intervention and provision of services in line with the [professional standards of care](#) for treatment dosage produce the best gains for individuals and can decrease the costs of care over the lifetime.

Due to low reimbursement rates and the high cost of living here in the islands, there is a shortage of providers, creating provider network adequacy issues. An increase in reimbursement rates would allow providers to pay livable wages and create additional jobs to serve QUEST beneficiaries.

We urge you to pass these resolutions to address the urgent need for parity in payments for applied behavior analysis services for the Medicaid population. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Mahalo,



Kristen Koba-Burd, BCBA, LBA
Legislative Chair
Hawai'i Association for Behavior Analysis



Committee on Human Services

Thursday, March 23, 2023
9:00 a.m.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 329
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

SUPPORT HCR 203/HR 207 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HCR 203/ HR 207**. BAYADA is a not-for-profit health care company committed to serving our community. We provide services across the state, with behavioral health services for QUEST members on Oahu and Maui.

As a behavioral health service provider, we have struggled to meet the needs of children with autism on Med-QUEST due to the increased costs of operating a business without increased rates for our services. QUEST rates for the coverage of intensive behavioral therapy (IBT) for treatment of children under 21 years of age with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), also referred to as applied behavior analysis (ABA), were set in 2015 and have not increased, despite the increased costs of living and increased costs for employers over the last 8 years. Wages have gone up nearly 30% since 2015 in Hawai'i, forcing businesses to shoulder the cost without proportionate rate increases, making it harder to attract candidates and businesses to the field of supporting individuals with autism and their families.

- **Rate differences**—There is a significant disparity in reimbursement between Med-QUEST and other departments within the state who pay a higher rate for Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT), who are an integral part of providing applied behavior analysis (ABA) services. In the table below, publicly available rates in the state are included for comparison. Additionally, these other funding sources allow for more service activities to be billed in comparison to QUEST, resulting in even lower reimbursement.

Funder	RBT rate per hour
TRICARE Hawai'i	\$65.56
DOH-DD Waiver	\$69.48
DOE for neighbor islands	\$75
MedQUEST	\$50

Table 1. Publicly available rates for the same service in Hawai'i.

- **Difficulty hiring and retaining providers**—as an organization, we have struggled to hire and retain providers to meet the needs of QUEST members and other clients in need of services. Often during the recruitment process, providers are asking for wages we are not able to provide due to the current reimbursement rates. We're receiving more applications than ever, and offering more conditional offers, however we're seeing lower position acceptance or transition to hired.



- **Staffing differences:** for comparison, at our Maui location we have been able to hire double the amount of RBTs in the last year to work in the DOE (which has a higher reimbursement rate) than we have been able to hire for our QUEST and insurance-funded services.
- **Waitlist to access services**—currently we must maintain a waitlist for clients to access services because there is more demand than we are able to meet with our current providers. At our Oahu location, 40% of those on our waitlist are QUEST members. At our Maui location, 66% are QUEST members. We closed our Big Island and Kauai insurance-based services, despite ongoing community need, due to losses based on unsustainable rates in 2018. These waitlists are only representative of our organization and are similar across providers.
- **Access to care** — behavioral health services provided during critical early years can decrease the overall costs to the state by preventing children and families needing to remain reliant on state resources for care as they grow. Current waitlists and provider adequacy limitations, prevent access to access to behavioral healthcare that allows children to build needed skills and decrease symptoms that reduce the need for supports from DOE, DHS, and DOH-DDD as they age.
- **Career and Workforce Development**—with improved funding in behavioral health organizations such as ours, providers can increase access to jobs for our local community with livable wages in healthcare careers supporting QUEST members here in Hawai'i. With adequately funded and competitive reimbursement rates we believe we can improve member access to much needed services not only on Maui and Oahu, but to Big Island and Kauai as well.

We respectfully request the Committee pass this resolution in support of increasing rates for what we believe are under-covered behavioral health services.

Thank you,

Josliene Miller
BAYADA Behavioral Health

March 22, 2023

March 20, 2023

Re: HCR203/HR207
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST
DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE
PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS
SERVICES.

I write to you today on behalf of The Council of Autism Service Providers (CASP) in support of HCR203/HR207 .CASP is a non-profit association of organizations committed to providing evidence-based care to individuals with autism. CASP represents the autism provider community to the nation at large, including government, payers, and the general public. We provide information and education and promote standards that enhance quality of care.

Of particular interest to our members is the coverage of evidence-based care in both private health insurance plans as well as through Medicaid.

The State of Hawaii took an important step in 2015, when it passed legislation requiring coverage of medically necessary care for ASD. Since then, individuals diagnosed with ASD have had access to meaningful interventions, reducing their need for special education services, improving their quality of life, and opening doors for further education and employment.

This coverage includes children under the age of 21 who are enrolled in MedQUEST, assuring access to medically necessary care pursuant to Medicaid's Early Periodic, Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) mandate and CMS' Informational Bulletin on Clarification of Medicaid Coverage of Services to Children with Autism.¹

¹ Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services. Informationa Bulletin, Clarification of Medicaid Coverage of Services to Children with Autism, July 7, 2014 (hereinafter "CMS Informational Bulletin"), available at <http://www.medicare.gov/Federal-Policy-Guidance/Downloads/CIB-07-07-14.pdf>.

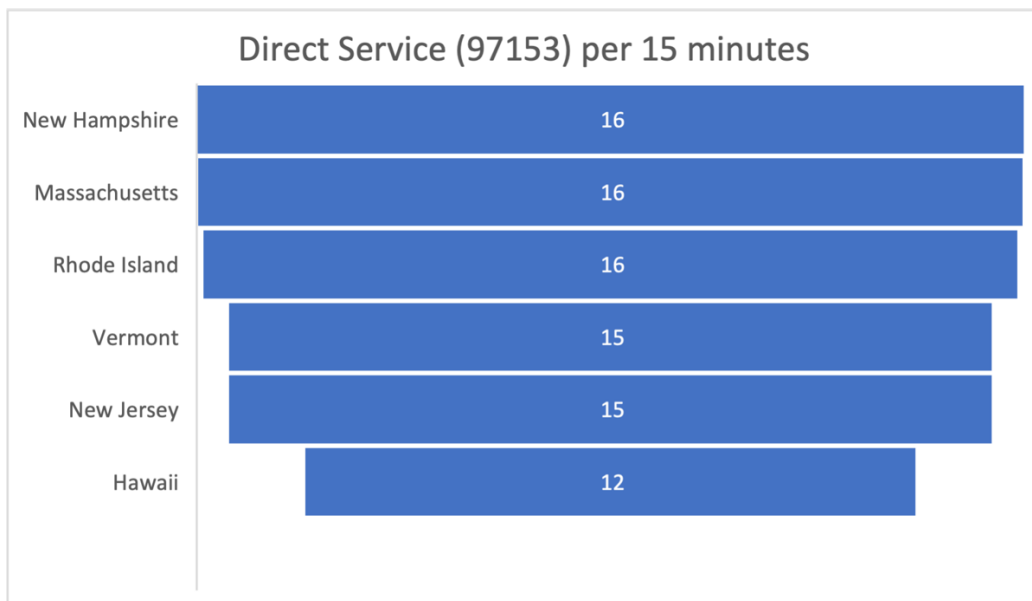
EPSDT requires that these services be provided **without delay**. The previously referenced CMS bulletin² states:

*EPSDT also requires medically necessary diagnostic and treatment services. When a screening examination indicates the need for further evaluation of a child's health, the child should be appropriately referred for diagnosis and treatment **without delay**. Ultimately, the goal of EPSDT is to assure that children get the health care they need, when they need it – the right care to the right child at the right time in the right setting.*

The role of states is to make sure all covered services are available as well as to assure that families of enrolled children, including children with ASD, are aware of and have access to a broad range of services to meet the individual child's needs.

Ensuring an adequate network is established by offering appropriate rates is critical. The existing MedQUEST rates have not been adjusted since 2015, even though the cost of providing these services has skyrocketed. This has caused our member organizations to maintain wait lists for children who are in dire need of services and is in direct contradiction to the requirements of EPSDT.

Additionally, as indicated below, other states with similar costs of living have rates that are more in line with economic forces:



² Ibid.

According to the most recent estimates from the Centers for Disease Control, 1 in every 44 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. This means that 2% of Hawaii's children who are on Medicaid have an autism spectrum disorder and to date, many are unable to access the most basic, evidence-based treatments for their diagnosis. Because of this, we respectfully request that you pass HCR203/HR207, which ensures that necessary steps are taken to establish adequate rates for autism service providers.

Thank you for your work in the past and moving forward to ensure that Hawaii's autistic children who are enrolled in Medicaid have access to life-changing, evidence-based care.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judith Ursitti". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judith Ursitti
Vice President of Government Affairs

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:15:55 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Torres	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Organizations have extensive waitlists for much needed ABA services and it is difficult hiring, competing, and retaining employees to serve QUEST beneficiaries. The state's medicaid reimbursement rates are not conducive to financially supporting employees working in the field given the cost of living in Hawaii.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:21:55 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Koenig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a provider it has been difficult to hire and retain providers to serve QUEST beneficiaries. I have seen providers move to mainland for better wages due to the state's low Medicaid reimbursement rates.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:30:07 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carla T Schmidt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We see providers move to mainland for better wages due to the state's low Medicaid reimbursement rates.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:38:02 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a provider of ABA services in the state of Hawaii, we are increasingly experiencing challenges in our ability to hire and retain staff to serve QUEST clients as we are unable to increase our pay rates without an increase in reimbursement. Our waitlist continues to grow, with some individuals in need remaining on the waitlist for over 2 years, as we struggle to hire competent and qualified professionals to provide services.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:57:05 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Schurtz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Other funders have increased their rates substantially making it difficult to retain providers to serve QUEST beneficiaries. We have a long waitlist and it is difficult to staff current cases with other agencies and funders reimbursing at such higher rates. Rates need to increase to keep up with inflation and other funders in order to continue to serve with the quality of care we strive for.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 11:05:11 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meah Ortiz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have waitlists that exceed two years. There are families that have been waiting for services for years. As a provider, I am experiencing difficulties hiring and retaining providers to serve QUEST beneficiaries because of the wages. We are seeing providers move to the mainland for better wages due to the state's low Medicaid reimbursement rates.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:07:58 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Hankins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of this bill. As a service provider, hiring manager, and someone who oversees an ABA service line with greater reimbursement rates, I understand the importance of maintaining equitable reimbursement rates across providers and the impact this has on clients. In a field with limited amounts of providers, services operating based on Medicaid QUEST reimbursements rates experience extreme difficulty in hiring and retaining adequate amounts of behavior therapist due to the competition elsewhere. As a result, clients are suffering and agencies are forced to waitlist or restrict client hours, failing to provide the medically necessary services these clients deserve. I firmly support this bill and the positive impact that increased Medicaid QUEST reimbursement rates will have on Hawaii's ABA community.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:35:22 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenifer Olin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

supporting HCR203/HR207 in support of increasing Med-QUEST rates for providers. ABA rates under QUEST have been the same since 2015, despite increased costs of living, resulting in difficulty meeting the needs of QUEST beneficiaries in our state.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:49:54 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dallas Star	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am submitting in support of HCR 203, Medicaid Rates for ABA services have not increased in 9 years since their inception in 2015. Throughout COVID and inflation Med-Quest, DHS, and other healthcare, LTSS, and HCBS services have been able to obtain and sustain rate increases to maintain their workforce supporting our most vulnerable populations. Hawai'i is already an underserved population with a high cost of living, without rate increases in our Medquest our families reliant on these services will fall even further behind.

Thank you,

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:01:20 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Ho'ohuli	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HCR203/HR207.

HR-203

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 4:40:50 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Kuhn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I submit this information today on behalf of our Hawaii-based Applied Behavior Analysis provider agency. Our agency has been providing evidenced based services in the state of Hawaii since 2016.

This letter is in support of ensuring adequate network capacity and increasing rates for service provision to the population of children and adults impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Our agency has been demonstrating difficulty in maintaining adequate staffing numbers due to increased cost of living in the state of Hawaii while rates of reimbursement have not shown an equivalent increase, and as such 19% of our staff have relocated to mainland offices, to ensure the ability to maintain a basic standard of living. Those staff have not been able to be replaced in Hawaii, due to inability to offer higher pay scales for our Medicaid clients. Many entry-level staff (RBT) are refusing work in the field outside of DOE based services, which pay at a significantly higher rate. This has directly impacted our ability to serve families located in the State of Hawaii, and has reduced the number of participants we are able to support.

The existing MedQUEST rates have not shown an adjustment since 2015, even as the cost of living in the state and the cost of providing services to these families has increased exponentially. This has caused our agency to implement wait lists for children and families who are in high need of support, which explicitly contradicts the requirements of EPSDT.

Due to these issues, our business has had to decrease its current available treatment openings for individuals in the state of Hawaii, and transition to states such as Utah, Colorado and Wyoming, which offer a more sustainable “rate vs cost of living” fee schedule.

As such, this letter is in support of review and increase of the current state of Hawaii MedQUEST rates for ABA services.

Thank you for your time.

Stacey E Kuhn, MS, BCBA, LBA

Owner – Kuhn Behavioral Consulting Services

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:37:13 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jemar Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Because of the long waitlists and families waiting, as a provider I'm experiencing the difficulty hiring and retaining providers to serve QUEST beneficiaries. I've seen providers move to mainland for better wages due to the state's low Medicaid reimbursement rates.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:50:49 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shauna Paul	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a practicing BCBA in Hawaii trying to support individuals with autism and afford to live and practice here I am support in increasing the reimbursement rate



DATE: 03/21/23

Re: HCR 203/HR 207- REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.

I support bills HCR 203 & HR 207 which aim to ensure that Med Quest provider rates are raised for Applied Behavior Analysis Services.

Aloha,
Mia Onorato

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:44:19 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naomi Tachera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

This resolution is crucial in ensuring that adequate provider rates are established for applied behavior analysis services for Med-QUEST beneficiaries under the age of twenty-one with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis. The reimbursement rates for these services were set in 2015 and have not increased, despite the increasing cost of living and staff costs. This has resulted in a shortage of providers and delays in access to services, which can negatively impact the outcomes of individuals with autism. I urge you to support HCR203.

Mahalo,

Naomi Tachera

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:50:44 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HCR203.



3/21/23

Re: HCR 203/HR 207- REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.

I support bills HCR 203 & HR 207 which aim to ensure that Med Quest provider rates are raised for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Services.

I have been fortunate to work in the state of Hawai'i, implementing ABA procedures since 2008. ABA is the science of behavior. As practitioners of ABA we aim to understand an individual's behavior to the very best of our abilities, create contexts that enrich and enhance learning and cooperation, and teach skills that will help individuals be as independent as they possibly can.

Developing a meaningful, productive, and successful ABA program requires a significant amount of training and oversight. Consistent and ongoing staff training and development, direct training and supervision of front-line staff while working with a learner, ongoing monitoring and oversight of the individualized program, and training of stakeholders are all HUGELY important requirements that are necessary for ideal outcomes.

As you are aware, the costs associated with running a business during the pandemic have been astronomical. The unexpected expenses of PPE, cleaning supplies, additional training, and other safety considerations are costs that directly impact how much we can pay our staff. To recruit and retain top talent and to mentor staff to develop skills that will truly address our consumers' individual needs, it is critical that the rates are raised.

We are in this field to make a difference. Please support the efforts to allow us to continue to create an environment where our consumers can be heard, seen, and ultimately flourish.

Aloha,

Sara Sato, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA
PhD Candidate
Clinical Director
Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 6:12:17 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

At our company and across the island there are waitlists where families have been seeking services. As a clinician providing these services we have turnover and difficulties with hiring and retaining staff the serve QUEST beneficiaries. There are many providers that are moving or have moved to the mainland for better wages due to the state's low Medicaid reimbursement rates. Please help keep these providers on island and providing medically necessary services by creating adequate rates for these providers.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 8:26:34 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Licensed behavior analyst who supports adults with autism with significant behavioral challenges, an increase in Quest reimbursement rates for ABA service will allow all individuals equal access to vital services.

Mahalo

Jessie Mitchell, MA, LBA, LMHC

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 9:12:07 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meir Mok	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have worked as a Registered Behavior Technician for the past 3 years and I think it's imperative that we pass bills HCR 203 and HR 207 which aim to ensure that Med Quest provider rates are raised for applied behavior analysis services. With inflation causing an even higher cost of living, the rates for applied behavior analysis services should also increase, as the minimum wage in Hawaii has increased.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 7:20:13 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Midori Aoki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a mother of a son with Autism, I wholeheartedly support this bill. The behavioral services which my son receives have been such an integral part of his life, and without them, we would all be lost. An increase in Quest reimbursement rates for ABA service will allow all individuals equal access to vital services. Many people are counting on this bill, and it is my hope that it will be passed.

Thank you!

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 7:40:54 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Koba-Burd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution focused on increasing QUEST rates for ABA services, given the disparity between rates in our state compared to higher rates in other states that have lower cost of living. Thank you for your consideration of this important resolution.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 8:40:36 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Burdt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution focused on increasing ABA rates under QUEST.

Sara Dinkelo, M.S., BCBA, LBA (HAWAI'I)

413-842-6250
sdinkelo@gmail.com

22nd March 2023

RE: Testimony for HCR203

To whom it may concern,

My name is Sara Dinkelo and I wish to submit testimony in support of HCR203 to increase MED-Quest rates to providers. I am an active behavior analyst supporting children receiving applied behavior analysis (ABA) services funded through Med-Quest and have directly seen the negative impact that not increasing rates has had on providers. As result, fewer clinicians are able to sustain their businesses or offer care to individuals seeking services through Med-Quest funding. I see local businesses going out of business, and so many individuals who are not able to access ABA services as a result. Increasing rates would help solve this ongoing problem affecting our communities in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Dinkelo', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval border.

Sara Dinkelo M.S., BCBA, LBA

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 10:21:41 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Lau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HCR 203.

As indicated, rates have not changed in almost a decade, and it is becoming more and more difficult to maintain the cost of appropriate, highly complex, Applied Behavior Analysis services for the increasing number of people with autism that could benefit from them, while also offering livable wages for the skilled professionals delivering them.

The outcomes are worth the investment.

Thank you again for your support and service to our state.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 11:34:42 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason J Stauffer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the esteemed members and chair of the human services committee,

As a licensed provider of applied behavior analysis (ABA) services, I can personally attest to the challenges and negative impacts that insufficient provider rates have created for providers of these services as well as for families struggling to access timely, medically necessary care. I can understand the reluctance and concerns one might have in raising the cost of providing these services. However, the long-term economic cost of not empowering individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder to achieve their potential through receipt of medically necessary care far outstrip any short-term cost-saving considerations - not to mention the human cost of restricting the quality of life for these individuals. I strongly urge you to vote in support of HCR203 as a step in remediating these challenges and impacts.

Respectfully,

Jason Stauffer, MS, BCBA, LBA

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 1:21:30 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Walters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

rates have been the same since 2015 despite the increased costs of living in Hawai'i, numerous other states have increased their ABA rates for Medicaid but unfortunately HI has not, we struggle to hire and retain providers at the current rates

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 2:07:58 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliza Lipp	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rates have been the same since 2015 despite the significant increase in cost of living in Hawaii. Numerous other states have increased their ABA rates for Medicaid but unfortunately Hawaii has not. Hawaii will continue to struggle with hiring and retaining providers at the current rate leaving our community without medically necessary services due to an inadequate amount of qualified providers in the state of Hawaii.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 3:56:20 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Artaho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have waitlists and there are families waiting, as a provider you're experiencing the difficulty hiring and retaining providers to serve QUEST beneficiaries, we see providers move to mainland for better wages due to the state's low Medicaid reimbursement rates.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 7:08:12 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Krekel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because rates have been the same since 2015 despite the increased costs of living in Hawai‘i. Additionally numerous other states have increased their ABA rates for Medicaid but unfortunately HI has not. As a result agencies that deliver medically necessary ABA treatment struggle to hire and retain providers at the current rates resulting in a shortage of providers to Medicaid recipients.

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 8:56:26 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Dickerson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure

HCR-203

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 7:47:25 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Penland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.