

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1228

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 14 , 2025

RE: S.B. No. 1281

S.D. 2

H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Health, to which was referred S.B. No. 1281, S.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO TELEHEALTH,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Update the State's laws on telehealth services to conform with federal Medicare regulations;
- (2) Require the Insurance Commissioner to report to the Legislature on reimbursements claimed in the previous calendar year for certain telehealth services; and
- (3) Repeal the sunset date of Act 107, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Disability and Communication Access Board; State Council on Mental Health; Hawai'i Primary Care Association; Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition; Hawai'i Academy of Family Physicians; AARP Hawai'i; American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center; Hawai'i Mental Health Coalition; Alzheimer's Association-Hawaii;

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AlohaCare; and three individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Hawaii Medical Service Association. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Health; Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; Department of Human Services; Department of the Attorney General; University of Hawai'i System; Healthcare Association of Hawaii; Hawaii Medical Association; and Hawaii Association of Health Plans.

Your Committee finds that the State's rural and underprivileged communities are often cut off from receiving essential health care services through telehealth because they lack the broadband coverage necessary to access this care. Your Committee further finds that the use of standard telephone contact for telehealth visits during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the effectiveness of this tool as a mode of essential health care delivery, particularly for residents living in rural, isolated, or underprivileged communities.

Your Committee also finds that this measure is intended to conform telehealth definitions under state law to be consistent with recent federal guidance. However, your Committee notes that there are currently numerous uncertainties regarding federal health care policy, including how the federal government may interpret reimbursement guidelines for audio-only telehealth services. Given the lack of certainty surrounding federal policies in this area, your Committee believes that attempting to conform state law to federal regulations may be premature at this point.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting the provisions that would have codified updates to the State's laws on telehealth services to conform with federal Medicare regulations and required the Insurance Commissioner to report certain reimbursement information to the Legislature;
- (2) Extending the sunset date of Act 107, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, to December 31, 2027; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.



As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 1281, S.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1281, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health,



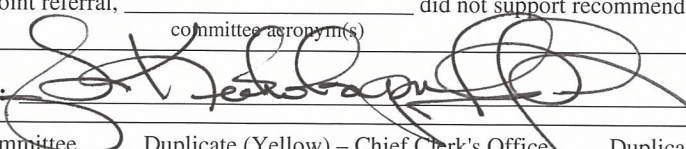
GREGO TARAVAMA, Chair



State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
The Thirty-third Legislature

HB CR 1228

Record of Votes of the Committee on Health

Bill/Resolution No.: SB1281, SD2	Committee Referral: HLT, CPC, FIN	Date: March 12, 2025		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.				
The recommendation is to: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended (as is) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments (HD) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold <input type="checkbox"/> Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)				
HLT Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. TAKAYAMA, Gregg (C)	X			
2. KEOHOKAPU-LEE LOY, Sue L. (VC)	X			
3. AMATO, Terez	X			
4. CHUN, Cory M.	X			
5. MARTEN, Lisa	X			
6. OLDS, Ikaika	X			
7. TAKENOUCHI, Jenna	X			
8. ALCOS III, David				X
9. GARCIA, Diamond	X			
TOTAL (9)	8			1
The recommendation is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation. committee acronym(s)				
Vice Chair's or designee's signature: 				
Distribution: Original (White) – Committee Duplicate (Yellow) – Chief Clerk's Office Duplicate (Pink) – HMSO				