



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 Education
Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

By

Dr. Clementina Ceria-Ulep, interim Dean
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And

Michael Bruno, Provost
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SB 943 – RELATING TO SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH SERVICES

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony **in strong support with proposed amendments** of this measure, SB 943, which aims to appropriate funds to the Department of Education to fund school health support staff. This will sustain the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn program as it currently functions. The Hawai'i Keiki program employs 171 School Health Support Staff (SHSS); this appropriation request is to continue the services to the state by ensuring continuation of funding by state funds once the federal funding expires.

During the initial years of the COVID pandemic, Hawai'i Keiki received federal funds to support the health and wellbeing of enrolled children to the Hawai'i Keiki Program with particular focus on preventing the transmission of and responding to the impact of COVID. The impact of the SHSS role within the Hawai'i Keiki school nursing program has grown considerably:

- COVID Response for Quarters 1 and 2 of School Year (SY) 2022-2023
 - 3,389 COVID tests conducted
 - 5,443 responses to new COVID case
 - 10,805 students supported in safe return to school after isolation or quarantine
- Health Center Support for Quarters 1 and 2 of School Year (SY) 2022-2023
 - 48,699 visits documented by the 171 SHSS; 70% returned to classroom
 - 2,581 referrals to Hawai'i Keiki nurse for higher level of care
 - 14,800 students supported at 136 screening events (vision/hearing/dental)

Today, Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn, includes 51 nurses, including APRNs and registered nurses, serving each complex, and school health support staff (SHSS)

who extend the clinical reach of the Hawai'i Keiki program in 171 schools. The Hawai'i Keiki program's SHSS impact in SY 2022-2023 demonstrates the continued need for this role and workforce. Additionally, without these staff, the need for these services would remain. With SHSS, school staff, teachers, and principals are able to dedicate their time to their primary mission of education with the confidence and knowledge that the physical health and wellbeing of students will be supported by the excellent Hawai'i Keiki SHSS, in addition to APRNs and RNs.

It is with great pleasure that NAWSON partners with the department in the delivery of school nursing care so that teachers, staff, and principals may focus on delivering exemplary education. NAWSON respectfully requests favorable consideration of this measure, SB 943, with amendments as provided by the department of education.

Proposed amendment:

Page 4, Line 13: "year 2024-2025 for the funding of school health ~~support staff~~
services"