



**Testimony to the House Committee on Health
Friday, April 11, 2025; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 070, SENATE DRAFT 1, REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH AND CONVENE A PHARMACY REIMBURSEMENT WORKING GROUP TO EXPLORE AND PROPOSE LEGISLATION FOR THE 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION. [AMENDED TITLE.]

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 070, Senate Draft 1, REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH AND CONVENE A PHARMACY REIMBURSEMENT WORKING GROUP TO EXPLORE AND PROPOSE LEGISLATION FOR THE 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This resolution, as received by your Committee, would request the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to establish a Pharmacy Reimbursement Working Group to study mandatory health insurance coverage and payment for health care services provided by pharmacists and to propose legislation mandating reimbursement for pharmacy services to be introduced during the Regular Session of 2026

Due to significant and longstanding shortages in Hawaii's health care work force, most primary care providers have had to find new ways of delivering services to meet the ever-present needs of patients. This has especially been the case in dealing with chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, and heart maladies to name a few.

FQHCs have found patient education and constant interaction between providers and patients to be extremely effective in improving health care outcomes. Because of physician shortages, FQHCs have begun to rely on teams consisting of a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, pharmacist, and medical assistants to oversee the patient's management of chronic diseases. Each professional has a specific role that complements the activities of others. In this arrangement, the pharmacist does more than merely dispense medication.

For example, in diabetes management, the pharmacist meets with the patient to explain when and how to use diagnostic tools such as glucose monitors, and instructs the patient on the use of injectable medications. These activities supplement and reinforces the therapeutic treatments that are conducted by the physician and advanced practice nurse. The medical assistants provide logistical and other support services needed by the patient and partner providers.

In the case of pharmacists, because these types of services are currently not eligible for insurance reimbursement, FQHCs have had to find other resources to offset these costs. As such, there are limits to the number of patients who can be serviced in this manner. Yet, due to the benefits demonstrated in patient outcomes, it is clear that this approach works, and will be how health care is provided moving forward.

For these reasons, the HPCA respectfully urges your favorable consideration of these resolutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



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GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW PARTNERSHIP

DATE: April 10, 2025

TO: Representative Gregg Takayama
Chair, Committee on Health

Representative Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy
Vice Chair, Committee on Health

FROM: Tiffany Yajima

RE: **SCR70 SD1 – REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND
CONSUMER AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH AND CONVENE A PHARMACY
REIMBURSEMENT WORKING GROUP TO EXPLORE AND PROPOSE
LEGISLATION FOR THE 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION.**

**Hearing Date: Friday, April 11, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room: 329**

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Members of the Committee on Health:

We submit this testimony on behalf of Walgreen Co. (“Walgreens”). Walgreens operates stores at more than 9,000 locations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In Hawaii, Walgreens has 13 stores on the islands of Oahu and Maui.

Walgreens **supports** SCR70, SD1, which requests the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to establish and convene a pharmacy reimbursement working group to explore and propose legislation for the 2026 Legislative Session.

Walgreens prefers S.B. 1245, which would mandate reimbursement for services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State and require the health plans to recognize pharmacists licensed in the State as participating providers.

The practice of pharmacy has evolved alongside significant changes in healthcare delivery. Patient demand on the healthcare system is expected to increase significantly and outpace current provider supply over the next few years. As a result, pharmacists today play a vital role in health care and are increasingly providing patient care services beyond the traditional prescription dispensing function.

Pharmacists are now offering patient care services such as medication therapy management, immunizations, health screenings, chronic disease management, and patient education and counseling. In addition, over the past decade the legislature has expanded on pharmacy services and given pharmacists the ability to perform tasks such as prescribing and dispensing contraceptive supplies (Act 67 (2017)), ordering and performing certain CLIA-waived tests (Act 103 (2023)), and most recently, allowing pharmacists the ability order immunizations and for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy interns the ability to administer minor immunizations (Act 104 (2024)).

The next step is to ensure that pharmacists are fairly reimbursed by health plans in the State for the clinical services they provide within their scope of practice. This will also help to ensure that pharmacies can continue to serve our communities. Pharmacies are convenient and accessible, especially in underserved areas, making them a vital resource for healthcare delivery. They can also help with cost savings by preventing hospital readmissions and managing chronic conditions thereby reducing overall healthcare costs and increasing positive patient outcomes.

It is for these reasons that Walgreens is in support of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.