



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P.O. Box 3378  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

## House Committee on Health

### S.B. 105, SD2, RELATING TO HEALTH

Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.  
Director of Health

Wednesday, March 13, 2013, 8:30 A.M.

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health supports SB105, SD2, provided that its passage  
2 does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget, and offers comments.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates \$\$ for use by DOH.

4 **Purpose and Justification:** This measure is timely as falls and fall related injuries among older adults  
5 impose an enormous burden on individuals, society, and Hawaii's health care system. Among older  
6 adults 65 years and older, falls are by far the leading cause of injury-related deaths and hospitalizations,  
7 and by far the leading cause of EMS attended injuries among older adults. Direct medical charges for  
8 fall and fall –related injuries among older adults amount to \$82.8 million, an amount that could be  
9 doubled if you were to include the costs of rehabilitation and long term care. Falls impact the quality of  
10 life and independence of older adults. Over half of those hospitalized from a fall go to a care home or  
11 rehabilitation center and many never regain full independence.

12 However, falls are not an inevitable part of aging and can be prevented. The Department is  
13 committed to addressing this critical public health issue and has already taken some steps to address fall  
14 injuries among older adults in Hawaii. These efforts include most recently organizing a short-term Fall  
15 Prevention Taskforce to develop and support a just completed statewide plan of action for preventing

*Promoting Lifelong Health & Wellness*

1 falls and reducing the severity of fall-related injuries that will strengthen existing collaborative efforts to  
2 address fall prevention.

3           Considering the magnitude of falls among older adults and the anticipated increase in this age  
4 group in the next 20 years to over 22% of Hawaii's population, the current level of dedicated resources  
5 for fall prevention are insufficient. The fall prevention and early detection program and the dedicated  
6 position proposed in this bill will enable the Department of Health to support a coordinated state-wide  
7 approach that is needed to prevent and reduce the impact of falls among older adults. The Department is  
8 prepared to carry out the duties as described in the bill in collaboration with community partners.

9           Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**morikawa2 - Shaun**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 12, 2013 3:13 PM  
**To:** HLTtestimony  
**Cc:** speedy\_bailey@amr-ems.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB105 on Mar 13, 2013 08:30AM\*

**SB105**

Submitted on: 3/12/2013

Testimony for HLT on Mar 13, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Speedy Bailey	American Medical Response	Support	No

Comments:

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Chair - Representative Della Au Belatti

Wednesday March 13, 2013  
8:30 AM  
House Conference Room 329

The Honorable Delia Au Belatti  
House Committee on Health

Dear Chair Belatti and Members of the House Committee on Health,

Subject: Support for SB105,SD2

My name is Bruce McEwan, and I am the volunteer Chairman of the Injury Prevention Advisory Committee. I am a recently retired Vice President of Young Brothers.

Falls is by far one of the most frustrating in that falls are preventable and are not inevitable due to maturity. However we have never had the resources to address the severity of the problem in Hawaii where we lead the nation in longevity and where fall injuries are more frequent.

SD105 SD2 outlines the severity of fall injuries for our island kupuna, their families, our community in general and our health care system. Falls for seniors are too frequent and can have devastating consequences, including loss of independence and in the case of hip fractures from falls- eventual death. The economic impact is also huge as the consequences of falls can cause a significant financial burden on families and in particular the Hawaii Health Care System.

In our recently published *2012-2017 Hawaii Injury Prevention Plan*, senior fall injuries is one of the 7 major injury areas our committee works towards alleviating. Falls can be prevented and there is much evidence that supports the effectiveness of fall prevention programs. The positive social and economic consequences of an organized approach to falls at the state level, which this bill supports, will save numerous lives and enable our kupuna to enjoy their families and grandchildren without crippling injuries.

I respectfully support the passage of SB105 SD2

**Thank you for allowing us to testify.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce McEwan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "B".

Bruce McEwan  
Chair  
Injury Prevention Advisory Committee

From: Phyllis Nakamura

E-mail: [nakamurad022@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:nakamurad022@hawaii.rr.com)

I support Senate Bill SB105 SD2.

As a member of the Maui Fall Prevention Coalition, a member of Maui Project Dana, and as a 68-year-old woman – I definitely see the urgent need to seriously address the problem of falling and the ripple effect that injuries sustained in falls can create.

We don't need to quote the statistics; they're repeated online, in the media, etc. Been there, done that. Now it's high time to start grabbing that bull by its horns.

Many states have had Fall Prevention programs and strategies in operation for quite some time. It's time for Hawaii to get on that smart list. Hawaii is "up there" statistics-wise for the number of elderly persons. It would be a smart strategy to be proactive in working with some of this population to prevent falls and repeat falls. It would also be wise to work with 'soon-to-be' most aged population with programs to boost general health, strength, agility, etc.

Respectfully,  
Phyllis Nakamura