



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 1300
RELATING TO CANCER

House Committee on Health
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 5, 2025

9:30AM

Room 329

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, members of the House Committee on Health:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 1300 which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center to conduct a multiethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos, including an analysis of the health effects and risks of individuals living in close proximity to landfills in Nanakuli, O'ahu. This bill further requires the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center to seek federal funding to complete the study.

OHA has long advocated for meaningful policies to help reduce the health disparities of Native Hawaiians and to better protect and uplift the health and vitality of the lāhui. OHA's strategy relating to improved health outcomes includes increased availability and access to quality, culturally based, and culturally adapted prevention and treatment interventions in 'ohana, schools, and communities (E Ola Mau a Mau). In furtherance of this priority, OHA supports an approach to health policy that incorporates "social determinants of health" – i.e., a holistic and systemic view in assessing and addressing health in Hawai'i's communities.

A holistic and systemic view of health must include the built and natural environment. Notably, research shows that Native Hawaiians continue to experience disparate outcomes compared to the rest of the US, with Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders having the highest prevalence of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.¹ These health disparities are correlated with disparities in areas recognized as social determinants of health, such as housing, education, social services, leisure, individual rights, culture, and public safety.

¹ Long CR, Narcisse MR, Bailey MM, Rowland B, English E, McElfish PA, "Food insecurity and chronic diseases among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the US: results of a population-based survey," J Hunger Environ Nutr. (2022), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9012098/>

For example, in addition to poorer health outcomes, of the five largest race groups in Hawai'i, Native Hawaiians have the lowest household incomes and the highest poverty rates, despite 74.5% of this population working 35 or more hours per week.²

To address these disparities, including and particularly with respect to the social determinants that may be causing or contributing to disparate health outcomes, a multiethnic study focusing on Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos is critical. Data on social determinants of health for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) in the United States are hidden because data are often not collected or are reported in aggregate with other racial/ethnic groups, despite decades of calls to disaggregate NHPI data. As a form of structural racism, data omissions contribute to systemic problems such as inability to advocate, lack of resources, and limitations to political power.³

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges this committee to **PASS HB 1300**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

² “Demographic, Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics for Selected Race Groups in Hawaii,” Research and Economic Analysis Division – Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism – State of Hawaii (March 2018) at p. ii; 11; and 13,

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/SelectedRacesCharacteristics_HawaiiReport.pdf

³ Morey BN, Chang RC, Thomas KB, Tulua, Penaia C, Tran VD, Pierson N, Greer JC, Bydalek M, Ponce N, “No Equity Without Data Equity: Data Reporting Gaps for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders as Structural Racism,” J Health Polit Policy Law (April 1, 2022) at Abstract,

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10959240/>



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Health
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

By

S. Lani Park, PhD,
Brenda Hernandez, PhD,
and Alike Maunakea, PhD, Principal Investigators

And

Naoto T. Ueno MD, PhD, Director
University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

And

T. Samuel Shomaker, MD, JD, MSM, Dean
Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, MD, Principal Investigator, Pacific Regional Central Cancer Registry,
U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, PhD, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1300 – RELATING TO CANCER

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (UHCC) and John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) strongly supports HB 1300, which would appropriate revenues for UHCC to conduct a multi-ethnic cohort study focusing on social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos in the state of Hawai'i.

This funding would provide vital resources to help initiate this long-term study, which would provide critical data to improve the cancer disparities and promote health equity in populations that experience high rates for many common cancers and continue to be understudied and underserved.

National data typically aggregate health information for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) and, thereby, ignore the rich cultural and lifestyle diversity of these populations and mask their marked differences in cancer incidence and outcomes. UHCC has extensive experience studying cancer disparities in AANHPI. Disaggregated data have revealed stark cancer disparities across Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Asian American subgroups. For instance, Native Hawaiians, among other racial/ethnic groups in the United States (US), have one of the highest rates of lung, breast, colorectal, pancreatic, gastric, liver, endometrial and cervical cancers. Most of these excess risks are only partially explained by known risk factors pointing to the need to explore new hypotheses. Pacific Islanders have high rates for many cancers that should be addressed through culturally tailored health education

and prevention efforts, such as in smoking cessation, HPV vaccination, and screening. Filipino Americans have high incidence rates for lung, colorectal and thyroid cancer in Hawai'i, and rapidly increasing rates of breast and prostate cancers. Due to gaps in the available data, such as on social determinants of health and environmental and occupational exposures, the specific reasons that drive these disparities remain unknown. A new study that captures such information would directly address these research gaps. For instance, there are private waste landfills in Nānākuli, O'ahu, where a high density of Native Hawaiian communities resides. The measure of potential cancer-causing environmental hazards and exposures and their associations with health can be studied through establishing a new prospective cohort study.

The proposed two-year project would establish the feasibility of recruiting participants for a long-term prospective study and greatly strengthen a grant application to NIH to fund the full-scale research. It will also help us continue to build strong partnerships with these communities that we have initiated through our work to field a mobile health clinic with the Native Hawaiian Healthcare Systems and through the work of our Pacific Islander Community Health Workers, so as to define common priority research areas and assist with study recruitment and future dissemination of study findings.

Information from the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (the State central cancer registry, operated by the UHCC), shows disparities in how early certain cancers are diagnosed (i.e., stage at diagnosis), in the number of new cancers detected each year (i.e., incidence), and in the proportion of deaths caused by certain cancers in Native Hawaiians, Filipinos, and Pacific Islanders residing in Hawai'i. Similarly, the Pacific Regional Central Cancer Registry (the US Affiliated Pacific Islands central cancer registry, operated by JABSOM), shows significant cancer health disparities in late stage at diagnosis and extremely poor survival rates in cervical, oropharyngeal, uterine, and liver cancer among the several of the populations indigenous to the USAPI. Many of the US Pacific Islander populations move to Hawai'i for educational and economic opportunities, as well as for health care. There is inadequate information about the contributing factors to the cancer health disparities, especially in the USAPI populations who reside in Hawai'i and are diagnosed with and treated for cancer here. It is well-studied that certain types of cancer are heavily influenced by tobacco, dietary composition, and overweight/obesity. Additionally, there is a high correlation between poverty and food insecurity, tobacco use, obesity, and obesity-related chronic disease, including cancer. Studies conducted in the US, USAPI, and globally also indicate other sociocultural impacts on cancer aside from poverty.

This new multi-ethnic cohort study is highly needed, and the results will inform UHCC, JABSOM, and University of Hawai'i researchers' current and future work with Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino populations to address social, cultural, and economic determinants of cancer prevention, cancer screening, and early detection, treatment, and survivorship.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1300, provided that its passage does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Health
Wednesday, February 5, 2025; 9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 1300, RELATING TO CANCER.

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1300, RELATING TO CANCER.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This measure, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same amount for fiscal year 2026-2027, for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center to conduct a multiethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos, including an analysis of the health effects and risks of individuals living in close proximity to landfills in Nanakuli, Oahu.

The goal of medical research is to develop safe and effective methods to prevent, detect, diagnose, treat and ultimately cure the collection of diseases known as cancer. The better we understand these diseases, the more progress we will make toward diminishing the tremendous human and economic toll disease inflicts upon our citizenry.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1300
Wednesday, February 5, 2025; 9:30 a.m.
Page 2

Ten years ago, the HPCA testified in support of House Bill No. 1616, Regular Session of 2014, a measure that would add to the Hawaii State Planning Act's objectives and policies for health, the identification of social determinants of health and prioritization of programs, services, interventions, and activities that address identified social determinants of health to improve Native Hawaiian health in accordance with federal law and reduce health disparities of disproportionately affected demographics.

We noted in our testimony that House Bill No. 1616, seeks to:

" . . . identify those specific social determinants that adversely affect Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos. As these populations make a sizeable percentage of patients seen by community health centers, the HPCA strongly supports this measure."

This bill was enacted as Act 155, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014.

Eleven years later, we continue to recognize the importance of social determinants of health on the health care outcomes and quality of life of Hawaii's most vulnerable, marginalized, and isolated constituencies. The more we learn the better we are able to act.

For these reasons, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Greg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Health

From: Kanilehua Kim, Native Hawaiian Health and Community Engagement, Queen's Health Systems

Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 5, 2025

Re: Support for HB1300 - Relating to Cancer

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 10,000 affiliated physicians, caregivers, and dedicated medical staff statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1300, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center to conduct a multiethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos, including an analysis of the health effects and risks of individuals living in close proximity to landfills in Nanakuli, Oahu.

The Queen's Medical Center is a long-standing member of the University of Hawaii Cancer Consortium, of which members have a common goal to eliminate cancer through research. The UH Cancer Center is one of only 71 institutions in the United States that hold the prestigious National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation and is the only NCI-designated center in the Pacific – making it particularly appropriate to undertake this study.

This proposed effort is in alignment with QHS's mission and vision while also underscoring the work that our Native Hawaiian Health program is undertaking to address systemic inequalities related to pollutant exposure and other environmental stewardship issues. Furthermore, the proposed study's holistic approach (including social determinants of health, resilience factors, and environmental exposures) ensures that community connections to land, culture, etc. are taken into account.

The mission of The Queen's Health System is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



House Committee on Health
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 5, 2025

ACS CAN SUPPORTS HB 1300 – RELATING TO CANCER.

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawai‘i Guam
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity in **STRONG SUPPORT** HB 1300 – RELATING TO CANCER which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center to conduct a multi-ethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos and environmental factors.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, non-partisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society advocates for public policies that reduce death and suffering from cancer. ACS CAN works with federal, state, and local government bodies to support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawaii with over 2,000 deaths each year. This year over 9,000 residents of Hawaii will be diagnosed with the disease. Cancer incidence and mortality rates have decreased in Hawaii over the last decade, but despite this overall reduction, the disparities between ethnic populations continue to be of concern. Cancer is the leading cause of death among Asian Americans and the second-leading cause (after heart disease) among Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander individuals. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have one of the highest incidence rates of breast, lung, colorectal, cervical, pancreatic, gastric and liver cancers among all U.S. racial/ethnic populations.

Hawaii Statistics:

- Cancer is the leading cause of death in females and the second leading cause of death after heart disease for males over the age of one.ⁱ
- Cancer is the leading cause of death in Filipino women and the second leading cause of death after heart disease for Filipino men.ⁱⁱ
- Cancer is the leading cause of death in Native Hawaiian women and the second leading cause of death after heart disease for Native Hawaiian men.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Cancer is the leading cause of death in Pacific Islander women and the second leading cause of death after heart disease for Pacific Islander men.^{iv}

To aid in research, collecting data on Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and Asian groups including Filipinos will help to provide information on the contributing factors to cancer disparities that currently exist. Data collection will aid in future research to improve health outcomes for these minority populations.

The cancer death rate is 20% higher for individuals from the US counties with the lowest average of incomes compared to counties with a higher average of incomes. According to the US Census, there are currently over 200,000 Filipinos in the state. Research is critical to understanding and reducing cancer disparities, as well as examining gaps in cancer prevention and care delivery that contribute to these disparities.

The University of Hawaii Cancer Center is one of 72 research organizations in the U.S. designated by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the only one in the Hawaii Pacific region.^v Its mission is to reduce the burden of cancer through research, education, patient care and community outreach with an emphasis on the unique ethnic, cultural and environmental characteristics of Hawaii and the Pacific. Cancer research focusing on Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos is unique to Hawaii and the University of Hawaii Cancer Center and cannot be easily conducted anywhere else in the world. Findings will further help with receiving future research grants from National Cancer Institute specific to these minority populations.

ACS CAN supports the legislature to fund \$1 million over two years for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center to conduct a multi-ethnic cohort study for the population of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos unique to the state. All individuals should have equitable access to quality cancer care and an equal opportunity to live a healthy life. However, cancer does not affect everyone equally. Our ability to continue to make progress against cancer relies heavily on eliminating the inequities that exist in cancer care, including in research.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT on this important matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at 808.460.6109, or Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org.

ⁱ Leading Causes of Death by Sex and Race/Ethnicity State of Hawaii, 2018-2022, Dec. 1, 2023
<https://hhdw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Leading-Cause-Death-RaceEth-Sex-2018-2022.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Leading Causes of Death by Sex and Race/Ethnicity State of Hawaii, 2018-2022, Dec. 1, 2023 <https://hhdw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Leading-Cause-Death-RaceEth-Sex-2018-2022.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Leading Causes of Death by Sex and Race/Ethnicity State of Hawaii, 2018-2022, Dec. 1, 2023
<https://hhdw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Leading-Cause-Death-RaceEth-Sex-2018-2022.pdf>

^{iv} Leading Causes of Death by Sex and Race/Ethnicity State of Hawaii, 2018-2022, Dec. 1, 2023
<https://hhdw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Leading-Cause-Death-RaceEth-Sex-2018-2022.pdf>

^v University of Hawaii Cancer Center <https://www.uhcancercenter.org/50years>



Iron Workers Stabilization Fund

T. George Paris
Managing Director
February ,2025

Members of the House Committee on Health

RE: HB 1300 – RELATING TO CANCER

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Keohokapu Lee-Loy and Members of the Committee,

The Ironworkers Stabilization Fund strongly supports HB1300, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center for a crucial multiethnic cohort study. This study, focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos, is essential for understanding and addressing health disparities in our state.

Investigating the impact of environmental factors, particularly for individuals living near landfills in Nanakuli, is critical. A 2010-2015 CDC small-area life expectancy study found that residents in this area had a life expectancy 10 years lower than the state average. The Waianae coast communities, in general, experience disproportionately higher rates of certain cancers and other chronic diseases, underscoring the urgent need for this research. This focus on environmental justice is paramount.

This study will not only benefit the Waianae community but also inform interventions for other communities facing similar environmental challenges. Identifying strengths and protective factors within these communities will contribute to building resilience and promoting positive health outcomes statewide.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB1300 for the health and safety of the people of Hawai'i. Thank you.

Sincerely,

T. George Paris
Managing Director

National Center for Health Statistics. U.S. Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP): Life Expectancy Estimates File for {Jurisdiction}, 2010-2015]. National Center for Health Statistics. 2018. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/usaleep/usaleep.html>.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:18:40 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lourdes Vergara Marcelo	Lou's Quality Home Health Care Services, LLC & Advanced Care Training, LLC, Philippine Nurses Asso	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1300

Re: Multi- Ethnic CoHorts Study ,

I support the HB 1300 for the University of Hawai'i's Cancer Center to conduct a Multi-Ethnic Cohorts study . The Cancer Center needs funding to continue or to initiate this study . Hawai'i as a multi -ethnic state has with high cases of Cancer, from breast cancer, ovarian cancer , prostate cancer for men , etc. . As a Reg. Nurse , providing nursing care in the community , in the homes , my team staff and I provide nursing care of clients that are diagnosed with Cancer. One lady just retired from teaching ,barely enjoying her SS or retirements and is now undergoing chemotherapy & radiation therapy. I see a lot from our countrymen as well, American Filipinos , Native Hawaiians & the Pacific Islanders . Once funded ,the study will unlock a lot of WHYs What, Where,Who ? . Social determinant , exposure , diet , are these factors contributing to the high or increases of CANCER cases? Is living close to a land fill , vegetation where pesticides is being used a contributing factor?

Please pass the HB 1300 . .

U.H. Cancer Center need your support in funding the study .

Thank you .

Lourdes Vergara Marcelo , RN

808 623 7109

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 3:50:37 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alika Maunakea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: HB1300 - RELATING TO CANCER

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee

Hearing: Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee.

I am Dr. Alika Maunakea, Professor in the Department of Anatomy, Biochemistry and Physiology at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), and Principal Investigator of the NIH-funded Hawai‘i Social Epigenomics of Early Diabetes (HI-SEED) cohort study and the proposed Hawai‘i Multicultural Asian and Native Ancestry (HI-MANA) cohort study. I strongly support **HB1300**, which would appropriate critical funding to the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center (UHCC) to establish a multi-ethnic cohort study focusing on social determinants of health, lifestyle factors, environmental exposures, and resilience in Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino communities.

As a Native Hawaiian born and raised in Nānākuli, O‘ahu, I have witnessed the devastating impact of cancer on my own family and community. Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in Hawai‘i and has cost our state billions of dollars. Moreover, minorities in Hawai‘i—particularly Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos—experience disproportionately high rates of many common cancers. Despite this, the factors driving these disparities remain poorly understood. Combining this experience with my vantage point as a biomedical researcher at JABSOM and a member of the UH Cancer Center, I see firsthand the urgent need to identify the underlying environmental and sociocultural contributors. Pollutants and toxins from nearby industrial zones—including landfills—may play key roles in elevating cancer risk. It is critically important to gather robust data to identify and confirm these linkages so we can develop effective, community-driven prevention and early detection strategies.

The establishment of a new multi-ethnic cohort study is critical because current national datasets often lump Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) into a single category, obscuring the distinct social, cultural, and biological factors that contribute to cancer incidence and outcomes. By focusing on Hawai‘i’s local populations, the study will allow for data disaggregation that can illuminate the unique risk factors, social determinants, and resilience strategies of Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino communities. This deeper

understanding is particularly vital given the pronounced cancer burdens observed in these groups. Native Hawaiians, for example, have some of the highest rates of lung, breast, and colorectal cancers in the United States. Pacific Islanders, meanwhile, also contend with elevated cancer risks, highlighting the need for culturally tailored interventions such as smoking cessation programs, HPV vaccination, and improved screening initiatives. Filipino Americans in Hawai‘i face similarly concerning statistics, including high rates of lung, colorectal, and thyroid cancers, alongside rapidly increasing breast and prostate cancer rates.

Although factors such as tobacco use, dietary patterns, obesity, and socioeconomic disparities have been identified as partial contributors to these heightened cancer risks, much remains unknown about the roles played by specific environmental exposures—such as industrial pollutants—and other sociocultural elements. The passage of **HB1300** will provide essential support for collecting the kind of comprehensive data needed to clarify these multifaceted interactions and shape effective, prevention-oriented strategies. Moreover, the two-year project will help demonstrate recruitment feasibility, strengthen existing community partnerships, and bolster future grant applications to major funding entities like the National Institutes of Health (NIH). It will build on promising collaborations already established through the HI-SEED cohort study and the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center’s work with the Native Hawaiian Healthcare Systems and Pacific Islander Community Health Workers.

Over the long term, examining the social determinants of health, environmental exposures, and resilience factors among Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos will lead to actionable insights that can inform culturally sensitive approaches to cancer prevention, early detection, clinical care, and survivorship. By prioritizing prevention over treatment, **HB1300** affirms Hawai‘i’s dedication to addressing cancer disparities head-on and lays the groundwork for further national support. Through this investment in research and community engagement, Hawai‘i has the opportunity to reduce—and ultimately eliminate—the cancer inequalities that have placed such a heavy burden on many of its most vulnerable populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for your **support** and passage of **HB 1300**. Your commitment to this research is an investment in a healthier future for all of Hawai‘i’s diverse communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:52:55 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
McKayla McCullah	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a young Native Hawaiian woman and a member of the Wai'anae community, to see the negative impact of health disparities isn't uncommon to me. Some of the most common leading causes of death amongst Native Hawaiians are cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. As a granddaughter and a niece to those who have fought against these diseases and have lost and to some who are still fighting, this research to me would mean that there are people who still care about using their skills and talents to do what they can for these people that I care about and my community. To have research focus on being done for multi-ethnic communities, means that someone sees us; thanks to the UH Cancer Research Center we have experts who want to focus more on the people of their land. With the help from you, this can continue. According to the UH Cancer Research Center in 2018, "Hawai'i men and women had higher incidence of cancers of the liver and intrahepatic bile duct and stomach compared to the US overall." By finding and researching these facts of our Native Hawaiian communities, we can get to the roots of these problems and hopefully find more solutions. As a Kamehameha Alumni and a beneficiary child of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, a Hawaiian princess who had done nothing but give back to her people and who had also passed due to breast cancer, I ask that you help us fight this fight for her and for our communities.

To: House Committee on Health
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 1300 – RELATING TO CANCER.

Hrg: Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Chair Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair, Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Cheryl K. Okuma and I am an advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. I am in STRONG **SUPPORT** of HB 1300 – RELATING TO CANCER. Cancer affects everyone, but it does not affect everyone equally.

Cancer has touched myself, family members across generations, as well as friends in its many different forms. A multi-ethnic research is a positive step towards understanding challenges of cancer impacts in our ethnically diverse population. Research is a step towards progress in achieving equity in our fight against cancer.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawaii and the leading cause of death among Asian Americans and the second-leading cause (after heart disease) among Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander individuals.

Research is critical to understanding and reducing cancer disparities, as well as examining gaps in cancer prevention and care delivery that contribute to these disparities for minority populations unique to Hawaii.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 1300 for state funding of \$1 million over two years on a multi-ethnic cohort study by the University of Hawaii Cancer Center of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and Asian groups including Filipinos.

Sincerely,
Cheryl K. Okuma
Wailuku, 96793

To: House Committee on Health
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 1300 – RELATING TO CANCER.

Hrg: Wednesday, February 5, 2025

My name is Mark Vasconcellos and I am an advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. I thank you for the opportunity to SUPPORT HB 1300 – RELATING TO CANCER.

As a survivor of stage 3 non hodgekins lymphoma cancer and secondary male breast cancer. I'm now 19 plus cancer free. Also a survivor of colon cancer stage 1. Now a survivor for now 10 years. So I ask humbly to support us in this bill submitted to you.

Research is critical to understanding and reducing cancer disparities, as well as examining gaps in cancer prevention and care delivery that contribute to these disparities. I ask that you support funding for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center to conduct a multi ethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Asians including Filipinos.

Everyone should have equitable access to quality cancer care and an equal opportunity to live a healthy life. Our ability to continue to make progress against cancer relies heavily on eliminating the inequities that exist in cancer care, including research. Data collection will aid future research to improve health equity for minority populations unique to the people of Hawaii.

Please support and pass HB 1300.

Sincerely,
Mark Vasconcellos
Honolulu, 96822