



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

#### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Health & Homelessness  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

By

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#### HB 1448 HD1 – RELATING TO ASTHMA

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1448 HD1 which authorizes the Department of Education (DOE) to stock bronchodilators for emergency use during respiratory distress. The bill further authorizes DOE employees to volunteer to administer bronchodilators. We also offer a minor clarifying amendment which is provided at the end of this testimony.

Provided the proper training and procedures are in place, this measure would allow for improved care and, ultimately, improved learning for asthmatic children. Asthma is more common in certain populations, including Native Hawaiians and Filipinos. Asthma prevalence is also higher in certain communities - many of these communities are also challenged with lower educational attainment (for a large variety of social determinants).

Having albuterol accessible in the schools, as part of a comprehensive asthma management plan done in conjunction with their health care provider, will help keep children affected by asthma in school. Ideally, the communication protocols should include communication back to the primary care provider that a child needed a rescue inhaler. The parental notification regarding the emergency use of a bronchodilator may include a statement encouraging the parent to notify the child's primary care provider, to ensure timely evaluation and any adjustment to the child's asthma action plan and/or therapy.

Through the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn program which was established within the Department of Education (DOE), school nurses at the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) or Registered Nurse level are present in 51 schools. There are 171 school health technicians who have clinical education and who can support

telehealth services and extend the nursing reach are also available. The APRN can assess and diagnose health conditions and prescribe medications. Nurses have education and training in administering medications, including inhaled bronchodilators. School health technicians may be educated in medication administration as well.

In light of the role APRNs have with the DOE through the Hawai'i Keiki program and based on their prescriptive authority, we suggest a clarifying amendment to extend immunity to APRNs as well as physician assistants who also play an important role in prescribing necessary medication. Amending language in red font is provided below.

Page 12, line 9:

(i) Any person, school district, or school and its employees and agents, including the prescribing physician, ~~physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse~~ and pharmacy filling the prescription, except for a qualified health care professional providing the training required in [~~subsection (g),~~] subsections (g) and (h), who acts in accordance with the requirements of this section shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability arising from these acts, except where the person's conduct would constitute gross negligence, willful and wanton misconduct, or intentional misconduct."

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.