

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0474-HD2-SD1
RELATING TO FALL PREVENTION**

SENATOR DONOVAN DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: April 02, 2025

Room Number: 211

Fiscal Implications: The Department of Health (Department) requests that this measure be considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the priorities and requests outlined in the Governor's executive budget request. The appropriation of \$100,000 for fiscal year 2025-2026 and for fiscal year 2026-2027.

Department Position: The Department strongly supports the intent of this measure.

Department Testimony: The Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch (EMSIPSB) provides the following comments on behalf of the Department. EMSIPSB recognizes the critical importance of fall prevention among seniors, particularly given the alarming statistics related to unintentional falls. As highlighted in the bill, unintentional falls among seniors aged sixty-five years and older in Hawaii are the leading cause of fatal injuries (an average of forty-nine percent) and injury-related emergency room visits (an average of sixty-one percent).

Act 153, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014, established a fall prevention and early detection coordinator position within the Department of Health. EMSIPSB currently has an existing funded position that is dedicated to addressing senior fall prevention at the state level which enables a coordinated statewide approach. However, funding for public education and awareness campaigns has decreased over the past few years.

1 An appropriation of \$100,000 would support our comprehensive Fall Prevention Campaign. This
2 campaign is conducted twice annually, in June and September, aligning with National Fall
3 Prevention Day. Currently, our budget will only allow for a limited campaign in September for
4 our annual statewide fall prevention campaign. This campaign would include the following:

5 Broadcast Media: The campaign will feature press releases from the Hawaii Department of
6 Health, morning talk show interviews on all four major networks, and the introduction of two
7 new Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Additionally, our PSAs will be broadcast a total of
8 700 times on five stations, including KIKU, during each campaign flight.

9 Community Outreach: We will organize one-on-one interactions between kupuna and
10 pharmacists to review medications for safety. Presentations at senior facilities and organizations,
11 "Home Safety Workshops" at a major hardware chain, and "Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall
12 Prevention Workshops" will be conducted to re-certify statewide instructors. Additionally, we
13 will use posters on city EXPRESS buses to further reinforce the campaign message.

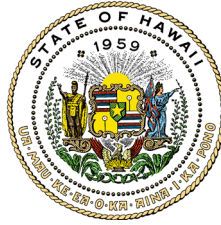
14 Materials and Travel: Funds will cover the production and distribution of educational materials,
15 such as brochures and magnets on fall prevention, and the costs associated with travel to
16 neighbor islands to support our outreach and education efforts. This includes expanding our
17 FREE pharmacy Medication Reviews to up to 80 locations across four islands and increasing the
18 number of in-person presentations using a PowerPoint program on "How to Prevent Fall
19 Injuries."

20 **Offered Amendments:** None

21 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB474 HD2, SD1
Relating to Fall Prevention**

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

Hearing Date: April 2, 2025
10:01 A.M.

Room Number: 211
Via Videoconference

EOA's Position: The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of Health, **supports HB474 HD2, SD1.**

Fiscal Implications: This measure appropriates funds for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the current fall prevention campaign.

Purpose and Justification: The bill is to appropriate funds to the Department of Health for the current fall prevention campaign. Falls are a serious health risk for older adults, as it can lead to fractures, pain, medication complications, loss of mobility and long-term care admission.

According to the CDC in 2020, 36,000 fall related deaths in adults, ages 65 and older was reported, making it the leading cause of injury death for that age group. The costs of falls by older adults equates to \$50 billion in medical costs annually, with 3/4 of those costs paid by Medicaid and Medicare.

Implementing a targeted, fall prevention campaign can prevent and reduce the impact of falls among older adults in Hawai'i. Appropriating funds to the DOH Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch (EMSIPSB) will continue their work on fall prevention and help older adults to protect their health and live a longer, better quality of life.

Recommendation: EOA supports this measure and defers to the DOH EMSIPSB on its implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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**The State Legislature
Sente 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 Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawaii
RE: Support for H.B. 474, HD2, SD1- Relating to Falls Prevention

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 age 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 supports H.B. 474, HD2, SD1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Health to fund one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) fall prevention and early detection coordinator position

According to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "falls among adults aged 65 and older are common, costly, and are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among older adults. In the United States, over 14 million, or one in four, adults ages 65 and older (older adults), report falling each year. While not all falls result in an injury, about 37% of those who fall reported an injury that required medical treatment or restricted their activity for at least one day, resulting in an estimated nine million fall injuries." In most cases, falls are preventable especially if people take steps to reduce the risks by making their homes safer, proper medications and health management, and engage in strength and balance exercises such as tai chi. The Hawaii Department of Health has had a successful fall prevention program that included certified tai chi classes, and it has expanded these classes to over thirty locations and all YMCA5 statewide. Exercise programs like Tai-chi and other falls prevention education and awareness efforts should be continued and supported to reduce the risk of fall-related injuries especially among Hawaii's older residents. A statewide falls prevention program should be available with the necessary staff to operate it.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in **support of H.B. 474, HD2, SD1.**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon M. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING

DATE: Wednesday April 2, 2025
TIME: 10:01 AM.
PLACE: CONFERENCE ROOM 211 & VIA
VIDEOCONFERENCE

Aloha Most Honorable Chair Dela Cruz,

COMMENTS AND TESTIMONY - Aloha in Reference to BILL HB474
Referring to Fall Prevention

My name is Stanley Michaels and for 17 years and 10 months I was the Senior Fall Prevention Specialist for the State of Hawaii Department of Health, Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention (EMSIPSB). Even though I am now formally retired, I cannot stop fighting for the necessity of fiscal support for the Fall Prevention program. So I am an 83 year old kupuna, and you have read the support from many organizations. Senior falls is a serious problem that destroys the ability of our kupuna to continue to serve, help and assist their families in vital everyday activities.

You have dozens of Bills just in this day's agenda for Transportation, Agricultural, Education, Land Use, Cessools, etc...but only one bill that protects our kupuna from deadly fall injuries.

Hawaii's kupuna lead the nation in the number of grandparents that care for their grandchildren. YES...so that Mom and Dad can go to work and help pay for the high cost of living in our incredible state; Grandma and Grandpa, our kupuna serve as the trusted family caregivers to hundreds of our children. This is the population this bill protects by serving as the Guardian, the Watchdog, the leader that

provides vital programs and information to keep this population from serious fall injuries. We must continue to inform, instruct, and teach our kupuna the vital steps to protect them from fall injuries.

It only takes a MILI-second of inattention that can lead to a fall injury that can destroy not only the senior's life...but their family also. Especially if that kupuna was caring for their grandchildren. Now the family must find someone to care for the injured grandparent, as well as look after the child that their kupuna was caring for.

FISCAL SUPPORT for this program is an excellent investment. The fall prevention program is proven to work. CDC reported that in 2014-2016 Hawaii's fall injury program generated the LOWEST fall injuries in the NATION. Investment in the DOH Fall Prevention program can save thousands of dollars. We need this investment because, over \$223 million DOLLARS, just in hospital and physician charges were required in Hawaii in 2022 just for seniors that fell. Our DOH fall prevention program works. I say "OUR" because I still volunteer and speak to kupuna to help stem the injuries.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Ways and Means Committee...I urge you to take this information seriously and consider that a mili-second could be the difference between health and disaster for your kupuna, your loved one. Generously fund this bill ... please!

Sincerely,

Stanley Michaels

Stanley Michaels
Retired DOH Fall Prevention Specialist
225 Kaiulani Ave. Apt 602
Honolulu, HI 96815 (808) 230-6675

HB-474-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 12:27:38 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelene Tenno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB474 HD2 SD1

Falls prevention is so important to all of us especially our cherished Kupuna.

After my Uncle fell he was never the same and I do believe the fall shortened his life with us.

Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Raelene Tenno

HB-474-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 12:12:01 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Sugimura	Testifying for Hawaii Council of Community Associations	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB474 HD2 SD1

Hawaii Council of Community Associations fully supports this bill.

Our population is aging and with many seniors wanting to live independantly and age in place, a falls prevention program is a much needed program.

We welcome the Department of Health to work with us on a Falls Prevention Seminar and Condo Insider show to assist them in getting the word out to the community.

Thank you for allowing the submission of this testimony.

Jane Sugimura, President, Hawaii Council of Community Associations

HB-474-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:19:50 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:

Aloha chair and committee members.

I encourage your strong support of HB 474 HD2 SD1. If for no other reason, the possibility of a serious downward turn in quality of one's life following a fall, is the reason for doing everything we can to assist Kupuna in learning how to prevent falls. The financial costs are prohibitive but not nearly as important as the human costs.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Barbara J. Service. MSW

Child Welfare Supervisor (ret.)

Passionate Kupuna advocate