



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health
and

Senate Committee on Human Services
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By

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And

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SB 2395 – RELATING TO TELEHEALTH

Chairs Bakers and Chun Oakland, Vice Chairs Kidani and Riviere and members of the committees:

As the Dean of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Social Sciences (CSS), and on behalf of the University of Hawai'i, we appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of S.B. 2395 intended to lift many existing barriers of telehealth in the State of Hawai'i. Dr. Norman Okamura, faculty in the Social Sciences Research Institute CSS, is the Principal Investigator for the UH Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center of the UHM.

On January 7, 2016, the UHM Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center brought together telehealth stakeholders from across the state for a one-day telehealth workshop. The group acknowledges the tremendous potential of telehealth for improving access to health care service, increasing quality, and lowering health care cost however current restrictions related to reimbursement and malpractice coverage were most pressing concerns that the workshop participants identified as major barriers to the advancement of telehealth in the State.

SB 2395 is very comprehensive in addressing these concerns, specifically: (1) Requires the State's Medicaid managed care and fee-for-service programs to cover services provided through telehealth; (2) Specifies medical professional liability insurance policy requirements with regard to telehealth coverage; (3) Clarifies requirements for establishing provider-patient relationships for telehealth for purposes of reimbursement; (4) Specifies reimbursement requirements for distant site and originating site providers; (5) Requires written disclosure of coverages and benefits associated with telehealth services; (6) Ensures telehealth encompasses store and forward technologies, remote monitoring, live consultation, and mobile health; (7) Ensures telehealth is covered when originating in a patient's home and other non-medical environments; (8) Clarifies requirements for physicians and out-of-state physicians to establish a physician-patient

relationship via telehealth; (9) Ensures reimbursement requirements for telehealth services apply to all health benefits plans under chapter 87A, Hawai'i Revised Statutes; and (10) Makes other conforming amendments related to telehealth.

The University of Hawai'i is in strong support of the bill. These timely changes are needed to further advance telehealth in Hawai'i. The lifting of the current limitations of telehealth, such as geographic restrictions on services, requirements for established provider-patient relationship, and restrictions on the technologies used, will help to expand telehealth throughout Hawai'i and expand access to critical services not currently available to many residents of our State.

The UHM CSS will be pleased to provide further technical expertise on this bill and other matters related to telehealth policy.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our strong support of SB 2395.