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STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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April 1, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1477 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO SOCIAL SERVICES.**

Hearing: April 2, 2025, 10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and respectfully requests an amendment of the effective date. In March, the Social Security Administration (SSA) informed DHS that it requires four months to make system changes following the bill's signing to implement the increase. DHS respectfully requests that the measure take effect on October 1, 2025, to allow SSA sufficient time to modify its system.

PURPOSE: Increase the domiciliary care rates for certain providers and clarifies that the needs allowance and the domiciliary care rates are included in the State supplemental payment ceiling amounts. (SD1)

DHS appreciates the Committee on Human Services and Homelessness amendments,

- (1) Removing the specific statutory reference to the starting date for the increase in needs allowance and state supplemental payment;
- (2) Deleting as unnecessary the appropriation for the Department of Human Services' Community-Based Residential Support Program;
- (3) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

DHS appreciates the Committee on Health and Human Services' amendments,

- (1) Clarifying its legislative findings;
- (2) Making it effective upon its approval; and
- (3) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a testimony in support of this measure.



STATE OF HAWAI'I
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
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April 2, 2025

The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Dela Cruz, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB1477 HD1 SD1 Relating to Social Services

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB1477 HD1 SD1**, which clarifies that the monthly needs allowance afforded to individuals living in certain long-term care facilities is not intended to replace or affect funds received as a state supplemental payment for domiciliary care and shall be supplemental to any funds provided to a recipient as a state supplemental payment for domiciliary care.

The monthly needs allowance is a crucial resource for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), supporting their independence, dignity, and active participation in their communities. This allowance helps cover essential personal expenses such as communication services, hygiene products, and transportation—expenses that directly impact an individual's ability to engage meaningfully in daily life. This bill provides necessary clarification to ensure that the needs allowance remains supplemental to state payments, preventing unintended reductions in financial support and allowing individuals to retain greater control over their personal resources.

Although recent legislative efforts aimed to strengthen financial assistance for individuals with I/DD through increases in both the needs allowance and state supplemental payments, the current structure has resulted in the unintended offset of one payment against the other. The proposed bill corrects this issue by ensuring that individuals receive the full benefits as originally intended. For those residing in long-term care settings, maintaining financial autonomy is not just a matter of practicality—it directly affects their ability to

participate in social activities, pursue personal interests, and maintain a sense of self-determination.

Furthermore, financial stability plays a key role in reducing reliance on crisis interventions and emergency services by enabling individuals to proactively manage their well-being. Ensuring that the needs allowance remains intact also aligns with broader efforts to promote equity and inclusion, reinforcing the state's commitment to supporting all residents, including those with disabilities, in leading full and engaged lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB1477 HD1 SD1**.

Sincerely,



Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



March 28, 2025

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Senators Henry J.C. Aquino, Lynn DeCoite, Brandon J.C. Elefante, Troy N. Hashimoto, Lorraine R. Inouye, Dru Mamo Kanuha, Michelle N. Kidani, Donna Mercado Kim, Chris Lee, Glenn Wakai, and Kurt Fevella, Committee Members

RE: HB 1477 RELATING TO SOCIAL SERVICES – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting this letter in support of HB 1477 on behalf of Easterseals Hawaii. Easterseals Hawaii served 2,025 Hawaii community members with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in 2024. Our purpose is to create a more equitable world where people with I/DD can choose their own path.

HB 1477 aims to improve financial support for individuals with I/DD living in long-term care facilities, as well as their service providers. It ensures that funds are properly allotted and resolves discrepancies in existing law by preventing the needs allowance increase enacted last year for individuals in such facilities from being deducted from the state supplemental payment increase. This bill is an imperative step in ensuring that recipients receive the entirety of the financial relief they need and are entitled to.

Easterseals Hawaii supports HB 1477 and respectfully requests your “aye” vote.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this letter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Liebert Lewis".

Rachel Liebert Lewis

Director, Public Policy and Advocacy

Easterseals Hawaii

PublicPolicyAndAdvocacy@eshawaii.org