



# 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 & Homelessness  
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology  
Friday, March 17, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

By

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And

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

Chairs Belatti and Perruso, Vice Chairs Takenouchi and Kapela, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. The John A. Burns school of medicine (JABSOM) **supports SB 62 SD2**, provided that its passage does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved budget. The measure reestablishes the Hawai'i Medical Education special fund to provide funding for medical education and training in Hawai'i. 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 suggest a minor amendment in Section 1 to identify the measure as a matter of statewide concern as recommended by the Attorney General. Additionally, we suggest amendments to Sections 4 and 5 to clarify the appropriation as money cannot be expended from the Hawai'i Medical Education Special Fund unless an appropriation is made from the fund. Amending language appears in red font and is attached to this testimony.

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.

The Hawai'i Medical Education Council (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.

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  
PROPOSED HD1

**Page 3, beginning at Line 18:**

The legislature recognizes that ongoing funding of medical education is a matter of statewide concern and is vital to address the physician shortage in Hawaii. Considerable public outcomes can be achieved by expanding capacity for training medical students with the goal of having these students ultimately remain in Hawaii to practice. One way to promote this outcome is to reestablish the Hawaii medical education special fund as a means of funding graduate medical education and training programs to support an expansion of key positions.

**Page 6 beginning at Line 20 to Page 7:**

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the ~~[general revenues of the State of Hawaii]~~ Hawaii medical education special fund the sum of \$                    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 the creation of additional medical residencies and training opportunities for medical students in counties with populations of not more than five hundred thousand.

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.

SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the ~~[general revenues of the State of Hawaii]~~ Hawaii medical education special fund the sum of \$                    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 ~~[the expansion of]~~ medical student and residency ~~[and]~~ training opportunities in partnership with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

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.