



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 Commerce and Consumer Protection
Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 10:01 a.m.

By

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And

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And

Michael Bruno, Provost
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SB 3129 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **support** of SB 3129 SD1 which establishes the Hui Ho'omana task force to develop a comprehensive plan to provide universal access to equitable and affordable high-quality healthcare for state residents. The purpose of the task force would be to make recommendations to achieve universal access and equity to quality healthcare at an affordable cost for our residents.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted and made worse preexisting challenges for some populations to achieve good health, in part due to inconsistent access to healthcare. Disparities in infection rates, hospitalizations and death were noted throughout Hawai'i and experienced by certain ethnicities more than others. Despite many efforts guided by community leaders to help with outreach and education, many health disparities continue today. Increasing healthcare insurance costs, low reimbursement rates to providers, healthcare workforce shortages combined with growing unaffordability for families and businesses are among the myriad reasons for poor access to care. Despite many efforts and partnerships among those in the health care sector and community leaders, coordinated efforts are needed to provide seamless access to care for all of Hawai'i's people, across community-based settings to clinics to inpatient, long-term, and home-based care settings.

The Hui Ho'omana task force would be an effective mechanism to outline processes and procedures that would move the state in the direction of achieving universal access to equitable and affordable high-quality healthcare. The John A. Burns School of Medicine appreciates and welcomes the opportunity to participate in the task force. We respectfully request that the Dean of the Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing or the Dean's designee be included as a voting member of the task force. The School of Nursing is an important contributor to the healthcare workforce in Hawai'i and would provide relevant insights to addressing the needs of the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.