



**March 3, 2023 at 10:00 am**  
**Conference Room 211**

**Senate Committee on Judiciary**

To: Chair Karl Rhoads  
Vice Chair Mike Gabbard

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

To: Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz  
Vice Chair Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

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

**Re: Submitting Comments**  
**SB 1018 SD 1, 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 30,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **comments** on this measure. Specifically, our members are concerned with the broad, yet unspecified, authority that would be afforded to the governor in any future emergency, including a pandemic. During the height of the COVID pandemic, hospitals, nursing homes, and other medical facilities worked extensively with both federal and state officials to ensure the continuation of essential services. We appreciated that there was ample flexibility to respond to frequently-changing conditions, and that local, state, and federal officials at the executive and legislative levels were supportive of requests to ensure that residents had access to needed services. For example, the Department of Health and the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency were instrumental in securing federal funding for surge staffing during the height of the delta and omicron surges.

Hawaii fared far better than other states in our infection and death rates, and stands as one of the highest-vaccinated populations in the country. This was achieved through incredible cooperation between public and private entities to ensure continuation of services without requiring additional regulations. Further, we would note that hospitals had the authority to suspend elective surgeries to address any capacity issues and did so when it was necessary to ensure that there were enough resources and beds available.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.