



# 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 Higher Education  
Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 2:15 p.m.

By

T. Samuel Shomaker, MD, Dean,  
Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, MD, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs,  
Kamal Masaki, MD, Chair, Department of Geriatric Medicine  
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HCR 31/HR 30 – REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO EXPLORE THE  
FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING AN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESEARCH CENTER  
AND IDENTIFY THE REQUIREMENTS FOR RECEIVING FEDERAL FUNDING FROM  
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESEARCH

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present COMMENTS today. The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) supports the intent of HCR 31/HR 30 which requests that the University of Hawai'i explore the feasibility of establishing an Alzheimer's Disease research center and to identify the requirement for receiving federal funding through the National Institute on Aging.

Hawai'i's aging population is increasing rapidly and approximately 31,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. JABSOM appreciates the significant impact Alzheimer's Disease has on our communities, families, healthcare providers, and the patients themselves. However, this may not be an appropriate time to conduct the kind of study envisioned in HCR 31/HR 30 considering the instability at the federal level and the uncertainty in funding streams for federal grants.

The award of a federal grant for a research center requires core faculty and programs to support robust administration, investigator development or research training, community engagement, research infrastructure, regulatory core, and several solid research projects that are multidisciplinary and include basic science, translational science, and clinical research (including clinical trials).

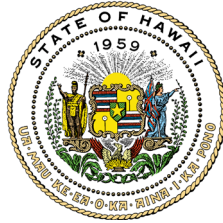
We are closely watching activities at the Federal level that will likely impact our research and education. We are concerned the University may not have sufficient personnel to plan an Alzheimer's Disease research center. Many of our research grants aim to

better understand and reduce unequal disease burdens among some of Hawai'i's populations. The extent to which those will be affected by the federal policies and orders issued by the current administration is unknown at this time.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAI'I  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I

**KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH**  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE



**STATE OF HAWAI'I**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
**KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO**  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING**  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HCR31/HR30**  
**REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY**  
**OF ESTABLISHING AN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESEARCH CENTER AND**  
**IDENTIFY THE REQUIREMENTS FOR RECEIVING FEDERAL FUNDING FROM**  
**THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**  
**RESEARCH.**

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
REP. ANDREW TAKUYA, CHAIR  
REP. TEREZ AMATO, VICE CHAIR

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

Hearing: Wednesday, March 19, 2024, 2:15 P.M. Conference Room 309

- 1 **EOA Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of
- 2 Health (DOH) supports the intent of HCR31/HR30.
- 3 **Fiscal Implications:** None.
- 4 **Purpose and Justification:** This resolution requests the University of Hawai'i to explore the
- 5 feasibility of establishing an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (research center) and to
- 6 determine the federal funding requirements for Alzheimer's Disease research from the National
- 7 Institute on Aging. According to Alzheimer's Association of Hawai'i, an estimated 31,000 older
- 8 adults, age 65 years and older, are living with Alzheimer's disease in Hawai'i, and 60,000

1 caregivers are bearing the burden of caring for their loved one. National and global research  
2 forecasts that the number of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease, or some form of  
3 dementia will continue to rise dramatically.

4       Established in 1984, these Research Centers address Alzheimer's disease and related  
5 dementias (ADRD) by providing information, local resources, support, and opportunities to  
6 participate in research. They are dedicated to developing and testing new ways to detect,  
7 diagnose, treat, and prevent dementia and to improving care for people with these diseases and  
8 their families. Starting such a research center in Hawai'i will benefit all stakeholders by  
9 elevating efforts toward addressing ADRD and improving the lives of those with the disease and  
10 their families.

11 **Recommendation:** EOA supports the intent of HCR31/HR30 and defers to the University of  
12 Hawai'i on its viability.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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*Executive Director*  
*Alzheimer's Association*

## Testimony to the House Committee on Higher Education Wednesday, March 19, 2:15 PM Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 309, and Videoconference

RE: HCR31 & HR30

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution requesting the University assess the feasibility of establishing a federally funded Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) at the University of Hawaii. My name is Coby Chock, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the Alzheimer's Association. I write in strong support of HCR31 and HR30, which will initiate the process of developing this opportunity to establish localized dementia research in the State of Hawaii and access substantial federal funds to conduct this research.

The Alzheimer's Association Hawaii Chapter is dedicated to supporting individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Hawaii has one of the greatest ethnic diversities and the largest relative concentration of Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islanders, and Asian Americans in the nation. With 31,200 people living with Alzheimer's disease in Hawaii, 60,000 caregivers providing \$1.9 billion in unpaid care, and a rapidly aging population, it is critical that we do more to be at the forefront of ending this disease. By joining 24 other states in establishing an organized research unit funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Institute on Aging (NIA), we can make significant strides.

The Alzheimer's Association is a nonpartisan organization that has mobilized advocates across the nation to secure increases in federal Alzheimer's research funding year after year. Since 2014, across many congresses and presidential administrations, annual research appropriations have increased from \$562 million in 2014 to \$3.8 billion in 2024. The University of Hawaii and research partners across the state currently contribute some scholarly research, but not nearly as much as we could if we organize a research unit to received ADRC specific federal funding to continue and expand these efforts.

It is crucial to include diverse populations in Alzheimer's research. Localized research will ensure new developments in the field address the specific needs of our diverse community, leading to more effective and inclusive diagnosis and treatments.

We urge you to support this bill because research is what will end Alzheimer's disease, and localized research will ensure new developments in the field don't overlook our diverse population. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support! If you have questions, please contact me at 808-451-3410 or [ckchock@alz.org](mailto:ckchock@alz.org).



Coby Chock  
Director of Public Policy and Advocacy  
Alzheimer's Association - Hawaii