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KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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February 5, 2023

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

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 221 HD1 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

Hearing: February 7, 2023, 8:45 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconferencing, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides comments on this measure and requests clarification.

PURPOSE: Provides that certain pregnant women receiving state-funded medical assistance and who receive substance abuse treatment are eligible for substance abuse treatment and related mental health services for an additional ten months following childbirth. (HD1)

DHS appreciates the Legislature's commitment to supporting pregnant individuals as they address their substance use disorder and seek mental health services. However, DHS requests clarification as to the population the measure intends to cover as existing DHS and DOH programs provide coverage and services included in this measure.

Importantly, in 2022 DHS expanded health care coverage to twelve months post-partum for Medicaid-eligible individuals, and the 2022 Legislature appropriated state general funds to

implement the program. The Med-QUEST division (MQD) implemented the program in the summer of 2022. MQD was able to do this based on federal regulations that allowed the State the option to extend post-partum coverage for 12 months. As long as the Hawaii resident is lawfully present in the U.S. and meets the program's income standards, they may apply for these expanded benefits. If already a Medicaid enrollee, they would automatically qualify for the extended coverage. Of additional note, Medicaid covers substance use disorder and mental health treatments. As is well-known, Medicaid is a program funded by the State and Federal government

Regarding uninsured individuals, the Department of Health (DOH) already provides access to substance use disorder and behavioral health services through programs funded mainly by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) with some additional state funding. DHS defers to DOH regarding any funding needs.

As drafted, the proposal appears to limit the substance abuse treatment, though not the related mental health services, for no more than ten additional months following childbirth if the individual adheres to all substance abuse treatment program requirements. However, this limit cannot be placed on the Medicaid program, as it is not solely State-funded and is inconsistent with Medicaid's provision of "medically necessary services."

Additionally, individuals challenged by substance use disorders need consistent and sustained support to maintain sobriety, and relapses are expected events in an individual's recovery. Also, an individual's mental health needs may influence substance use and vice versa. Limiting access to services for substance use disorders to 10 months will likely have unintended consequences for the individual and their child, resulting in more costly interventions or services, such as homelessness and involvement with the child welfare and criminal justice systems.

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



Submitted Online: February 5, 2023

HEARING: February 7, 2023

TO: House Committee on Human Services House Committee on Health & Homelessness
Rep. John Mizuno, Chair: Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice-Chair: Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice-Chair

FROM: Eva Andrade, President

RE: Strong Support for HB 221 HD1 Relating to Huma Services

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii. We support this bill because women who need substance abuse treatment and related mental health services while pregnant, and afterwards, should be a priority.

The challenge with addiction is that the addict is not the only one impacted by this disease. Family and friends can have difficulty with the addict's behavior, financial problems, legal problems and the daily struggle of supporting their loved one. These are problems that exist not only before she gives birth, but even after.

We understand that an effective addiction treatment program is not one-size-fits-all. Many pregnant women experiencing substance abuse need longer term care to overcome their addiction. If she is committed to getting the help she needs (and deserves), then adding the extra ten months of coverage is essential for her success. This extra layer of eligibility will ensure that providers are able to address trauma at the root of the addiction, resulting symptoms, and substance use in different aspects of her life without short term time constraints.

Expertly-trained therapists, medical staff, spiritual advisors, psychiatrists, massage therapists, registered dieticians, and holistic healers, are integral to the process and we all know that these services cost money – not only for the providers, but for the woman in need.

This important bill is a great way to support pregnant women not only before birth, but thereafter.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support.

HB-221-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/3/2023 9:21:29 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/7/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dara Yatsushiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand in Support