

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

**Testimony COMMENTING on HB1772 H.D.1  
RELATING TO FALL PREVENTION**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: April 4, 2024

Room Number: 211

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates funds to support the Department of Health's Senior Fall
- 2 Prevention Campaign. The Department respectfully defers to the Governor's Executive
- 3 Biennium Budget.
- 4 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health comments on HB1772 H.D.1. The Bill
- 5 appropriates \$100,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the
- 6 Department of Health's senior fall prevention campaign.
- 7 The Department of Health supports the intent of this bill. Every year Hawaii's seniors experience
- 8 significant mortality and morbidity from falls. This measure would add to the department's fall
- 9 prevention program to include Statewide Public Service Announcements (PSA) about fall
- 10 prevention, fall prevention bus posters, statewide medication reviews for seniors through local
- 11 pharmacies, statewide home safety workshops aimed at removing fall hazards from the home,
- 12 and statewide Tai Chi classes for living with arthritis and fall prevention. The department will
- 13 sponsor fall prevention consortium speakers.
- 14 If appropriated, funds for kupuna fall prevention campaign will benefit Hawaii's kupuna by
- 15 reducing injuries, healthcare costs, stress, and anxiety.
- 16 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

April 4, 2024

### TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

#### House Bill 1772 HD1 – Relating to Fall Prevention

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1772 HD1 – Relating to Fall Prevention.

This bill would appropriate funds to support the Department of Health's Senior Fall Prevention Campaign.

Fall related injuries disproportionately impact the elderly, often resulting in a long term disability. This impacts their quality of life and puts a strain on the medical system, the rehabilitation system, and on family caregivers. Reducing the incidence of falls has short and long term positive effects.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW  
Executive Director



**HB1772 HD1**  
**RELATING TO FALL PREVENTION**  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

April 4, 2024

10:15 a.m.

Conference Room 211

---

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB1772 HD1, which appropriates funds to support the Department of Health's Senior Fall Prevention Campaign. The proposal aims to address the pressing issue of fall-related injuries among seniors, a matter of significant concern within our Native Hawaiian community and the state at large.

Kūpuna, aged sixty-five and older, including many within our Native Hawaiian population, are disproportionately affected by fall-related injuries. The emotional, physical, and financial toll on individuals, families, and our healthcare system cannot be overstated.

Research consistently demonstrates that falls are not an inevitable consequence of aging but are preventable through targeted interventions.<sup>1</sup> The incorporation of evidence-based practices, such as tai chi, into fall prevention initiatives has shown promising results in improving balance and overall well-being among seniors.<sup>2</sup>

The longstanding efforts of the Department of Health's senior fall prevention campaign have been commendable, even in the face of budgetary challenges. Fully funding this campaign is not just a matter of financial investment but a commitment to safeguarding the health and safety of our seniors.

By appropriating funds to support the department's senior fall prevention campaign, HB1772 HD1 signifies a proactive approach to addressing this critical public health issue. OHA acknowledges the success of evidence-based interventions and seeks to

---

<sup>1</sup> Tricco, Andrea C et al. "Quality improvement strategies to prevent falls in older adults: a systematic review and network meta-analysis." *Age and ageing* vol. 48,3 (2019): 337-346. doi:10.1093/ageing/afy219

<sup>2</sup> Chen, Weidong et al. "Tai Chi for fall prevention and balance improvement in older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials." *Frontiers in public health* vol. 11 1236050. 1 Sep. 2023, doi:10.3389/fpubh.2023.1236050

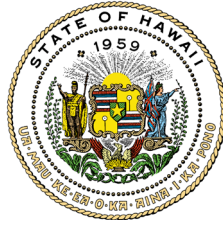


**HB1772 HD1**  
RELATING TO FALL PREVENTION  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

---

ensure their continued availability and accessibility to all seniors, including those in our Native Hawaiian communities. Let us stand together in support of proactive measures that will undoubtedly save lives, preserve dignity, and alleviate the burden on families and our healthcare system.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS HB1772 HD1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



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

**KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH**  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING**  
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT  
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

**CAROLINE CADIRAO**  
DIRECTOR  
Executive Office on Aging

Telephone  
(808) 586-0100

Fax  
(808) 586-0185

**LATE**

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1772 HD1  
RELATING TO FALLS PREVENTION**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao  
Director, Executive Office on Aging  
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing: Thursday, April 4, 2024, 10:15 A.M., Conference Room 211

- 1 **EOA Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of
- 2 Health (DOH) **supports** the intent of this measure, provided that its enactment does not reduce
- 3 or replace priorities with the Administration's budget request.
- 4 **Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates funds to support the Department of Health's Senior Fall
- 5 Prevention Campaign. Declares the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded.
- 6 **Purpose and Justification:** Falls are a serious health risk for older adults, as it can lead to
- 7 fractures, pain, medication complications, loss of mobility and long-term care admission.
- 8 According to the CDC in 2020, 36,000 fall related deaths in adults, ages 65 and older was
- 9 reported, making it the leading cause of injury death for that age group. Older adult falls cost

1 \$50 billion in medical costs annually, with 3/4 of those costs paid by Medicaid and Medicare.

2 Many falls are preventable, and education is key. The Department of Health, Falls Prevention

3 Program has a successful falls prevention campaign with the CDC stating that we have the

4 lowest fall and injury rate in the nation. The funding will allow the DOH to continue its public

5 awareness campaign.

6 **Recommendation:** EOA supports this measure to fund a public health awareness campaign for

7 falls prevention.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## 2024 Hawaii Leadership Board

Lori McCarney, Chair  
*Community Advocate*

Dr. Pokii Balaz, Immediate  
Past Chair  
*Obama Foundation  
Kokua Kalih Valley*

Tricia Medeiros, Past Chair  
*Chief Operating Officer  
The Plaza Assisted Living*

Gina Fujikami, MD  
*The Queen's Medical  
Center*

Travis Kikuchi  
*Senior Vice President  
Central Pacific Bank*

Kai Ohashi  
*Financial Advisor  
Edward Jones*

Michael Robinson  
*Vice President  
Hawaii Pacific Health*

Kimberly Soares  
*Vice President  
Atlas Insurance*

Gino Soquena  
*Executive Director  
Hawaii Building and  
Construction Trade Council*

Gordon Takaki  
*Past President  
Hawaii Island Chamber of  
Commerce*

Cary Tanaka  
*Past President  
Island Insurance  
Companies*

Caroline Witherspoon  
*President  
Becker Communications*

LJ R. Duenas  
*Executive Director  
Alzheimer's Association*

## Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Thursday, April 4, 2024; 10:15 a.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211, and Videoconference

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1772, HOUSE DRAFT 1 – RELATING TO FALL PREVENTION**

Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Alzheimer's Association–Aloha Chapter serves the residents of Hawaii to help all those facing Alzheimer's disease and other dementias by providing local support groups and educational resources while advancing crucial research and public policy initiatives. We testify in **SUPPORT of House Bill No. 1772, House Draft 1.**

Alzheimer's disease is a public health crisis across the country. In Hawaii, approximately 29,000 individuals aged 65 and older live with Alzheimer's disease. This figure is projected to increase to over 35,000 by next year.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate funds to support the Department of Health's Senior Fall Prevention Campaign.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "About 36 million falls are reported among older adults each year – resulting in more than 32,000 deaths." Individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are at a greater risk for falls because of the changes that are happening in their thinking abilities.

This bill serves a noteworthy purpose to ensure continued education and public awareness of fall prevention. **We ask you to pass House Bill No. 1772, House Draft 1.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. If you have questions, please contact Ron Shimabuku at 808.451.3410 or [rkshimabuku@alz.org](mailto:rkshimabuku@alz.org).



Ron Shimabuku  
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy  
Alzheimer's Association – Hawaii



1001 Bishop Street | Suite 625 | Honolulu, HI 96813-2830  
1-866-295-7282 | Fax: 808-536-2882  
aarp.org/hi | [aarphi@aarp.org](mailto:aarphi@aarp.org) | [twitter.com/AARPHawaii](https://twitter.com/AARPHawaii)  
[facebook.com/AARPHawaii](https://facebook.com/AARPHawaii)

**The State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Thursday, April 4, 2024  
Conference Room 211, 10:15 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawaii  
RE: Support for H.B 1772 HD1 -Relating to Fall Prevention

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

**AARP supports H.B 1772 HD1 which appropriates funds to support the Dept. of Health's Senior Fall Prevention Program.**

According to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "falls among adults aged 65 and older are common, costly, and are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among older adults. In the United States, over 14 million, or one in four, adults ages 65 and older (older adults), report falling each year. While not all falls result in an injury, about 37% of those who fall reported an injury that required medical treatment or restricted their activity for at least one day, resulting in an estimated nine million fall injuries." In most cases, falls are preventable especially if people take steps to reduce the risks by making their homes safer, proper medications and health management, and engage in strength and balance exercises such as tai chi. The Hawaii Department of Health has had a successful senior fall prevention program that includes certified tai chi classes, and it has expanded these classes to over thirty locations and all YMCA5 statewide. Exercise programs like Tai-chi and other falls prevention education and awareness efforts should be continued and supported to reduce the risk of fall-related injuries especially among Hawaii's older residents.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in **support of H.B. 1772, HD1.**





## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO

DATE: Thursday, April 4, 2024 (10:15 a.m., Conference Room 211 & Videoconference)

RE: **IN SUPPORT OF HB 1772, HD1, Relating to Fall Prevention**

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been serving people in need in the State of Hawaii since 1947.

**CCH supports HB 1772, HD1**, which would provide funding to support the Department of Health's **Senior Fall Prevention Campaign**. We ask that the amount of **\$100,000** be considered by the WAM Committee for this purpose.

CDC research highlights the dangers, and cost, of older adult falls<sup>1</sup>:

- Each year, more than 1 out of 4 Americans, age 65+, will experience a fall
- Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries for older adults
- The cost of treating fall-related injuries will increase to over \$101 billion by 2030

CCH provides services for over 4,000 older adults each year. From hip/shoulder/wrist fractures to traumatic brain injury, the consequences of a fall for an older adult can be devastating. We also see the social impact of falls – increased social isolation, depression and physical decline.

Because fall prevention is so critical to independent living, our Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center has integrated a fall risk assessment for every participating older adult – when they join the center and annually thereafter. In addition, tai chi, which is considered a form of exercise that improves balance, is offered at the Center, including a certified volunteer instructor who teaches the evidence-based Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention.

The Senior Fall Prevention Campaign is needed to increase public awareness and education for older adults and their families throughout the State. Fall prevention education and awareness can lead to reduced medical costs and it will ensure that older adults are able to enjoy a better quality of life.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i asks for your support of HB 1772, HD1. For more information or questions, please feel free to contact Diane Terada, Division Administrator, at 808-527-4702.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncoa.org/article/get-the-facts-on-falls-prevention>



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Thursday, April 4, 2024  
10:15 a. m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 211 and via videoconference

Re: HB 1772 HD 1 Relating to Fall Prevention

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am testifying as an individual who has worked in healthcare for over thirty-five years, and I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports HB 1772 HD 1, which appropriates funds to support the Department of Health's Senior Fall Prevention Campaign.

According to the National Council on Aging:

- Falls are the number 1 cause of injury and fatal injury among older adults.
- Falls prevention programs save lives, save money, and are effective in helping older adults stay independent and falls free.

We urge you to support fall prevention and HB 1772 HD 1, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email [gsimon@aarp.org](mailto:gsimon@aarp.org)

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**  
**Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair**  
**Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING**  
**DATE: Thursday, April 4, 2024**  
**TIME: 10:15 AM**

**Re HB1772 HD1 RELATING TO FALL PREVENTION**

**Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee. My name is Linda Dorset, and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1772 HD1. The bill Appropriates funds to support the Department of Health's Senior Fall Prevention Campaign. I took the class being presented at the Maui Memorial Medical Center because I was having episodes of light headedness while walking. Aside from the usual diet and exercise advice, there was also useful and otherwise unknown advice on the correct way to walk and to strengthen age related foot muscle deterioration. This is yet another program to allow older people to age at home and keep them out of state financed care institutions. Please support this appropriation and allow others to profit from this program.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!**

**Linda Dorset**  
**Wailuku, Maui**

**HB-1772-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 10:05:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1772, HD 1 and to appropriate the amount of \$100,000 into its passage. This is an excellent state program and Health Department service to our citizens who will benefit from it, especially our elderly growing population and individuals with disabilities. This a preventive and proactive strategy for our Hawaii residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support for HB 1772, HD 1.

**LATE**

**HB-1772-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 10:22:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I and my wife Deborah are in support of HB 1772 HD1. In 2021 the costs of Physicians and Hospital treatment reached \$223 Million to pay for senior's falls. Many of these falls can be prevented through continued education of and warning to our seniors. Please support funding to enable continuation of the Department of Health's "Senior Fall Prevention Campaign." Sincerely,

Dan Gardner

Honolulu, Hawai'i

daniel.dano.gardner@gmail.com

**LATE**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon M; Moriwaki, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING

DATE: Thursday April 4, 2024  
TIME: 10:15 AM.  
PLACE: CONFERENCE ROOM 211 & VIA  
VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Aloha Most Honorable Chair Dela Cruz,**

**COMMENTS AND TESTIMONY - Aloha in Reference to BILL HB1772  
Referring to Fall Prevention**

**My name is Stanley Michaels and for 19 years and 10 months I was the Senior Fall Prevention Specialist for the State of Hawaii Department of Health, Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention (EMSIPSB). Even though I am now formally retired, I cannot stop fighting for the necessity of fiscal support for the Fall Prevention program. So I am an 82 year old kupuna, and you have read the support from many organizations. Senior falls is a serious problem that robs many of our dearest kupuna.**

**A MILLI-second of inattention can lead to a fall injury that can destroy not only the senior's life...but their family also. Especially if that kupuna was caring for their grandchildren. Now the family must find someone to care for the injured grandparent, as well as look after the child that their kupuna was caring for.**

**FISCAL SUPPORT for this program is an excellent investment. The fall prevention program is proven to work. CDC reported that in 2014-2016 Hawaii's fall injury program generated the LOWEST fall injuries in the NATION. Investment in the DOH Fall Prevention program can**

save thousands of dollars. In the past years that budget has shrunk. So much so that over \$223 million DOLLARS, just in hospital and physician charges were required in 2022 just for seniors that fell. Our program works. I say "OUR" because I still volunteer and speak to kupuna to help stem the injuries.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Ways and Means Committee...I urge you to take this information seriously and consider that a mili-second could be the difference between health and disaster for your kupuna loved one. Generously fund this bill ... please!

Sincerely,

*Stanley Michaels*

Stanley Michaels  
Former DOH Fall Prevention Specialist  
225 Kaiulani Ave. Apt 602  
Honolulu, HI 96815  
(808) 230-6675