
HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WAHIAWA CENTER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH TO PROVIDE PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE SERVICES TO THE MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATION OF WAHIAWA AND ITS SURROUNDING RURAL COMMUNITIES.

1 WHEREAS, the town of Wahiawa in central Oahu has a rich
2 history rooted in pineapple, tourism, and the military, but now
3 serves as a microcosm of Hawaii's challenges as it transitions
4 to a more diverse economy that can remain relevant on a global
5 stage; and
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7 WHEREAS, 43,000 individuals live in the Wahiawa community,
8 of which fifty-four percent are living in a United States
9 Department of Health and Human Services-designated Medically
10 Underserved Population; and
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12 WHEREAS, the federal Medically Underserved Population
13 designation reflects the inadequate number of primary care
14 clinicians practicing in Wahiawa and the area's poor socio-
15 economic indicators, including that thirty-five percent of the
16 Medically Underserved Population are on Medicaid and forty-four
17 percent are at or below two hundred percent of the poverty
18 level, according to the 2010 United States Census; and
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20 WHEREAS, the Wahiawa area includes the State's largest
21 population of active military and dependent family members, who
22 are covered by Tri-Care health insurance and must travel to
23 Tripler Army Medical Center for healthcare access, despite
24 military dependents' preference to access care in Wahiawa; and
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26 WHEREAS, the Legislature and the Administration have
27 included Wahiawa as an area for economic growth through
28 revitalization and development of agriculture in Hawaii which
29 will increase job growth and generate more need for access to
30 healthcare; and
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32 WHEREAS, the five elementary schools in Wahiawa are Title I
33 schools and the percentage of students who qualify for free or



1 reduced cost lunch programs is greater than eighty-two percent
2 of the students; and
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4 WHEREAS, in focus group discussions with the principals of
5 all Wahiawa schools, the principals have discussed substantial
6 behavioral issues and unnecessary absenteeism that could be
7 better managed if there were adequate primary and behavioral
8 healthcare access available; and
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10 WHEREAS, the homeless population in Wahiawa continues to
11 increase due to the easy access to state benefit offices and the
12 free food services offered by area churches, but recent
13 community meetings also indicate that the homeless have an
14 increasing need for primary healthcare; and
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16 WHEREAS, although no recent statistics exist, there is a
17 growing population of Micronesians moving into Wahiawa and like
18 other past immigrants, they are least integrated into the local
19 community and their perspective of health is intertwined with
20 beliefs and spirits that influence their state of being, making
21 the delivery of culturally competent healthcare services
22 essential for this population; and
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24 WHEREAS, limited access and availability of healthcare
25 services in Wahiawa are increasing at a rapid pace, since the
26 scarce number of physicians available to the community are at
27 capacity, ready to retire, are not accepting new patients, limit
28 the type of insurance accepted, and cannot serve all of the
29 uninsured who are unable to pay in full; and
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31 WHEREAS, a survey and report entitled "Wahiawa Community
32 Health Needs Assessment", by Nora Rodli, RN, a University of
33 Hawaii Manoa APHN practicum student, dated May 18, 2015,
34 describes how dire the situation has become with the following
35 data:
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37 (1) Eighty-six percent of respondents seek medical care
38 outside of Wahiawa;
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40 (2) Only sixty-one percent have visited a doctor for a
41 routine physical examination within the past year,



1 twenty-two percent between one and two years ago, and
2 seven percent more than five years ago;

3
4 (3) Almost twenty percent needed to see a doctor within
5 the past year but did not do so due to cost;

6
7 (4) Forty-two percent reported that they delayed getting
8 needed medical care within the past year, with two of
9 the major reasons being an inability to get an
10 appointment soon enough and long wait times at the
11 clinic or doctor's office;

12
13 (5) While ninety-six percent have medical insurance, this
14 includes twenty-one percent on Med-QUEST, nineteen
15 percent on Medicare, and five percent on Medicaid; and

16
17 (6) Only fifty-six percent visited a dentist within the
18 past year, sixteen percent between one and two years
19 ago, fifteen percent between two and five years ago,
20 and four percent have never been to a dentist; and

21
22 WHEREAS, survey respondents in the same report also
23 indicated the top five chronic health diagnoses in the Wahiawa
24 community as high blood pressure or hypertension, at forty-one
25 percent; high cholesterol, at thirty-two percent; asthma, at
26 thirty-two percent; obesity, at twenty-eight percent; and
27 diabetes, at twenty-six percent; and

28
29 WHEREAS, as the only acute-care hospital serving central
30 Oahu and the North Shore, the Wahiawa General Hospital emergency
31 department often serves as the de facto primary care provider
32 for individuals in the Wahiawa population who have no other
33 access to a primary care provider; and

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35 WHEREAS, emergency room visits for preventable and non-
36 emergency visits for chronic conditions that may be managed by
37 primary care providers expends the Wahiawa General Hospital's
38 limited resources; and

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40 WHEREAS, as reported in the July 6, 2015, Honolulu Star
41 Advertiser, over the past year, the financially-strapped Wahiawa
42 General Hospital was forced to restructure its Family Medicine



1 Residency Program, cancel its Home Health and Physical Therapy
2 outpatient programs, and reduce staffing; and

3
4 WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii Department of Health is
5 working with the United States Department of Health and Human
6 Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau
7 of Primary Health Care, to designate the Wahiawa and neighboring
8 Waialua areas as Health Professional Shortage Areas, a
9 designation that indicates individuals living in the area have
10 increased over-utilization of costly emergency room services and
11 are in greater need of multi-disciplinary care team based
12 approaches, and a designation that may ultimately save third
13 party payers hundreds of thousands of dollars through a decrease
14 in use of unnecessary services; and

15
16 WHEREAS, on behalf of and in coordination with the
17 community of Wahiawa, in 2011, Faith Action for Community Equity
18 launched a year-long planning effort, funded by the federal
19 Health Resource and Services Administration, to bring community
20 stakeholders together, assess health care and other service
21 needs, and identify culturally competent strategies to identify
22 if there was a healthcare access need; and

23
24 WHEREAS, through this community organizing and outreach
25 process, the definite need for a community health center was
26 established and the Wahiawa Center for Community Health was
27 born; and

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29 WHEREAS, the Wahiawa Center for Community Health was
30 incorporated on January 25, 2012, and recognized by the Internal
31 Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity with the express
32 purpose of creating a federally qualified health center in
33 Wahiawa to bring affordable, high quality, and accessible care
34 to the people of Wahiawa, regardless of ability to pay and on a
35 sliding discount; and

36
37 WHEREAS, the mission of the Wahiawa Center for Community
38 Health is: "In the spirit of Aloha and compassion, the Wahiawa
39 Center for Community Health provides access to affordable,
40 quality health care and wellness services to promote a healthy
41 community"; and



1 WHEREAS, the inception of the Wahiawa Center for Community
2 Health is the direct result of a vision held by the late United
3 States Senator Daniel K. Inouye, who wanted to ensure that the
4 geographically isolated area of Wahiawa was adequately served;
5 and

6

7 WHEREAS, this vision is now considered a Senator Inouye
8 Legacy Project by the Hawaii congressional delegation; and

9

10 WHEREAS, the specific objectives of the Wahiawa Center for
11 Community Health include:

12

13 (1) Purchasing portions of the Wahiawa Medical Building,
14 which is a condominium medical building located on
15 California Avenue in the center of Wahiawa;

16

17 (2) Repurposing and renovating the initial two offices in
18 the building which will be the Wahiawa Center for
19 Community Health initial medical clinic and
20 administrative offices; and

21

22 (3) Furnishing and equipping the renovated facility to
23 provide clinical, dental, and behavioral health
24 services and other community driven wellness and
25 health programs; and

26

27 WHEREAS, completion of the initial 5,700 square foot
28 facility will create the Wahiawa service area's first
29 comprehensive health care provider, and the only clinical
30 provider in the area that is truly accessible by all,
31 particularly individuals who are typically not welcomed by the
32 traditional health care system, including the uninsured or
33 underinsured, those at or below two hundred percent of the
34 federal poverty level, and others experiencing barriers to care
35 like geography and culture; and

36

37 WHEREAS, at full operational capacity, the Wahiawa Center
38 for Community Health's services will include a multi-
39 disciplinary team approach that includes primary care, including
40 pediatrics and obstetrics and gynecology, behavior health, oral
41 health care, care coordination, and on-site pharmacy services;
42 and



1
2 WHEREAS, at full operational capacity, and using standard
3 methodologies associated with federally qualified health centers
4 nationwide, Wahiawa Center for Community Health will directly
5 create about seventy full-time jobs and indirectly create about
6 another thirty nine full-time jobs; contributing about
7 \$11,000,000 annually to the local economy and about \$365,000 to
8 state and local tax coffers; and
9

10 WHEREAS, grassroots efforts over the past three years have
11 resulted in increased exposure and government support for the
12 Wahiawa Center for Community Health; and
13

14 WHEREAS, the Wahiawa Center for Community Health now has a
15 fully-functioning board of directors consisting of thirteen
16 individuals who are leaders in the community, residents,
17 volunteers, and individuals otherwise concerned about the
18 availability of primary medical care services in Wahiawa and its
19 neighboring rural communities; and
20

21 WHEREAS, on March 10, 2014, the City and County of Honolulu
22 certified the Wahiawa Center for Community Health as a Community
23 Based Development Organization under title 24 Code of Federal
24 Regulations section 570.204(c)(1), thereby making the Wahiawa
25 Center for Community Health eligible for Community Based
26 Development Organization funding from the United States
27 Department of Housing and Urban Development, Disaster Recovery
28 Division, to carry out a neighborhood revitalization, community
29 economic development, or energy conservation project; and
30

31 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Housing and Urban
32 Development has designated Wahiawa as one of two areas on Oahu
33 that is a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area, a
34 designation given to an area where there is a demonstrated
35 commitment by residents, property owners, small businesses, and
36 other community stakeholders to forge partnerships that will
37 help revitalize their neighborhood by fostering the growth of
38 resident-based initiatives to identify and address the
39 community's housing, economic, and human services needs; and
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41 WHEREAS, on September 27, 2014, the United States
42 Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, designated the



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1 Wahaiawa Center for Community Health as a Rural Community
 2 Facilities Project and as such will enable Wahaiawa Center for
 3 Community Health to qualify for and encumber federal Affordable
 4 Care Act funds for ongoing development and operation of a rural
 5 healthcare facility; and

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 7 WHEREAS, in 2014, pursuant to chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised
 8 Statutes, the Legislature approved a grant request from the
 9 Wahaiawa Center for Community Health and appropriated \$250,000
 10 for the planning, design, and construction expenses for facility
 11 repairs, renovations, and other related improvements to the
 12 Wahaiawa Medical Building; and

13
 14 WHEREAS, this body finds that establishing the Wahaiawa
 15 Center for Community Health is in the public interest and for
 16 the public health, safety, and general welfare to assist in the
 17 improvement of the health care system for residents of the
 18 State; now, therefore,

19
 20 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 21 Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
 22 Session of 2016, that this body strongly supports the
 23 establishment of the Wahaiawa Center for Community Health to
 24 provide primary medical care services to the medically
 25 underserved population of Wahaiawa and the surrounding rural
 26 communities; and

27
 28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 29 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Director of Health;
 30 Director of Human Services; Director of Business, Economic
 31 Development, and Tourism; Director of Agriculture; Department of
 32 Education; United States Senator Mazie Hirono; United States
 33 Senator Brian Schatz; United States Representative Tulsi
 34 Gabbard; United States Representative Mark Takai; Board of
 35 Directors of the Wahaiawa Center for Community Health; Board of
 36 Directors of Faith Action for Community Equity; and Chief
 37 Executive Officer of every hospital and health insurance company
 38 conducting business in Hawaii.

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 41

OFFERED BY: *Della A. Schmitt*
Kam
Brian Kolinski
[Signature]



