

JAN 23 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EMERGENCY AEROMEDICAL SERVICES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that most rural
2 communities in the State have fewer health care resources
3 compared to communities on Oahu, including access to advanced
4 levels of trauma care, medical specialists, and sub-specialists.
5 This puts patients in these areas at greater risk of poor
6 outcomes for serious medical conditions such as heart attack,
7 stroke, and traumatic bodily injuries.

8 The legislature further finds that the existing aeromedical
9 services system is overburdened. The State is currently served
10 by only one statewide aeromedical provider, for which there are
11 few viable and cost-effective alternatives in the event of a
12 grounding, for example, due to maintenance issues or crew
13 availability. Emergency aeromedical services are not available
14 for many patients in rural counties and areas.

15 The legislature further finds that one model to improve
16 emergency aeromedical services could be based on the county of
17 Maui's medevac service model. Act 2, Special Session Laws of
18 Hawaii 2003, appropriated general funds for the provision of

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1 emergency aeromedical helicopter services for the county of
2 Maui. Act 213, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, appropriated
3 general funds for a replacement helicopter for the county of
4 Maui aeromedical emergency medical services program. The
5 department of health cost-shares a helicopter with the county of
6 Maui and contracts with a private entity to provide staff and
7 operate the helicopter for emergency aeromedical services.

8 The legislature further finds that the department of health
9 has the authority to establish emergency aeromedical services
10 but lacks sufficient resources to implement the Maui model in
11 other rural counties. Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is
12 to appropriate funds to increase the availability of emergency
13 aeromedical services.

14 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$_____ or so
16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 and
17 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
18 year 2027-2028 to assist the counties, other than the county of
19 Kalawao, to increase access to emergency aeromedical services,
20 to be allocated as follows:

- 21 (1) \$_____ to the city and county of Honolulu;
22 (2) \$_____ to the county of Maui;

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1 (3) \$_____ to the county of Hawaii; and

2 (4) \$_____ to the county of Kauai.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by each county for
4 the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$_____ or so
7 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 and
8 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
9 year 2027-2028 to be deposited into the emergency medical
10 services special fund.

11 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the emergency
12 medical services special fund the sum of \$_____ or so much
13 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 and the
14 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
15 2027-2028 for the establishment of and operating expenses for
16 emergency aeromedical services, including the procurement of
17 helicopters.

18 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
19 of health for the purposes of this Act.

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1 SECTION 5. This Act, upon its approval, shall take effect
2 on July 1, 2025.

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INTRODUCED BY: 

5

BY REQUEST

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Report Title:

DOH; Emergency Aeromedical Services; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Health to expand access to emergency aeromedical services.

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

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Health

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY
AEROMEDICAL SERVICES.

PURPOSE: To appropriate funds to the Department to
increase the availability of emergency
aeromedical services in rural counties.

MEANS: Appropriate funds.

JUSTIFICATION: Most rural communities have fewer healthcare
resources compared to communities on Oahu,
including advanced levels of trauma care,
medical specialists, and sub-specialists.
Funding to increase access to emergency
medical services, including emergency
aeromedical services, is needed to improve
the quality of health care available to
rural communities in the State.

Impact on the public: This bill will
provide improved access to medical care for
rural communities in the State.

Impact on the department and other agencies:
The resources required to implement or
enhance emergency aeromedical services will
vary by county due to different
infrastructure needs, which include whether
or not the county has a helicopter, hangars,
medical staff, technical staff, and other
equipment. As the appropriations will not
cover the entire cost, each county will need
to share in the costs in an amount to be
determined later.

GENERAL FUND: \$_____.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM
DESIGNATION: HTH 730.

OTHER AFFECTED

AGENCIES:

County of Kauai, County of Maui, County of
Hawaii, and City and County of Honolulu.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

July 1, 2025.