



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of SR 69 / SCR 86
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE AN
AEROMEDICAL SERVICES WORKING GROUP.
SENATOR SAN BUENAVENTURA JOY, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: March 24, 2025

Room Number: 225

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A
- 2 **Department Position:** The Department strongly supports the intent of this resolution.
- 3 **Department Testimony:** The Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System
- 4 Branch (EMSIPSB) supports the intent of the Senate Concurrent Resolution to assess and
- 5 improve emergency aeromedical services in Hawaii. We recognize the importance of the
- 6 proposed working group in addressing the stability and predictability of air ambulance services
- 7 across the state.
- 8
- 9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 24, 2025
Senate Committee on Health & Human Services
Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice-Chair

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino and members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services,

My name Doug Flanders, Vice President of State Government Affairs for Air Methods (AMC).

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 86 and Senate Resolution 69 which request the Hawaii State Department of Health to convene an aeromedical services working group. AMC is the leading air medical service, delivering lifesaving care to more than 100,000 people every year. AMC has 40 years of air medical experience; we are the preferred partner for hospitals and one of the largest community-based providers of air medical services. AMC previously operated Hawaii LifeSave which, due to in part to inflation, was forced to leave the state.

It is of critical importance to the State of Hawaii to ensure that residents have access to critical care medical services, including aeromedical services. Currently, the state is served by only one statewide aeromedical provider. This poses a risk to residents; high demand or maintenance issues could deny patients, particularly those in rural areas, access to primary health care.

Accordingly, EMS officials, health departments, hospitals, health insurance providers, and air medical companies must work together to develop plans, procedures, protocols, and funding for air medical transport. These resolutions are a strong step in that direction.

With that in mind, AMC respectfully requests a minor amendment to these resolutions to address a potential typo in drafting. On page 3, AMC asks the item (12) be amended as follows (new language underlined; deleted language is bracketed and stricken):

“(13) Two representatives from providers of emergency aeromedical services who have conducted operations in the State within the last five years and can provide comprehensive air medical services with rotor and ~~fizzled~~ fixed wing support, to be selected and invited to participate by the Director of Health; and”

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

AIR METHODS

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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: March 24, 2025

From: Hawaii Medical Association (HMA)

Jerald Garcia MD - Chair, HMA Public Policy Committee

RE SR 69/SCR 86 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE AN AEROMEDICAL SERVICES WORKING GROUP - Department of Health; Emergency Management Systems; Aeromedical Services Working Group; Report

Position: Support

This resolution requests the Department of Health to convene an Aeromedical Services Working Group.

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. Efforts to support and further develop needed aeromedical services for healthcare requires the collective analysis of the present system and thoughtful collaboration of stakeholders.

HMA supports this resolution for a Work Group to study and assess aeromedical services across the State and in each county. The information will inform future solutions for Hawaii emergency aeromedical medical services to facilitate prompt quality medical care that patients urgently need, and reduce the stressful and costly burdens of air travel placed upon them and their loved ones.

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

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:

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