

ACT 242

S.B. NO. 498

A Bill for an Act Relating to Emergency Medical Services.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that residents of the island of Maui would greatly benefit from the addition of a Maalaea-based special emergency medical response vehicle to augment the Maui county emergency medical services system for residents of west and south Maui. The population of these districts has significantly increased over the years, which has corresponded with a steady increase of approximately one thousand calls per year for emergency medical services.

The legislature further finds that the population growth and increase in call volume in south and west Maui affect the timely response capabilities of the two ambulances that serve residents in these districts. For example, the timeline to reach the only acute care hospital on Maui may be forty-five minutes or more if the ambulance that responds to a call for emergency medical services must respond from an out-of-district location.

The legislature additionally finds that a timely response to a 911 call is critical to increase the likelihood of a good outcome for an injured individual. Unfortunately, these out-of-district responses, especially into west and south Maui, have increased twenty-five per cent over the past four years. Currently, if the Lahaina and Napili ambulances are out on a call and another emergency call comes in for the west side of Maui, the Kihei station responds if available, potentially leaving the south side of Maui “uncovered” during that time. The removal of ambulances from their own districts creates a domino effect of missing emergency medical services to other areas.

The legislature also finds that the last time new emergency medical services ambulance units were added on Maui was in 2004. A special emergency medical response vehicle unit for the Maui emergency medical services sys-

tem that is based in Maalaea would substantially address the steady increase in calls for emergency medical services and out-of-district responses. Modeled after successful units and strategies used on Oahu and the mainland, this special emergency medical response vehicle unit will be equipped with appropriate life-saving, emergency response equipment and staffed by a state-certified paramedic. Although the special emergency medical response vehicle will not be used for patient transport, it will arrive at the scene if the resident ambulances are out of the district, provide advanced life support services to augment the basic services of fire department first responders, or quickly arrive to a remote area while waiting for the medevac helicopter. This full complement of advanced life support care will save lives and stabilize patients in the crucial initial stage of injury, illness, or cardiac arrest.

The legislature finds that the new special emergency medical response vehicle unit will help reduce death and disability among residents and visitors on the island of Maui by supporting the two existing ambulance units in each of the busiest regions of west and south Maui, as well as by being available to assist central Maui.

Coupled with Maui's significant growth and aging population, the addition of a special emergency medical response vehicle is needed and cost-effective. Whereas an advanced life support staffed ambulance unit costs approximately \$1,200,000, a special emergency medical response vehicle unit costs approximately \$600,000. The special emergency medical response vehicle unit is a more effective use of scarce resources, well worth the investment, and provides better emergency medical services coverage and response to emergency situations. From its base in Maalaea, the special emergency medical response vehicle unit will be well situated to arrive at calls in the west, south, or central districts of Maui in fifteen minutes or less.

The legislature concludes that as Maui's population and demand for healthcare continue to grow, a Maalaea-based special emergency medical response vehicle unit will emerge as a key component of effective pre-hospital medicine on Maui.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to establish a twenty-four-hour, seven-days-a-week, special emergency medical response vehicle unit to be based in the Maalaea area on Maui, including acquisition of a vehicle, equipment, and personnel costs for twenty-four-hour, seven-days-a-week staffing by state-certified emergency medical service personnel.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the emergency medical services special fund the sum of \$600,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2013-2014 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 to establish and fund a twenty-four-hour, seven-days-a-week, special emergency medical response vehicle unit based in the Maalaea area on Maui that is appropriately staffed at all times by state-certified emergency medical service personnel, including acquisition of a vehicle, equipment, and personnel costs.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of health for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2013.

(Approved June 28, 2013.)