



# 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 Finance  
Thursday, March 30, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

By

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And

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#### SB 62 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO MEDICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) **strongly supports SB 62 SD2 HD1**, which reestablishes the Hawai'i Medical Education special fund to provide funding for medical education and training in Hawai'i, provided that its passage does not impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget. The measure also appropriates money to JABSOM to expand medical residency and training in Hawai'i with an emphasis on supporting residency training on the neighbor islands and in medically underserved communities, as well as funding to expand medical training in partnership with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

We respectfully request an amendment to Section 4 on page 6, beginning at line 12 to clarify the types of costs the funds may be used for. These items are consistent with HRS Section 304A-1704(4) which outlines the duties of the Hawai'i Medical Education Council (HMEC). Amending language appears in red font and is attached to this testimony.

#### **We also request the following sums to support medical education and training:**

In Section 3, JABSOM requests an appropriation of \$1,240,000 to the Hawai'i Medical Education special fund;

In Section 4, we request an appropriation of \$520,000 from the Hawai'i Medical Education special fund as well as the amendment requested above;

In Section 5, we request an appropriation of \$520,000 from the Hawai'i Medical Education special fund to support additional medical residencies and training

opportunities for medical students in counties with populations of no more than five hundred thousand; and

In Section 6, we request an appropriation of \$200,000 from the Hawai'i Medical Education special fund to expand training opportunities for medical students and residents in partnership with the Veterans Affairs.

The HMEC is tasked with monitoring the state's graduate medical education (GME) programs, physician residency and fellowship training, and their ability to meet the healthcare workforce needs. According to HMEC's 2022 report to the legislature, GME programs, especially those in primary care, geriatrics, psychiatry (adults and children) and addiction serve a high proportion of the state's most vulnerable populations. Yet, there has been a reduction in the overall civilian GME positions offered in Hawai'i from 241 in 2009 to 230 in 2021. Nationally, Hawai'i is in the bottom quintile of GME positions per population. Decreased federal and state funding has had a significant impact on the number of available training positions.

Many Hawai'i residents are unable to obtain timely and appropriate health care due to shortages of physicians and other health care providers in the State. These shortages threaten individual health. The State's neighbor islands, which have been designated by the federal government as medically underserved areas, have been disproportionately adversely affected by shortages of physicians in all areas of practice.

Based on the most recent data from the Hawai'i physician workforce assessment project, the State has a shortage of nearly 800 full-time equivalent physicians. Primary care, internal medicine, and some specialty physician shortages represent Hawai'i's disciplines of greatest need. Without these physicians, the people of Hawai'i do not have access to the health care they need. JABSOM has shown that eighty percent of graduates who complete their medical school and residency training in the State remain in Hawai'i to practice. Medical students and medical residents who perform their training on the neighbor islands are more likely to open practices and remain on the neighbor islands. Expanding capacity for year-round medical education training will create a pipeline of new physicians who are poised to enter practice on the neighbor islands. Similarly, expanding the training capacity in partnership with the Veterans Affairs would enable JABSOM to offer residency positions to more students.

Ongoing funding of both undergraduate medical education (medical school) and GME is vital in addressing the physician shortage in Hawai'i. Reestablishing the Hawai'i Medical Education special fund will allow optimal use of state funding to support GME and assure close monitoring by the university and legislature of the specific application of state funds for GME programs, especially those focused on enhancing neighbor island workforce needs.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SB 62, SD2, HD1

PROPOSED HD2

**Page 6, beginning at Line 12:**

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the Hawaii medical educational special fund the sum of \$520,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 ~~[for]~~ to support graduate medical education and training programs established under chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, including but not limited to establishing partnerships on the neighbor islands to expand training opportunities, faculty development and salaries, travel to the neighbor islands, housing on the neighbor islands for residents and faculty, and other operational expenses.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the University of Hawaii at Manoa John A. Burns school of medicine for the purposes of this Act.