



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

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A., M.P.H.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'OKOLE

## Testimony COMMENTING on HCR172

### REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS ISSUES RELATING TO PATIENT TRANSFER AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND EVALUATE POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS.

SEN. JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: April 12, 2024

Room Number: 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) recommends this measure be  
3 deferred since it partially duplicates the mission of the Emergency Medical Services Advisory  
4 Committee (EMSAC). Various sub-committees such are currently evaluating components of the  
5 patient transfer issue, but there is no immediate fix to such a complex issue. DOH commits to  
6 placing the patient transfer issues on the April 2024 agenda, with a goal of evaluating potential  
7 solutions and reporting findings back to the Legislature.

8 EMSAC is authorized by [section 321-225, HRS](#), and its primary responsibility is to maximize  
9 the implementation and operation of the state EMS system, including individual components and  
10 how they work together, as well as the system as a whole.

11 It is important to note that focusing on ambulance service impacts to patient transfer will provide  
12 an incomplete evaluation. The continuum of EMS infrastructure, healthcare facility, and medical  
13 transportation must be examined as discreet parts and as a whole. EMSAC, which consists of all  
14 entities identified by HCR172 plus others, is the existing and appropriate entity for this  
15 evaluation. As a result, HCR172 is unnecessary and duplicative and may be deferred.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



## Hawaii Medical Association

1360 South Beretania Street, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814  
Phone: 808.536.7702 • Fax: 808.528.2376 • hawaiimedicalassociation.org

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry JC Aquino, Vice Chair

Date: April 12, 2024

From: Hawaii Medical Association (HMA)

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, HMA President

**RE HCR 172** - Requesting the Director of Health to convene a working group to address issues relating to patient transfer and ambulance services and evaluate potential solutions.

#### **Position: Support**

Along with the natural beauty of our island state, there are unique geographic and logistical challenges for our Hawaii patients to receive timely medical care, particularly in our rural areas. A work group will be important in order to coordinate a statewide transfer patient system between healthcare facilities. Assessing flight and ground transportation resources as well as connecting healthcare systems admission/transfer protocols will allow patients to receive prompt quality medical care that they urgently need.

HMA supports this resolution for a work group that will improve healthcare access for all of Hawaii patients, especially in rural and underserved communities.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify on this resolution.

#### REFERENCES, QUICK LINKS:

Hawaii Air Ambulance and Medical Escort Costs. <https://airambulance.com/locations-served/hawaii-air-ambulance/> Accessed Feb 7, 2024.

Consillio, K. Charges for Medevac Flights Soar in Hawaii. <https://www.hmpgloballearningnetwork.com/site/emsworld/news/12111684/charges-for-medevac-flights-soar-in-hawaii> Accessed Feb 7, 2024.

Hawaii residents complain of high prices for medevac flights. <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/29981390/hawaii-residents-complain-of-high-prices-for-medevac-flights/> Accessed Feb 7, 2024.

#### **2024 Hawaii Medical Association Officers**

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, President • Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President Elect • Angela Pratt, MD, Immediate Past President  
Jerris Hedges, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

#### **2024 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team**

Beth England, MD, Chair  
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

**2024 Hawaii Medical Association Officers**

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, President • Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President Elect • Angela Pratt, MD, Immediate Past President  
Jerris Hedges, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

**2024 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team**

Beth England, MD, Chair  
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director



April 12, 2024  
Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice-Chair

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino and members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services,

My name Doug Flanders, Vice President of State Government Affairs for Air Methods (AMC).

Thank you for the opportunity to offer support testimony to House Concurrent Resolution 172 regarding establishing a working group to address issues relating to patient transfer and ambulance services. AMC is the leading air medical service, delivering lifesaving care to more than 100,000 people every year. AMC has 40 years of air medical experience; we are the preferred partner for hospitals and one of the largest community-based providers of air medical services. And until about 18 months ago, AMC operated Hawaii LifeSave, until inflation, operating costs and low government reimbursement forced AMC to close several bases nationwide including LifeSave.

Regarding the resolution, we fully support the foresight and necessity to look at this issue and how to best increase and improve the transport system and other medical services for the Island. With that in mind, AMC respectfully requests a minor amendment to this concurrent resolution to ensure that more voices are heard, especially when the intent is to increase the number of providers. On page 3, AMC asks the item (6) be changed to:

“(6) Transportation service providers to include current and possible future air/ground, air, and ground providers.”

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

**AIR METHODS**

5500 SOUTH QUEBEC STREET, SUITE 300 | GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO 80111

303.792.7400 | [AIRMETHODS.COM](http://airmethods.com)



Adriana Alvarez  
Chapter Executive Director  
(800) 798-1822 Ext 3312

## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Date: April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

From: Hawaii Chapter of American College of Emergency Physicians (HACEP)  
Elizabeth England MD, HACEP President

**Re: HCR 172**

**Position: Support**

The Hawaii Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (HACEP) represents over 160 emergency physicians working across Hawaii. HACEP is testifying in support of HCR 172, which requests “the director of health to convene a working group to address issues relating to patient transfer and ambulance services and evaluate potential solutions”.

Our organization has been tracking the significant delays patients are experiencing waiting for transfer to a higher level of care on both the neighbor islands and Oahu. A preliminary collection of individual cases demonstrates these consequences that emergency physicians have been witnessing across the state. This includes wait times for acceptance to a higher level of care of up to 5 days and wait times for transportation of up to three days. These delays have had profound repercussions, including severe delays in care and even patient deaths. At this time, the major contributing issues identified are lack of a state-wide coordinated transfer system to identify available beds, limited transportation capacity both for ground and flight transfer, and limited bed availability at accepting hospitals.

HACEP appreciates efforts currently being made to address these issues of both patient transfer acceptance and transportation (via both air and land). Given the complexity of these challenges, we strongly support creating a task force specifically designated to finding solutions. Required reporting to the legislature will facilitate timely, comprehensive recommendations and ensure that our patients avoid these devastating outcomes in the future.

To protect our patients from these tragic outcomes, we strongly support a coordinated effort to create a user-friendly, efficient, state-wide transfer and transportation system. Thank you for allowing HACEP to testify in support of this measure.

**LATE**

**HCR-172**

Submitted on: 4/11/2024 7:28:47 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tiffany Lightfoot	Testifying for American Medical Response (AMR)	Comments	In Person

Comments:

Thank you to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for hearing HCR 172 requesting the Director of Health to convene a working group to address issues relating to patient transfer and ambulance services and evaluate potential solutions.

Our team has provided air and ground emergency medical services and interfacility medical transport services in Hawaii for nearly 50 years. We actively participate in existing committees that address matters that are the subject of this resolution (e.g., Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee (EMSAC), Aeromedical Quality Assurance Committee, Hawaii Trauma Advisory Council, Hawaii Stroke Coalition, and Hawaii Capacity System Governance Committee).

We concur with the Department of Health's testimony and comments on this resolution.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

**LATE**

**HCR-172**

Submitted on: 4/12/2024 6:22:02 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HCR172, in emergency patient transfer and ambulance services. I have known many who have waited for the ambulance although they were only a few blocks away, locals have not been able to explain to these first responders either out of ignorance or stubbornness to seek the help of people who did not look like them. Others who have been picked up and taken to one hospital and then had to be transported to another because they could not be admitted. Others who were later told about the charges of over \$1000 that they would have to pay since their insurance didn't cover it. Why do we have insurance if the most vital service is not covered. Many people may not have even heard of the City and County's CORE, which had serviced just Chinatown, Makiki, and Waikiki, but is now spreading throughout the island. Why is it that the C&C is being more efficient than our health services system by the state?

Apparently Dr. Fink took on a very difficult position, faced by many before him that do not appear to know the views of the local community. Two decades ago, Behavioral Health Director, Michelle Hill, and AMHD Chief, Dr. Thomas Hester faced the same type of issues. The main comment was, "why should we listen to a Mainland Haole!" and this is after 5 consecutive AMHD Chiefs and front line directors brought in to assist Hawaii in the federal mandate. I myself being born and raised in Hawaii was called by staff with degrees a "traitor" and was yelled at from across a training room full of AMHD staff. I don't know who was more mentally ill, certainly not me. I believed that we could learn from these people from the East Coast who helped create Evidence Based practices in Recovery from Georgia, who has recently gotten an award after 25 years! These are the same people that assisted Dr. Hester in bringing in the Certified Peer Specialist program in 2004 to educate state staff, providers of services, as well as consumers with mental health issues. Knowing Dr. Fink from previous Human Services, I believe he can do things, but with the support of the legislature in listening to the people of the community and not just the select few in higher state positions with professional degrees!