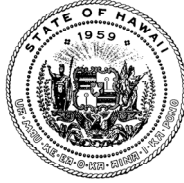


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII



KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A, M.P.H
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 1941
MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
TO IMPLEMENT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE HAWAII STATE HOSPITAL**

REPRESENTATIVE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 8:30 a.m., Room 329/Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (Department) requests this emergency
2 appropriation to be considered as a vehicle to enhance safety and security at the Hawaii State
3 Hospital (HSH). A concurrent Governor's Message provides a more comprehensive needs
4 request.

5 **Department Position:** The Department of Health strongly supports H.B. 1941, making an
6 emergency appropriation to the Department to implement quality improvement
7 recommendations for the HSH.

8 **Department Testimony:** The Adult Mental Health Division provides the following testimony on
9 behalf of the Department.

10 The Department supports an emergency appropriation to address immediate safety and
11 quality concerns at the HSH. This measure aimed to provide preliminary funding for crucial
12 improvements while a more comprehensive funding request was prepared.

13 The urgency of this request stems from the potential risks to safety and security at HSH,
14 which could adversely affect both patients and staff if not promptly addressed. The proposed

1 funds would be utilized to secure positions, contract services, repair and purchase safety
2 related equipment and relocate/reconstruct the guard shack to enhance safety measures and
3 maintain a secure environment on the hospital campus.

4 This Emergency Appropriation reflects the preliminary safety and security review which
5 was later refined. The refined request is reflected in a Governor's Message. Either vehicle is
6 acceptable, however, the complete needs are included in the GM.

7 **Offered Amendments:** The Department will provide the committee with the contents of the
8 Governor's Message.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

February 14, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

House Bill 1941 – Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Health to Implement Quality Improvement Recommendations for the Hawaii State Hospital

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1941 – Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Health to Implement Quality Improvement Recommendations for the Hawaii State Hospital. It is vital that the State provide funds to ensure the health and safety of the employees, patients, and visitors at the Hawaii State Hospital.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director

HB-1941

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:43:01 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/14/2024 8:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

We support whatever funding is needed for the Hawaii State Hospital.

HB-1941

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:29:32 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/14/2024 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Billie Yutaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 12, 2024.

To: The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair

Honorable Representative Jenna Takeuchi, Vice Chair

Subject: HB 1941

Hearing: Tuesday, February 24, 2022

8:00 a.m.

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

Conference room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honorable Chair Della Au Belatti, and House Committee on Health and Homelessness members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning House Bill HB 1941, MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO IMPLEMENT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HAWAII STATE HOSPITAL.

My name is Billie Yutaka, and I strongly support Bill HB 1941. I have been a psychiatric technician at the Hawaii State Hospital since 2012. As a psychiatric technician, we play a crucial role in providing care and support to patients with serious mental illnesses. In order to be effective at maintaining safety and providing a therapeutic environment, the state hospital is in need of adequate staffing and infrastructure.

The severity of the staffing shortage at the Hawaii State Hospital is unacceptable. We are constantly working overtime to cover our matrix, which leads to fatigue and safety concerns. The Hawaii State Healthcare Association reports a 26.8% vacancy rate for registered nurses as of June 30, 2023 and a 20.9% vacancy rate for direct support professionals as of June 30, 2023. Doctors, nurses, social workers, and techs have high workloads that impact the quality of patient care. Consequences of understaffing include reduced quality of care, increased patient violence, and burnout among remaining staff. On November 13, 2023, Justin Bautista, 29, a registered nurse working at a transitional group home at the Hawai'i State Hospital, was tragically murdered. It was an unnecessary and preventable death. We pondered the question: might it have been averted with more personnel, stronger security measures, and more effective rules that could have been put into place? I agree that it was possible.

Our new addition, a \$160 million psychiatric facility, is described as holding 144 beds; however, we are often at full capacity. We have since experienced overcrowding, leaky roofs, plumbing issues, and a state-of-the-art security system that is unreliable.

We also have six units that are outdated and deteriorating. They lack basic amenities like proper lighting and heating. As well as limited outdoor space and recreational opportunities for patients. We experienced broken windows, mold growth, exposed pipes, malfunctioning ventilation systems, and inadequate electrical wiring. Both patients and staff run the risk of developing more health issues as well as possible legal repercussions.

Having personally experienced the difficulties, I beg you to approve HB 1941. By doing this, we can continue to invest in better facilities and address the severe staffing shortages, as it is our shared duty to deliver safe and efficient care. Better treatment is due to the Hawaii State Hospital's employees and patients. We can make sure they receive the attention and assistance they require to flourish if we act now.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Billie Yutaka

(808) 383-1554