



# 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 Higher Education  
Friday, January 31, 2025 at 2:15 p.m.

By

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and

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### HB 223 – RELATING TO PHARMACY

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 223. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) supports HB 223, which establishes the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy Special Fund to create a Hawai'i Center for Pharmacy which will support pharmacist workforce assessment and planning efforts. The Center will be established through a pharmacist workforce assessment fee, and appropriate funds to advance the profession of pharmacy, as part of an intentional effort to help improve access to quality health care for the people of Hawai'i.

Pharmacists are among the most accessible health care providers, with a doctoral level of expertise and clinical training, and are currently underutilized in Hawai'i. HB 223 is modeled after the Hawai'i Center for Nursing and a similar center for medicine, which have been instrumental in facilitating the ability of these professions to be proactive and strategic in formulating data-informed solutions for existing and emerging health care challenges in Hawai'i. HB 223 will allow pharmacists, who are essential members of current health care teams, to also align with and contribute to this collective effort.

Passage of HB 223 represents a profession-driven solution that will allow pharmacy to work toward matching the standard already granted to other health care professions (medicine, nursing) in Hawai'i. No legislative appropriations are being requested to get the Center started. Instead, the bill will allow for a workforce assessment fee as part of licensing requirements that would create a foundational base to hire a Director and provide a sustainable mechanism for supporting the activities of a Hawai'i Center for Pharmacy.

The Hawai'i Center for Pharmacy would be housed in the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy. Being housed within the UH system has worked well for the successful

centers for medicine and nursing that already exist, and ensures that appropriate business systems are in place to manage funds (accept, disburse, leverage from different sources) and hire personnel. Also, the profession will be able to leverage the academic expertise and unique training and professional networks of the college that will be crucial for implementing data-driven approaches and innovative solutions to improve access to quality health care. The role of the college in training future pharmacists also offers natural synergies for supporting the disbursement of scholarships and loan repayment initiatives to attract to Hawai'i and retain needed talent for service in medically-underserved areas of the state.

In summary, passage of HB 223 will support a data-informed, coordinated and intentional effort to position the profession of pharmacy to help fill existing health care gaps in Hawai'i. The college is uniquely suited for housing the proposed Center which will proactively assess, train, and leverage pharmacists, working with pharmacy stakeholders across the state and country, to fill gaps in care related to medication management and safety. Pharmacists are embedded as trusted health care professionals in many remote communities, and many published studies have documented their positive impact on patient outcomes as the health care landscape has shifted to value- and team-based care models. The proposed Center would be instrumental in adapting effective approaches for the unique needs of Hawai'i and creating innovative solutions working in alignment with other stakeholders in today's rapidly evolving health care landscape. The people of Hawai'i deserve access to quality health care and we respectfully ask your support in allowing the profession of pharmacy to be part of the solution through this Center.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 223.