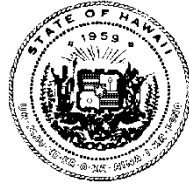


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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

March 19, 2024

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [SCR94/SR80](#) - REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TELEHEALTH WORKING GROUP TO EXAMINE THE IMPACT OF WIDESPREAD TELEHEALTH ADOPTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND IDENTIFY PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVES AT THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVEL TO OPTIMIZE TELEHEALTH UTILIZATION AS THE STATE TRANSITIONS OUT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

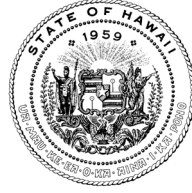
Hearing: March 22, 2024, 1:00 PM
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services supports this resolution.

PURPOSE: This resolution requests the establishment of a telehealth working group to examine the impact of widespread telehealth adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic and identify public policy initiatives at the federal and state levels to optimize telehealth utilization as the state transitions out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

DHS supports the review of telehealth adoption during and since the COVID-19 pandemic and looks forward to having the Med-QUEST Administrator or the Administrator's designee participate in this workgroup.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this resolution.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, March 22, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference**

On the following measure:

S.R. 80 REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TELEHEALTH WORKING GROUP TO EXAMINE THE IMPACT OF WIDESPREAD TELEHEALTH ADOPTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND IDENTIFY PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVES AT THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVEL TO OPTIMIZE TELEHEALTH UTILIZATION AS THE STATE TRANSITIONS OUT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ahlani Quiogue, and I am the Licensing Administrator of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (Department) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division. The Department appreciates the intent of and offers comments on this measure.

The purposes of this resolution are to establish the Telehealth Working Group to:

- (1) evaluate the impact of telehealth adoption in the State on safety, utilization, total cost of care, and patient and provider satisfaction to determine how best to integrate telehealth into in-person practice as the State transitions out of the COVID-19 pandemic and provide the State with greater insight into existing telehealth challenges and benefits;
- (2) examine the impact of telehealth adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic

and identify public policy initiatives at the federal and state level to optimize telehealth utilization as the State transitions out of the COVID-19 pandemic; and (3) submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2025.

The Department understands the importance of the working group to identify the impacts of telehealth initiatives and the utilization of this modality to provide health care services. The Department respectfully requests that page 3, item (6), be amended to allow the Licensing Administrator of the Professional and Vocational Licensing Division to appoint/name a designee similar to the authority provided to the Insurance Commissioner on page 2, item (4).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

March 22, 2024, 1 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice-Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SCR94/SR80 — REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TELEHEALTH WORKING GROUP TO EXAMINE THE IMPACT OF WIDESPREAD TELEHEALTH ADOPTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND IDENTIFY PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVES AT THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVEL TO OPTIMIZE TELEHEALTH UTILIZATION AS THE STATE TRANSITIONS OUT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Aloha Chair, Vice-Chair and other Committee members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to comment in **support** of [SCR94](#) and [SR80](#), which look to establish a telehealth working group.

The purpose of the working group would be to examine the impact of widespread telehealth adoption during the COVID-19 lockdowns and identify policy initiatives that might build on that experience in order to optimize telehealth usage in Hawaii.

Telehealth provides a wonderful opportunity to mitigate the problems related to healthcare access and staffing shortages that have had a significant effect on healthcare in Hawaii.

The COVID-19 crisis was instrumental in showing the potential of telehealth as a way to improve healthcare outcomes. Moreover, the experience of Hawaii and other states under emergency orders related to telehealth demonstrated that removing barriers to out-of-state telehealth access was helpful to both patients and providers.

In an upcoming policy brief, the Grassroot Institute examines ways in which the state could improve outcomes and expand healthcare access by removing regulations that prevent Hawaii patients from receiving telehealth from out-of-state providers.

This is a strategy that has been embraced by other states with great success. Twenty-six states have special license or telehealth registration programs that allow out-of-state doctors to offer telehealth services.

Idaho, for example, allows licensed doctors to offer telehealth care to patients with whom they have an established relationship but are in the state only temporarily.¹

And Florida recently created a system that allows licensed out-of-state providers to practice telehealth by registering with the state medical board and agreeing to certain conditions such as liability coverage.²

Hawaii's geographic challenges make telehealth expansion a necessity. We commend the Legislature for seeking ways to remove barriers to telehealth in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ ["Cross State Licensing: Idaho."](#) Center for Connected Health Policy. Feb. 13, 2024.

² ["Cross State Licensing: Florida."](#) Center for Connected Health Policy. Feb. 24, 2024.



March 22, 2024

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: SCR 94 / SR 80 – Requesting the establishment of a telehealth working group to examine the impact of widespread telehealth adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic and identify public policy initiatives at the federal and state level to optimize telehealth utilization as the state transitions out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SCR 94 / SR 80, which requests the establishment of a Telehealth working group to examine the impact of telehealth adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic and identify public policy initiatives at the federal and state level to optimize telehealth utilization as the state transitions out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As an early supporter of telehealth access for our state, we believe in increasing access to health care services in Hawaii, especially for kupuna who may have limited digital literacy and for those living in rural and underprivileged communities where broadband coverage is lacking. With the end of the Public Health Emergency related to COVID-19 and upcoming changes from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, we think it's critical to better understand the role telehealth has played and the optimal role it will play in the future for Hawaii residents.

We would respectfully request the committee's consideration to include HMSA as a member of the working group.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR 94 / SR 80.

Sincerely,



Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations