



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 Consumer Protection & Commerce
Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

By

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John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Clementina Ceria-Ulep, Dean
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And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2411 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee:

This testimony is presented on behalf of the UH Mānoa's John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) and the Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing (NAWSON).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **comments** on HB 2411 which renames the Hawai'i Health Corps Program to the Hawai'i Rural Healthcare Provider Loan Program.

The Hawai'i Health Corps Program was established in 2012 in HRS Section 309H-2 to encourage physicians, nurses and other health care providers to practice in rural areas of the state by providing loan repayment. The Hawai'i Health Corps Program was never funded by the legislature and, therefore, was never operational.

In September 2023, the State launched the Hawai'i healthcare education loan repayment program (HELP). HELP provides educational loan debt repayment to qualified health professionals licensed or otherwise certified to practice and provide care to patients in Hawai'i. In its first year of implementation with the funding appropriated by the legislature in 2023, HELP will be alleviating the educational debt of 492 medical and healthcare professionals.

Given the success of HELP so far, we wish to avoid any actions that may unintentionally undermine the positive outcomes HELP has achieved.

Should this committee decide to advance HB 2411, we suggest a minor amendment in the preamble of the bill which would clarify the distinction between HELP and the proposed Hawai'i Rural Healthcare Provider Loan Program as follows:

Page 1, Line12

“The legislature further finds that on September 9, 2023, the State launched the Hawai'i healthcare education loan repayment program (HELP), [which] a separate program that is alleviating the education debt of 492 medical and healthcare professionals.”

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