

DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Rm. 118 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129 • (808) 204-2466 (VP)

April 2, 2025

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Bill 705 HD1 SD1 – Relating to the Executive Office on Aging

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 705, HD1, SD1 – Relating to the Executive Office on Aging. This bill establishes a temporary Medi-Medi Project within the Hawaii State Health Insurance Assistance Program to be 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. Appropriates funds. Effective 12/31/2050. (SD1)

This initiative is crucial in providing support to older adults, Medicare beneficiaries, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations who may qualify for various low income subsidy programs.

Access to medical care is a fundamental right, yet many individuals in these groups face significant challenges in navigating the complex landscape of available health benefits.

The Medi-Medi Project will address these challenges by assisting these populations in obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled, thereby promoting greater access to healthcare and improving their quality of life.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



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
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

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: HB705 HD1 SD1 Relating to The Executive Office on Aging

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB705 HD1 SD1**, 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.

To ensure that this bill effectively meets the needs of individuals with disabilities under the age of 65, it is essential that appropriations be directed toward services and programs specifically designed to support this group. This includes ensuring that the Executive Office on Aging (EOA) has the necessary resources to implement and manage initiatives that assist individuals with disabilities.

From past projects such as the No Wrong Door and the Aging and Disability Resource Center, we have learned that the Executive Office on Aging has faced challenges in addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities due to appropriations constraints and limited resources. We are grateful for EOA's continued inclusion of our disability community in projects and look forward to working closely with them in supporting our vulnerable populations.

April 2, 2025

Page 2 of 2

For individuals in the intellectually or developmentally disabled (I/DD) community, this bill could help improve access to long-term services that promote independent living, increase care coordination to reduce gaps in support, and enhance resources for family caregivers. Strengthening these areas would allow individuals with I/DD to receive the appropriate care and services they need to participate fully in their communities and lead meaningful lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB705 HD1 SD1.

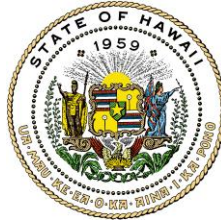
Sincerely,



Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE



CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR

Telephone
(808) 586-0100

Fax
(808) 586-0185

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831**

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB705 HD1, SD1
Relating to the Executive Office on Aging**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR

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

Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 10:01 A.M.

Room Number: 211

EOA's Position: The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of Health, **strongly supports HB705 HD1, SD1** and recommends an amendment for consideration.

Fiscal Implications: This measure requests a full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position and operating cost appropriation for SFY 2025-2026. However, EOA requests the project includes funding and personnel for 2026-2027 as outlined in the recommendation below.

Purpose and Justification: This bill will establish the medi-medi project in EOA to support the underserved population eligible for Medicare and Medicaid to access low-income subsidy program benefits. The project will assist with navigating and applying for Medicaid/Medicare Savings Program, Extra Help, Part D prescription drug plans, or options for those uninsured.

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 Medicaid eligibility redetermination

period began in 2023 and ended in December 2024. Throughout this period, EOA had a significant increase in calls, emails, website visits, and referrals from Med-QUEST and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to help those who lost coverage.

Two staff and a cohort of volunteer counselors successfully addressed the demands, however, EOA experienced slower response rates, and staff and volunteers reported burnout.

The benefits of the Medi-Medi project are threefold. First, individuals will have access to a streamlined application process and confirmation to timely submission to MedQuest, thus starting coverage sooner for qualified individuals. In addition, this project will expand services and referral to other assistance programs to address food, housing, and caregiving needs, thereby increasing the amount of disposable income for these individuals. Second, MedQuest will improve processing times for eligibility and redetermination renewals. Third, EOA will build its infrastructure and expand access to coordinated services for Medicare beneficiaries. EOA's intent was to demonstrate this as a project and make it a permanent program in future years as the needs are projected to increase in alignment with the growing aging population. By supporting the general funded 1.0 FTE, EOA will be able to bill for Medicaid Administrative Claiming, thus building a new funding stream to support growth and expansion.

Recommendation: EOA is requesting **\$100,000 for operating costs** (i.e. outreach campaign, contracted support, educational materials, initial start-up costs); and one full-time equivalent **(1.0 FTE) program specialist V position** for 2025-2026 **and 2026-2027**. To implement and gather data for analysis and reporting, an additional 12 months of funding is needed to establish the position and infrastructure to successfully launch the project.

We **strongly support** this measure provided that its enactment does not reduce or replace priorities with the Administration's budget request.



1001 Bishop Street #625 | Honolulu, HI 96813
866-295-7282 | aarp.org/hi | hiaarp@aarp.org |
[Twitter.com/aarphawaii](https://twitter.com/aarphawaii) | facebook.com/aarphawaii

**The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Conference Room 211, 10:01 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for H.B. 705, HD1, SD1 Relating to Executive Office on Aging (Medi-Medi)

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz 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, SD1 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, HD1, SD1 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, SD1.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB705 HD1 SD1, RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

April 2, 2025

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Ways & Means Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB705 HD1 SD1, RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING. The Democratic Party of Hawai'i's platform emphasizes the importance of public funding for kupuna and family care programs, ensuring equal access to medical services and long-term care without exhausting personal and family resources.

The recent challenges faced by our community, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 Maui wildfires, have highlighted the critical need for robust support systems for our most vulnerable populations. The Medi-Medi Project is a timely and essential initiative that addresses these needs by providing a vital safety net for those who need it most. This project will significantly enhance community outreach, streamline processes, and offer additional services to ensure that underserved populations are fully informed about and can access the benefits available to them. This bill represents a significant step forward in our commitment to supporting our kupuna and ensuring that all members of our community receive the care and support they deserve.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of HB705 HD1 SD1, RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR

SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR

Re: HB705 HD1, SD1, Relating to the Executive Office on Aging

Hearing: Wednesday, April 2 at 10:01am in Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

I am Beverly Gotelli Chair, of the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs (PABEA), which is an appointed board tasked with advising the Executive Office on Aging (EOA). My testimony does not represent the views of the EOA but of PABEA.

The members of PABEA, SUPPORT HB705 HD1, SD1, which establishes a temporary Medi-Medi Project within 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.

This is a project that is needed to assist with our aging population. We are seeing more and more kupuna having to make difficult choices on their health care. There are numerous stories that can be shared and each is meaningful. Imagine a single kupuna who may have early stages of dementia and cannot recall what appointments they have. This is happening and they do not know where to turn too.

The project 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.

Hawai'i residents continue to struggle with the increasing costs of 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 Medi-Medi project will streamline the Medicaid application process and help individuals with quicker access to benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB705 HD 1, SD 1.



To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Director of Public Policy
Sarielyn Curtis, External Affairs Specialist

Hearing: Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 10:01 AM, Conference Room 211

RE: **HB705 HD1 SD1 Relating to the Executive Office on Aging**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB705 HD1 SD1**. This measure establishes a temporary Medi-Medi Project within the Hawai'i 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.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 70,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 37 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

As a safety-net health plan dedicated to serving our state's Medicaid and Medi-Medi population, AlohaCare appreciates expanding resources to help our kūpuna access support navigating an oftentimes complex maze of programs and services. We support this measure to improve access to healthcare and other services toward whole-person health.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB705 HD1 SD1**.

HB-705-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 5:49:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB705 HD1 SD1 to establish a project within EOA's State Health Insurance Assistance Program to assist older adults, Medicare recipients, individuals with disabilities and other underserved populations to get information and access to services. It is imperative that these populations are provided services, hopefully to keep them out of nursing homes and to improve, or at least preserve, their quality of life.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Barbara J. Service MSW

Child Welfare Supervisor (ret.)

Passionate Kupuna advocate