



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1281
RELATING TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.

REP. RYAN I. YAMANE, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date: February 16, 2021 Room Number: N/A

1 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the intent of this measure
2 to return authority and responsibility for emergency medical services system (EMS) services to
3 Hawaii counties using a shared cost model. However, the Department recommends initially
4 limiting this change to counties with over 500,000 population.

5 A more equitable distribution of costs should be coupled with greater county flexibility to deploy
6 its own EMS resources, including innovative service delivery such as community paramedicine
7 and transport to alternative destinations to complement existing county-based services such as
8 police and fire departments.

9 Currently most costs are negotiated by the counties and paid by the State. The cost sharing
10 model builds on current cost sharing such as fire's dual response, 911 air ambulance, and EMS
11 communications. The concept of cost-sharing is timely as the total state cost of operating a
12 statewide comprehensive EMS system now exceeds \$100,000,000. New ground transportation
13 stations, existing station costs, vehicle costs, and labor-related expenses predictably increase
14 each biennium.

15 That said, the State must retain its general oversight role to assure equitable standards meet
16 established standards to ensure equitable 911 care in areas diverse as Honolulu and Hanapepe.
17 Continued coordination between county EMS systems and state EMS programs and injury
18 prevention and trauma system programs is important to public health

1 With the support of the Legislature and Governor, the department has opened preliminary
2 discussions with the most populous county in the state to explore this opportunity. DOH
3 respectfully requests this measure pass out of committee to sustain that conversation, with
4 amendments that assure:

- 5 1. A requirement for cost-sharing,
- 6 2. A timeline reflecting urgency,
- 7 3. The continuing role of the State to provide oversight and set standards, and
- 8 4. Assurances that counties with populations less than 500,000 residents are out of scope.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

10

11 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.

12

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 300 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-4141 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • INTERNET: www.honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR



MICHAEL D. FORMBY
MANAGING DIRECTOR DESIGNATE

DANETTE MARUYAMA
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR

February 15, 2021

The House Committee on Health,
Human Services, and Homelessness
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Ryan I. Yamane, Vice-Chair Adrian K. Tam, and Honorable Members of the
Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness:

SUBJECT: HB1281, Relating to Emergency Services

Thank you for the opportunity to express concerns regarding HB1281 and provide
comments for your consideration.

HB1281 amends Chapter 46, Hawaii Revised Statutes (hereinafter HRS), to add a
new part entitled "COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEM", and amends
Chapter 321, HRS, to transfer "certain duties, functions, and powers relating to emergency
medical services for the island of Oahu from the Department of Health to the City and
County of Honolulu" with certain general fund and special fund appropriations through the
proposed two-year transition period ending in fiscal year 2023.

The City and County of Honolulu has a contract to implement emergency medical
services on the island of Oahu (hereinafter "County") with the State of Hawaii Department of
Health Emergency Medical Services Injury Prevention Branch (hereinafter "EMSIPB"). The
current contract commenced on July 1, 2017.

In January 2021, the State of Hawaii approached this administration about a
scheduled transfer, over a four (4) year transition period, of duties, functions and powers
relating to emergency medical services (hereinafter "EMS") for the island of Oahu. During
the first full fiscal year of the transition period, fiscal year 2022, the State of Hawaii
proposed full funding, with a graduated reduction in state funding through the remaining
three (3) fiscal years of the transition period.

The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair
and Honorable Members of the Committee on
Health, Human Services, and Homelessness
February 15, 2021
Page 2

The County indicated an interest in implementing the proposed transfer of duties, functions and powers over a four (4) year transition period with a desire by the County to establish the required regulations, rules, laws and staff positions necessary to stand up a County regulated, managed and operated EMS system. Also discussed was the ability of the County to promulgate certain reasonable billing policies and practices that would enable the County EMS system to capture certain fees and charges for services rendered which are presently non-compensable under existing rules and regulations, with the ultimate goal of the County operating a sustainable EMS system that best serves the people of the County.

Unfortunately, HB1281, as currently drafted, does not reflect the discussions to date between the State of Hawaii and the County. Further, the County has not had an opportunity to conduct its required due diligence with the State of Hawaii Department of Health EMSIPB regarding the details of a scheduled transition plan.

Given the above, the County respectfully requests the members of this Honorable Committee provide the County a longer, four (4) year, transition period, with an agreed-upon funding schedule, during which time the County may conduct its due diligence with EMSIPB and thereafter plan, implement and effect the County regulatory system necessary to fully protect the health and well-being of the people of the island of Oahu.

In closing, the County appreciates the opportunity to share our concerns and we look forward to further discussions.



February 16, 2021

The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
The Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

Re: HB 1281 – Relating to Emergency Medical Services

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Committee Members:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB 1281, which transfers certain duties, functions, and powers relating to emergency medical services for the island of Oahu from the department of health to the City and County of Honolulu. Appropriates general funds to the City and County of Honolulu for emergency medical services for fiscal year 2021-2022. Appropriates half of the moneys in the emergency medical services special fund to the City and County of Honolulu for emergency medical services for fiscal years 2021-2022 to 2022-2023.

HMSA supports the role that a robust emergency medical services system plays in the healthcare ecosystem. HMSA stands committed to helping improve the well-being of our community, and we look forward to further discussions on the transfer of certain duties and functions of emergency medical services for the island of Oahu to the City and County of Honolulu.

Thank you for allowing us to testify in support of HB 1281. Your consideration of our comments is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Sasaki
Director, Government Relations