

# HB913 HD2

Measure Title: RELATING TO MEDICAL COVERAGE FOR FIREFIGHTERS.

Report Title: Cancer; Firefighters; Service Connected Disability; Medical Coverage

Description: Improves access for firefighters to comprehensive medical coverage and service-connected disability retirement benefits upon diagnosis with or death from cancer that is presumed to arise out of and in the course of employment. (HB913 HD2)

Companion: [SB383](#)

Package: None

Current Referral: CPH/PSM, JDL/WAM

Introducer(s): BELATTI, BROWER, EVANS, LOWEN, MCKELVEY, MIZUNO, MORIKAWA, NISHIMOTO, TAKAYAMA, TAKUMI, TOKIOKA, Yamashita

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March 20, 2017

The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair  
Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection,  
and Health  
The State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 230  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Clarence Nishihara, Chair  
Committee on Commerce, Public Safety,  
Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
The State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 214  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Baker and Nishihara:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 913, House Draft (HD) 2 Relating to Medical Coverage for Firefighters

I am Manuel P. Neves, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD support HB 913, HD 2, which proposes to provide fire fighters who develop cancer with expanded benefits that improve access to comprehensive medical coverage and disability benefits for hazardous duty-related diseases.

Over the last decade, the fire profession has experienced an increase in fire fighter deaths related to cancer. The University of Cincinnati and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health conducted studies as a result of the initial findings. They are the most comprehensive investigations into cancer-related diseases incurred by career fire fighters to date and support the initial findings. The State of Hawaii (State) cancer taskforce performed an investigative study with assistance from medical

The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair  
The Honorable Clarence Nishihara, Chair  
Page 2  
March 20, 2017

insurance companies and found that fire fighters in the State are also experiencing elevated levels of exposure to the effects of cancer-related diseases, correlating Hawaii's information with the national studies.

If passed, this bill will provide the fire fighter and their family with the financial and moral support they need during this crisis.

The SFC and the HFD urge your committees' passage of HB 913, HD 2, for the welfare of our fire fighters.

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrator Socrates Bratakos at 723-7105 or [sbratakos@honolulu.gov](mailto:sbratakos@honolulu.gov).

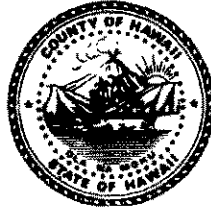
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Neves', with a stylized flourish at the end.

MANUEL P. NEVES  
Chair

MPN/LR:clc

Harry Kim  
Mayor



Wil Okabe  
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow  
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i  
Office of the Mayor

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March 20, 2017

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection  
and Health  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Committee on Public Safety,  
Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Baker, Chair Nishihara, and members:

**RE: HB 913, HD 2  
Relating to Medical Coverage for Firefighters**

As you may know, my son is a firefighter and I have been intimately involved in medical issues that may arise for these dedicated public servants. With that conflict of interest acknowledged, I would like to offer my support for HB 913, HD2.

HB 913 was the product of a state task force on which Hawaii County was represented by our Fire Chief and a Fire Captain. It would provide expanded, employer-financed medical, disability indemnity, and death benefits to firefighters who develop cancer as a result of exposure to carcinogens in the line of duty. I believe these benefits are warranted, and I urge your support for this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Kim  
Mayor

# SHOPO



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TO: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection,  
and Health

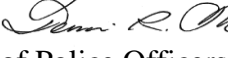
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection,  
and Health

Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer  
Protection, and Health

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and  
Military Affairs

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and  
Military Affairs

Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety,  
Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

FROM: Tenari Ma'afala, President   
State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers

DATE: March 20, 2017

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 913 H.D.2, Relating to Medical Coverage  
for Firefighters

HEARING: Tuesday, March 21, 2017  
1:30 p.m. Conference Room 229

This bill creates a new chapter in the Hawaii Revised Statutes providing expanded benefits for firefighters who develop cancer, along with a presumption that the cancer arose out of and in the course of employment as a firefighter. The State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers ("SHOPO") supports H.B. 913 H.D.2 with amendments to extend its applicability to county police officers.

Workers compensation claims for Hawaii's county police officers demonstrate exposure to biochemical hazards when arriving as first responders at fires and other hazardous materials events. Police officers have searched burning

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houses and buildings, prior to firefighters arrival, and have brought injured and/or helpless victims to safety, at the same time being exposed to hazardous fumes. They have done so, despite not having proper breathing apparatus and other safety equipment.

SHOPO proposes amendments as follows, under Section 2. “Chapter Hazardous Duty Related Diseases Treatment Insurance Benefits”, subsection 1, add definition “‘Police officer’ means all county employees whose principal duties include prevention of crime and enforcement of criminal laws.” Thereafter, in subsections 2 through 7, 10 and 11, where there is ‘firefighter’, add “and police officer”.

SHOPO stands in support of firefighters receiving these proposed benefits, and also requests that amendments be made to include police officers. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

March 21, 2017

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Consumer Protection and Health

Re: HB 913, HD2 – Relating to Medical Coverage for Firefighters

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Medical Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB 913, HD2, that would expand access to comprehensive medical coverage and service-connected disability retirement benefits for hazardous duty related diseases for firefighters. HMSA is empathetic to the dangers and health risks Hawaii's firefighters face, and we offer comments.

As we understand this legislation, HB 913, HD2, places the administration of firefighter cancer benefits outside of the Workers Compensation (WC) system. The Bill presumes that if a firefighter contracts a cancer, that cancer was contracted as a result of the firefighter's employment. However, despite potentially being compensable under the WC system, the firefighter may seek medical service from a non-WC provider, and the firefighter's private health plan will cover the medical benefits at the firefighter's health plan's "usual and customary charge" levels. While we do cover the costs of cancer treatment-related services, bypassing the WC system may result in increased costs for insuring firefighters - a cost to the EUTF.

Although this Bill specifically addresses firefighters with cancer, we note that other groups of employees who similarly face dangerous work conditions (e.g., police officers, emergency medical technicians, wastewater system employees, employees who process solid waste) may argue for their potential WC cases to be administered outside of the WC system.

Thank you for allowing us to provide these comments on this measure.

Sincerely,

Mark K. Oto  
Director, Government Relations

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 19, 2017 4:52 PM  
**To:** CPH Testimony  
**Cc:** hawaiifishingfanatic@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB913 on Mar 21, 2017 13:30PM\*

**HB913**

Submitted on: 3/19/2017

Testimony for CPH/PSM on Mar 21, 2017 13:30PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Don Aweau	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**Sent:** Saturday, March 18, 2017 1:10 PM  
**To:** CPH Testimony  
**Cc:** mendezj@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB913 on Mar 21, 2017 13:30PM\*

**HB913**

Submitted on: 3/18/2017

Testimony for CPH/PSM on Mar 21, 2017 13:30PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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