

ACT 337

S.B. NO. 83

A Bill for an Act Relating to Health.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that it is natural for Hawaii's abundance of resources to be expressed in Aloha with its Pacific neighbors. The sharing of this abundance and attitude has been characteristic of Hawaii's Aloha for many years. Countless organizations and individuals from the State have entered into economic-, social-, and cultural-related activities with Pacific neighbors over the years. This is an integral part of Hawaii's history.

In an international health conference on leadership and child survival held at the University of Hawaii in 1987, the governor proposed that Hawaii come together to work with Pacific island nations for the general improvement of health conditions, services, and the quality of life in the Pacific. The Pacific health promotion and development center was created as a partnership of Hawaii's private and public institutions with the governments of the Pacific. Some of the direct benefits to Hawaii include: (1) the long-range development of a health promotion industry for Hawaii; (2) a reduction of tertiary care costs presently absorbed by local hospitals in relation to medical referrals; and (3) the strengthening of public and private relationships that assist in meeting Pacific island health needs through the health professions industry of Hawaii.

Initial priority areas of cooperation were identified, and they included: health manpower development; health data production and analysis; administration and management; preventive maintenance; and alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and mental health programs. More specifically these have been translated into a set of first-year initiatives that include:

- (1) Prevention and management of otitis media in children;
- (2) Prevention and control of hypertension and diabetes;
- (3) Improvement of health data systems for the development of preventive health services;
- (4) Provision of short-term technical training in facilities maintenance, laboratory services, and radiology;
- (5) Nursing and medical manpower training and development;
- (6) Preventive mental health and substance abuse prevention and control;
- (7) Community health center development;
- (8) Primary care to remote areas;
- (9) Pacific center management;
- (10) Pacific health reassessment; and
- (11) Resource acquisition from private and public sources of funding.

The legislature further finds that Hawaii's relations with the Pacific, while progressing well at policy levels, has yet to be translated into a grass roots involvement, which services the day-to-day needs of the most remote areas of the Pacific.

More specifically, while occasionally highly, highly-trained teams of professionals are sent for very short visits to deliver a limited number of services, few programs place people in living environments with our Pacific neighbors for extended periods of time. Living and working side by side with our Pacific brothers and sisters is a completely different context, which generates special insights,

respect, and appropriate responses to everyday problems while avoiding the common resentments. It is an arrangement which breeds understanding, mutual respect, and Aloha. It is the kind of experience yet to be developed by Hawaii's health-related international efforts.

The legislature believes that volunteerism, especially among those who already have valuable training and skills, is of benefit to the volunteer, the volunteer's community, and, if done well, to the host community in which the volunteer works. Volunteerism excites the idealism in young and old alike, and creates a community which asks unselfish questions and which accepts responsibility for cooperative problem-solving.

The purpose of this bill is to create an Aloha health corps whose mission is to coordinate grass roots health volunteers and programs in Hawaii and the Pacific; to recruit and train health professionals for special assignments in Hawaii and the Pacific that complement existing programs and that provide an extended grass roots partnership between Hawaii and our Pacific neighbors; to create idealistic opportunities for Hawaii's people at home and abroad; and to learn, contribute, and benefit from international and domestic service.

The objectives of the office of the Aloha health corps include:

- (1) To share Hawaii's Aloha Spirit with other nations of the Pacific Basin through the efforts of volunteers, living and working in the Pacific;
- (2) To enrich Hawaii's multi-cultural climate with the knowledge and understanding gained in other countries by Aloha health corps volunteers;
- (3) To provide health education, training, and services at the grass roots level in Hawaii and the Pacific;
- (4) To provide a positive outlet for the energy of the youth, health professionals, students, and the elderly of the State;
- (5) To promote a spirit of goodwill and a positive image of Hawaii in the minds and hearts of our South Pacific neighbors; and
- (6) To forge personal links and contacts between citizens of our State and other nations that will in the future establish Hawaii as the repository of knowledge, understanding, and contacts that would resound to our social, economic, educational, and cultural benefit.

SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“CHAPTER OFFICE OF THE ALOHA HEALTH CORPS

§ -1 **Office of the Aloha health corps; appointments.** (a) There is established the office of the Aloha health corps within the department of health.

(b) The director of the office of the Aloha health corps shall have experience in domestic and international health programs; and recent experience in a supervisory, consultative, or administrative position. The director shall be appointed by the director of the department of health without regard to chapters 76 and 77. The director shall be included in any benefit program generally applicable to the officers and employees of the State.

§ -2 **General functions, duties, and powers of the director.** The director shall have the following principal functions, duties, and powers:

- (1) Establish an advisory committee consisting of leaders in Hawaii's health or education community, including hospital administrators, health professionals, leaders of other volunteer groups, members of the Uni-

- versity of Hawaii, and others with domestic and international experience and expertise;
- (2) Serve as a liaison between the State and foreign nations to determine needed health-related services;
 - (3) Work cooperatively with the Pacific health and development center, the U.S. public health services, the peace corps, VISTA, and other domestic and international health efforts;
 - (4) Recruit volunteers in Hawaii who can satisfy identified needs in Hawaii and in Pacific Basin nations;
 - (5) Develop training programs designed to facilitate the transition of volunteers to and from foreign cultures to enhance their effectiveness in those cultures;
 - (6) Provide opportunities to incorporate Aloha health corps volunteers and trainees in ongoing health programs to serve the State of Hawaii; opportunities for returning volunteers to continue volunteer service in Hawaii; and opportunities for other volunteer efforts to support Hawaii's public health programs;
 - (7) Develop arrangements with the University of Hawaii and other institutions designed to assist in the selection, training, placement, and readjustment of returning volunteers; and their continuing education and professional development in Hawaii;
 - (8) Oversee, supervise, and direct the director's subordinates;
 - (9) Administer funds allocated for the office of the Aloha health corps; and apply for, receive, and disburse grants and donations from all sources for the office of the Aloha health corps;
 - (10) Adopt, amend, and repeal rules pursuant to chapter 91 for the purposes of this chapter;
 - (11) Employ and retain staff as may be necessary for the purposes of this chapter in conformity with chapters 76 and 77; and
 - (12) Contract for such services as may be necessary for the purposes of this chapter.

§ -3 Aloha health corps volunteers. (a) The office of the Aloha health corps shall recruit volunteers who are:

- (1) Over the age of eighteen; and
- (2) Possess appropriate knowledge or skills related to domestic and international programs as determined by the director;

Volunteers shall be compensated, provided with appropriate health information and benefits, and participate in orientation and training. Foreign-bound volunteers also shall be provided with in-depth information on the language, religion, economy, politics, and culture of the nations in which they serve. Transportation to and from respective host nations shall be provided.

(b) The director and a representative from each local organization or host nation shall draft a work description summary, including specific goals, for each volunteer prior to the commencement of a volunteer's service. The work description summary shall become part of the volunteer's contract with the office of the Aloha health corps. At the conclusion of a volunteer's period of service, an analysis of the work performed by the volunteer shall be made by the host nation or local organization and the corps director.

§ -4 Host nation responsibilities. Host nations desiring to sponsor a volunteer shall provide adequate housing and subsistence for each volunteer accepted, as well as any other assistance and personnel they may have available to aid each volunteer."

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SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 1989.

(Approved June 16, 1989.)