



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'OKELE

LATE

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.**

REP. MARK M. NAKASHIMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Hearing Date: March 21, 2024

Room Number: 329

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A.
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) shares the concerns of the
- 3 Legislature regarding patient transfer waiting times when transported between facilities. DOH
- 4 commits to prioritizing an assessment of both ground and air transfer components, as well as
- 5 examining the institutional capacity issues with stakeholders. The next meeting of the
- 6 Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee (EMSAC), a statutorily authorized entity,
- 7 will be in mid-April and this issue will be placed on the agenda.
- 8 HCR172 may not be necessary since EMSAC will take up this issue and report findings back to
- 9 the Legislature as the analysis proceeds.
- 10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
- 11



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

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Mark M. Nakashima, Chair

Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair

Date: March 21st, 2024

From: Hawaii Chapter of American College of Emergency Physicians (HACEP)

Elizabeth England MD, Chair, HACEP President-elect

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.

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.



March 21, 2024

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Representative Mark Nakashima, Chair
Representative Jackson Sayama, Vice-Chair

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

Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Sayama and members of the House Consumer Protection Committee,

My name Doug Flanders, Vice President of 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



Hawaii Medical Association

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

Rep. Mark M. Nakashima, Chair

Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair

Date: March 21, 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 issue.

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.

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