



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, March 15, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

by

Clementina D. Ceria-Ulep, PhD, RN
Dean & The Queen's Health Systems Endowed Professor
Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing

And

Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, Interim Dean
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2744 HD2 – RELATING TO ORAL HEALTH

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **HB 2744 HD2 in support.**

This measure establishes an oral health task force to review the status of oral health in the State and make recommendations to improve the oral health infrastructure in Hawai'i. This initiative is in collaboration with the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition, of which faculty from NAWSON and JABSOM both are engaged in and collaborate with.

The recommended members of the Task Force include a faculty member of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing (NAWSON) which includes the Department of Dental Hygiene. The faculty is to be appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives. In addition, the Task Force will include a representative of the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine, to be appointed by the President of the Senate.

This Task Force will fill an important role in our state by creating the dedicated entity which will review information on the status of oral health in the State and make recommendations to improve oral health infrastructure in Hawai'i. Benefits of this Task Force include stronger cross-sector collaboration on oral health issues, up-to-date analysis of community oral health status, increased awareness of the importance of oral health, and clear, actionable recommendations for improvements.

The NAWSON wishes to recognize the incredible talent and dedicated experts in oral health that are faculty of NAWSON. These faculty commit to enhancing access to oral

healthcare through the education and training of the future dental hygienist workforce. In addition, Dr. Mattheus, PhD, APRN-Rx, CPNP, FAAN, Nancy Atmospera-Walch Endowed Professor in School Health & Professor, is the Senior Practice Director and Dental Sealant Program Director for the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn Program. Dr. Mattheus was a recipient of the Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS) Scholarship, Honolulu Chapter for her doctoral research study on the prevention of early childhood caries in primary care practice and currently serves at the Hawai'i State Oral Health Champion designated by Harvard University's Center for Integration of Primary Care and Oral Health (CIPCOH). We would like to recommend her as a candidate Taskforce member.

The UH JABSOM recommends Dr. Jill Omori, Director of the Office of Medical Education, and Dr. Matthew Oishi, part-time faculty in charge of the oral health curriculum for the medical students, as qualified experts who would offer high value contributions to this Task Force.

The NAWSON and JABSOM look forward to serving on this important task force.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide supporting testimony related to this measure.