



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Health and
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Thursday, March 31, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

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SCR 123 – REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR EARLY ACCESS BREAST CANCER SCREENING

Chairs Keohokalole and Bakers, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the committees:

The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center supports SCR 123, requesting the Auditor to conduct a social and financial assessment of proposed mandatory health insurance coverage for early access breast cancer screening.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Hawai'i women. Annually in Hawai'i, an average of 1,233 women are diagnosed with invasive breast cancer and another 308 are diagnosed with in situ (non-invasive) tumors. An average of 155 women in Hawai'i die of breast cancer each year. The incidence of breast cancer in Hawai'i is higher than the U.S. overall and statewide rates continue to increase each year. There are substantial disparities in the burden of breast cancer across Hawai'i's multiethnic populations with the highest mortality in Native Hawaiian women. Nearly ¼ of all breast cancer patients are diagnosed at advanced stages when it is more difficult to treat, and survival is poorest. Mammography is an important tool for the early detection of breast cancer.

The Resolution is necessary to determine the impact of expanding health care coverage for baseline mammograms for women between the ages of thirty-five and thirty-nine. The UH Cancer Center is prepared to provide relevant expertise and data to facilitate the proposed assessment.