

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1426
RELATING TO EMERGENCY AEROMEDICAL SERVICES.**

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: February 3, 2025

Room Number: 229

1 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) strongly supports SB1424, which is
2 part of Governor Green's Administrative Package, to improve health care access and reduce
3 administrative burden related to the credentialing of health care providers.

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5 Most rural communities have fewer healthcare resources compared to communities on Oahu,
6 including advanced levels of trauma care, medical specialists, and sub-specialists. Funding to
7 increase access to emergency medical services, including emergency aeromedical services, is
8 needed to improve the quality of health care available to rural communities in the State.

9

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Hawaii Medical Association

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Date: February 3, 2025

From: Hawaii Medical Association (HMA)

Jerald Garcia MD - Chair, HMA Public Policy Committee

RE SB 1426 RELATING TO EMERGENCY AEROMEDICAL SERVICES- DOH;
Emergency Aeromedical Services; Appropriation

Position: Support

This measure would appropriate funds to the Department of Health to expand access to emergency aeromedical services.

The ongoing critical physician shortage that is most severe on the neighbor islands as well as the overall aging of Hawaii's population have contributed to the increased use of emergency medical services in our state. When combined with the unique geographic and logistical challenges of air travel, the barriers for our Hawaii patients to receive timely medical care, particularly in our rural and underserved areas, are considerable. Expansion of emergency aeromedical medical services as based on the Maui medevac model will allow more patients to receive prompt quality medical care that they urgently need and reduce the stressful and costly burdens of air travel placed upon them and their loved ones.

HMA supports this measure that will improve emergency healthcare access for the rural and underserved communities of Hawaii.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify in support of this measure.

2025 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, President • Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President Elect • Angela Pratt, MD, Immediate Past President
Jerris Hedges, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

2025 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Jerald Garcia, MD, Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

REFERENCES, QUICK LINKS:

Wu N. State selects REACH for Maui County's aeromedical transport services. [Honolulu Star Advertiser July 11 2024. Accessed Feb 1 2025.](#)

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Hawaii residents complain of high prices for medevac flights. <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/29981390/hawaii-residents-complain-of-high-prices-for-medevac-flights/> Accessed Feb 1 2025.

[Withy K et al . UH System Annual Report to the 2025 Legislature on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project.](#) Accessed Feb 1 2025.

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LATE

SB-1426

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:21:11 AM
Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay Lim	Testifying for American medical response	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a EMT on the island of Lanai. I'm in support of HB 1426. This bill will save people lives on Lanai. Having a air medical service is very important to the people on the neighbor islands. I know a lot of cases where they made a difference in saving people lives in order to get them to higher level of care. The fast response makes a huge difference in trauma, strokes and cardiac events in the patient survival and outcome.

LATE

SB-1426

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:11:50 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marc S Emde	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been a physician in the emergency room at Maui Memorial Medical center for over 20 years so I am very aware of the challenges we face here when it comes to transferring patients to Honolulu. I think it would be beneficial for the state to audit the necessity of many of the transfers. This would provide valuable insight into the services required on the neighbor islands to keep patients near their homes and families. Instead of allocating more funds to transferring patients, I believe spending those monies on expanding services would make more sense. Maui Memorial Medical Center transferred 8 adolescent behavioral health patients in January of this year alone via air ambulance. This puts tremendous strain on the transport service and can adversely affect those needing life saving, time sensitive care. Funding inpatient mental health for adolescents in this case might make more sense.

LATE

SB-1426

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:01:43 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Rose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB 1426. I work as a paramedic on Lanai. I have firsthand experience of the issues this bill will reduce. We have sick patients needing to fly out that are waiting up to 10 hours or more to fly out to a higher level of care. Since Hawaii Life Flight is stretched out even our 911 Medevac helicopter is doing interfacility transfers. This means we are now getting delays on the 911 helicopter for critical scene calls. Since the Hawaii Life crash in 2022, the Aeromedical services in Hawaii have not fully rebounded. Delays have been increasing and people are suffering because of it. Please pass this bill.

LATE

SB-1426

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:26:32 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
douglas vant groenewout	Testifying for AMERICAN MEDICSL RESPONSE	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i certainly support this effort to increase the funding for the aeromedical services. i am presently a paramedic (35 year tenure) serving Hana, maui and have on numerous occasions have been without aeromedical service due to lack of availability. yes, flight support can be limited due to weather, maintenance. that is true for any system. however, when it is due to lack aircraft availability due to call volume (Maui county's aircraft is busy) or due to personnel (pilot or medic downtime), people suffer and increases the chance of permanent damage or death. If you couple this with a rural clinic whose medical/trauma resources are limited, this invariably results in poor patient outcome for the people you represent and have a duty to take care of.

With this necessary funding, please help up bring this necessary service to proper and optimum health and health care standards.

mahalo. Doug vant Groenewout MICT (Mobile Intensive Care Technician)



HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS
C O R P O R A T I O N

"Quality Healthcare For All"

LATE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice-Chair

February 3, 2025

1:00 PM

Hawaii State Capitol

Room 225 & Via Videoconference

Testimony in support of S.B. 1426

RELATING TO EMERGENCY AEROMEDICAL SERVICES

Appropriates funds to the Department of Health to expand access to emergency aeromedical services.

Edward N. Chu

President & Chief Executive Officer

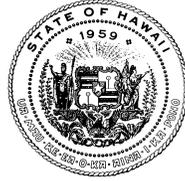
Hawaii Health Systems Corporation

On behalf of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) Corporate Board of Directors, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony **in support of S.B. 1426, Relating to Emergency Aeromedical Services.**

Emergency aeromedical services or air ambulances play a crucial role in transporting a critically ill patient from the neighbor islands to Oahu for treatment. For those situations where such aeromedical services are necessary, every second counts toward saving lives, and providing more resources for such services are something that our residents on the neighbor islands deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

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



KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A., M.P.H.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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