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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB705
Relating to the Executive Office on Aging

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
REP. KYLE T. YAMASHITA, CHAIR
REP. JENNA TAKENOUCI, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: February 24, 2025
12:00 P.M.

Room Number: 308
Via Videoconference

- 1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
- 2 of Health, **strongly supports HB705.**
- 3 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates funds for SFY 2025-2026 and the same sum for
- 4 SFY 2026-2027 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position within the EOA and for
- 5 operating costs to be expended by the EOA for this pilot project.
- 6 **Purpose and Justification:** The bill establishes a Medi-Medi project within the Advocacy,
- 7 Education, and Outreach Section (AEOS) to screen residents who may be dually eligible for
- 8 Medicare and Medicaid. This Section provides information and assistance on low-income
- 9 subsidy programs that can help to offset healthcare costs such as premiums, deductibles,
- 10 copayments, coinsurance, and late enrollment penalties. With 33 years of proven experience,
- 11 staff and volunteer counselors educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries to make cost-
- 12 effective, informed health care decisions based on their own needs and ability to pay.

1 Hawai‘i is No.1 in the nation with the highest cost of living as well as having the longest
2 average lifespan at 80.7 years of age. Residents continue to struggle with the increasing costs for
3 healthcare services and prescription drugs. Since the pandemic, the Department of Human
4 Services (DHS) reported the number of Medicaid members rose 24.4% from 46,013 to 58,085.
5 The Medicaid eligibility redetermination period began in 2023 and ended in December 2024.
6 Throughout this period, a significant increase in the volume of calls, emails, website visits, and
7 referrals were received from Med-QUEST and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to help
8 those who lost coverage. Two staff and the volunteer counselors successfully addressed the
9 demands, however, the program experienced slower than usual response rates.
10 Currently, this Section screens for eligibility for low-income subsidy programs such as
11 Medicaid/Medicare Savings Programs, Extra Help, or Part D plans; helps individuals to find
12 MarketPlace options for those uninsured; and provides information and referrals for other
13 assistance programs to address food, housing, or caregiving needs. The Medi-Medi project will
14 streamline the Medicaid application process and ensure the submission of applications, helping
15 individuals with quicker access to benefits. The project would help Med-Quest save time and
16 resources, resulting in faster intake processing for initial applications. In addition, by supporting
17 the Medicaid intake process, EOA could bill for Medicaid Administrative Claiming, thus
18 generating ongoing revenue to sustain these services.

19 **Recommendation:** EOA strongly supports this measure provided that its enactment does not
20 reduce or replace priorities with the Administration’s budget request.

21 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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**The State Legislature
House Committee on Finance
Monday, February 24, 2025
12:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for H.B. 705, HD1 Relating to Executive Office on Aging (Medi-Medi)

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals aged 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP is in support of H.B. 705, HD1 which seeks to establish the Medi-Medi project under the Executive Office on Aging. This initiative is crucial for the well-being of our kupuna and other vulnerable residents who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

Hawai'i residents continue to struggle with the increasing costs for healthcare services and prescription drugs. Since the pandemic, the Department of Human Services (DHS) reported the number of Medicaid members rose 24.4% from 46,013 to 58,085. The proposed Medi-Medi project under the Executive Office on Aging (EOA) will screen residents who may be dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid and assist them in making cost-effective, informed health care decisions based on their own needs and ability to pay. This will help streamline the Medicaid application process and ensure the submission of applications, helping individuals with quicker access to benefits. The project would help Med-Quest save time and resources, resulting in faster intake processing for initial applications.

In due course, the Medi-Medi project will help:

- **Improve Health Outcomes** by facilitating quicker access to healthcare services which will help prevent the escalation of medical conditions, leading to better health outcomes for our residents.



- **Reduce Administrative Burden** by streamlining the application process and alleviate the administrative burden on both applicants and state agencies, allowing for more efficient use of resources.
- **Promote Equity**- The project will help bridge the gap in healthcare access for low-income individuals, promoting greater equity in our healthcare system.

Hawaii House Bill 705 represents a significant step forward in supporting our dually eligible residents. AARP appreciates the committee's consideration to pass this bill and help ensure that all Hawai'i residents have access to the healthcare services they need.

Thank you for the opportunity to support H.B 705, HD1.



Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Monday, February 24, 2025
12:00 noon
State Capitol Conference Room 308 and via videoconference

Re: HB 705 HD 1 Relating to the Executive Office on Aging

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am testifying as an individual who has worked in healthcare for over thirty-five years, and I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition supports HB 705 HD 1, which 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; and appropriates funds.

For struggling families, the Medi-Medi Project will make a positive difference in their health and well-being.

We urge you to support the proposed Medi-Medi Project and HB 705 HD 1, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email garysimon@hawaii.rr.com

HB-705-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 4:18:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In STRONG SUPPORT of HB705 HD1.

Aloha Chair and members of the Committee,

Please vote YES on this measure that will help residents in our rural communities to access their benefits and better maintain their helath.

Nancy Moser in Waikoloa on Hawai'i Island

HB-705-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 4:27:47 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Yamashita and Members of the Finance Committee. I and my wife Deborah are both in strong support of this legislation to establish a Medi-Medi Project within the Hawaii State Health Insurance Assistance Program administrated by the Executive Office on Aging. It will provide help to older adults, Medicare beneficiaries, individual with disabilities, and underserved populations who my qualify for various low -income subsidy programs to gain access to their benefits. These people in great need should have the necessary help to seek this existing support intended for them.