



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 and Homelessness
Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 10:15 a.m.

By

Bonnie Irwin, Chancellor

and

Rae Matsumoto, Dean

Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy

University of Hawai'i at Hilo

HB 2553 – RELATING TO PHARMACISTS

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2553. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) supports HB 2553, which authorizes pharmacists, pharmacy interns and pharmacy technicians under the direct supervision of a pharmacist to administer vaccinations to persons aged 3-17, when certain requirements are met. This bill will also allow pharmacists to order and administer any vaccination approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

HB 2553 essentially extends the vaccination services already permitted in the federal emergency authorization PREP Act, which is set to expire at the end of 2024. Through the PREP Act, pharmacists across the nation have had the authority to administer all recommended vaccines to children ages 3-18, and have demonstrated their ability to do so.

Passage of HB 2553 will ensure that the vaccination services provided by pharmacists, along with pharmacy interns and technicians under their supervision, can continue in Hawai'i after the federal emergency authorization ends. It is important to note that even when working under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist, the pharmacy interns and technicians have been and will continue to be required to have specialized training and a national certification to administer the vaccinations. Moreover, as different types of vaccines become available and recommended for use in children by the CDC ACIP, they will also be covered through this legislation.

The ability to leverage the accessible vaccination services of pharmacists, pharmacy interns and technicians for children is significant. It has been reported that more than 90% of Americans live within 2 miles of a community pharmacy, and annually, Americans visit their pharmacy 35 times, as compared to 4 visits to their primary care

provider. Since the pandemic, members of the public and other health care providers have come to depend on pharmacists, pharmacy interns and technicians to provide their vaccinations. This accessibility is important because childhood vaccination rates have been decreasing, eliciting public health concerns as children and communities have become more vulnerable to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

In summary, passage of HB 2553 will allow pharmacists, pharmacy interns, and pharmacy technicians to continue to provide vaccination services for children, which families and communities across Hawai'i need and have come to expect. Please allow us to continue to serve and protect the wellbeing of the people of Hawai'i by passing this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2553.