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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that low-income subsidy  
2 programs such as medicare, medicaid, a medicare savings program,  
3 and Extra Help, can help reduce out-of-pocket costs for  
4 individuals with limited income by offsetting their medical and  
5 prescription drug costs, such as premiums, deductibles,  
6 copayments, coinsurance, and lifetime late enrollment penalties.  
7 The legislature further finds that although individuals with low  
8 income, those who speak English as a second language, or those  
9 who live in rural areas may qualify for these programs, they may  
10 have no or limited access to the benefits, as they may not be  
11 aware of or need assistance with the application or eligibility  
12 renewal process.

13       The legislature further finds that the Hawaii state health  
14 insurance assistance program, administered by the executive  
15 office on aging of the department of health, provides free  
16 information and one-on-one counseling on medicare. Since 2022,  
17 the program has been receiving a significantly higher volume of



1 referrals from med-QUEST to assist uninsured or underinsured  
2 individuals who are losing their medicaid eligibility and need  
3 to find other health coverage. The overflow and referrals are  
4 made to community partners within forty-eight hours to help with  
5 food, housing, utilities, employment, and other needs.

6 The legislature also finds that during the COVID-19  
7 pandemic, the med-QUEST division of the department of human  
8 services paused disenrollments based on eligibility issues and  
9 all medicaid members received continuous uninterrupted coverage  
10 through March 2023, regardless of their change in eligibility.  
11 Following the 2023 Maui wildfires, the med-QUEST division again  
12 paused all eligibility disenrollments statewide until the end of  
13 2023. However, the med-QUEST division has resumed its annual  
14 eligibility redetermination process, and therefore, people have  
15 been or will be receiving notices and forms to renew their  
16 coverage.

17 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish within  
18 the Hawaii state health insurance assistance program a temporary  
19 medi-medi project to assist the underserved population in the  
20 State who may qualify for various low-income subsidy programs to  
21 gain access to their benefits.



1       SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the Hawaii  
2 state health insurance assistance program a medi-medi project to  
3 assist older adults, medicare beneficiaries, individuals with  
4 disabilities, and other underserved populations who may qualify  
5 for various low-income subsidy programs such as medicare,  
6 medicaid, medicare savings programs, and Extra Help, to gain  
7 access to their benefits.

8       (b) The medi-medi project shall:

9       (1) Develop and implement a community outreach program;

10       (2) Streamline the application and eligibility renewal  
11 process for various low-income subsidy programs; and

12       (3) Provide any other service it deems necessary for the  
13 underserved populations in the State to gain access to  
14 benefits under various low-income subsidy programs.

15       (c) The executive office on aging shall submit a report of  
16 its findings and recommendations regarding the medi-medi  
17 project, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature  
18 no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular  
19 session.

20       (d) The medi-medi project shall cease to exist  
21 on .



1       SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                   or so  
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and  
4 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
5 year 2026-2027 for the Hawaii state health insurance assistance  
6 program, to be expended as follows:

7       1. \$                   for the establishment of one full-time  
8           equivalent (1.0 FTE) position to implement and  
9           administer the medi-medi project; and

10      2. \$                   for other operating expenses.

11      The sums appropriated shall be expended by the executive  
12 office on aging for the purposes of this Act.

13      SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

14                                   INTRODUCED BY: \_\_\_\_\_



JAN 17 2025



# H.B. NO. 705

**Report Title:**

Kupuna Caucus; EOA; SHIP; Low-Income Subsidy Programs; Medicaid; Medicare; Medi-Medi Project; Underserved Populations; Community Outreach; Application and Renewal Process; Reports; Appropriations

**Description:**

Establishes a temporary Medi-Medi Project within the Hawaii State Health Insurance Assistance Program administered by the Executive Office on Aging to assist older adults, Medicare beneficiaries, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations who may qualify for various low-income subsidy programs to gain access to their benefits. Requires the Executive Office on Aging to submit reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

