



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Jerris Hedges, MD, Dean

Kelley Withy, MD, Professor, Department of Complementary and Integrative Medicine
Hawai'i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Director

John A. Burns School of Medicine

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 313 HD1 – RELATING TO PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair DeCoite, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **strong support** of HB 313 HD1, which repeals the spending caps of the workforce assessment fees and authorizes the John A. Burns school of medicine (JABSOM) to utilize the funds to provide loan repayment to physicians who commit to working in medically underserved areas of the State as part of the federally-matched health care provider loan repayment program JABSOM administers as well as provide scholarships to qualifying JABSOM students who commit to practicing in Hawai'i.

Hawai'i faces a critical need for recruitment and retention of physicians to serve rural and medically underserved areas of the State. The shortage of physicians is as high as 1,008 and is compounded by the fact that Hawai'i has the fifth oldest physician workforce of all the states and more than half of the State's physicians will be over age sixty-five within ten years. The physician workforce assessment project has assisted with malpractice reform, provided thousands of hours of continuing education, coordinates the loan repayment program for physicians working in areas of need, advertises all open practitioner positions in Hawai'i to medical graduates, prepares local students for medical school, provides education regarding the physician shortage, and a host of other physician workforce services for all of Hawai'i.

State-matched loan repayment relief to new providers as well as scholarships for medical students who agree to practice in the areas of highest need have great promise. In many cases, the increasingly high cost of education for medical students and their families impacts their future career decisions. High educational debt discourages physicians from entering primary care fields and/or choosing to practice on the neighbor islands or in rural areas of O'ahu where the need is greatest.

Removing the spending caps for this key fund and expanding the use of funding received through the existing physician workforce assessment project will allow JABSOM to optimally match the federal grant monies received for the physician loan

repayment program it administers. Similarly, supplemental scholarship support will reduce educational debt on the front-end for Hawai'i students at JABSOM. Through this two-pronged approach, Hawai'i can act rapidly to build upon tangible solutions to the state's physician workforce shortage.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

HB-313-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 3:05:29 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Rantz	Hilo Medical Center Foundation	Support	No

Comments:

The flexibility provided in HB313 to utilize funding for loan repayment and scholarships will go a long way to helping our state to retain physicians critical to supporting a robust healthcare workforce to provide high-quality healthcare close to home.

HB-313-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 3:52:46 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Rantz	Hawaii State Rural Health Association	Support	No

Comments:

Allowing additional funds to be used for loan repayment and scholarships is critical to retaining a robust health care workforce to provide high quality health care close to home.

Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board

**Before the
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Wednesday, February 10, 2021
2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 313, H.D. 1, RELATING TO PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Takayama and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ahlani Quiogue, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawaii Medical Board (Board). The Board offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) repeal the requirement that no less than 50% of the physician workforce assessment fees deposited into the John A. Burns School of Medicine special fund be used for purposes identified by the Hawaii Medical Education Council; (2) repeal the monetary cap of expenditures from the John A. Burns School of Medicine special fund; and (3) authorize the John A. Burns School of Medicine special fund to provide loan repayment to certain physicians and scholarships to qualifying medical students.

The Board will review this bill at its next publicly noticed meeting on February 11, 2021.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

1360 S. Beretania Street, Suite 200, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Phone (808) 536-7702 Fax (808) 528-2376
www.hawaiimedicalassociation.org

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair

Date: February 10, 2021

From: Hawaii Medical Association

Michael Champion MD, President

Christopher Flanders DO, HMA Legislative Liaison

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD, Chair, HMA Legislative Committee

Linda Rosehill JD

Re: HB 313 Relating to Physician Workforce Assessment

Position: Support

Hawaii continues to struggle to maintain access to quality healthcare under a severe shortage of physicians, and this has worsened during the coronavirus pandemic. More than 400 Hawaii physicians were forced to close their practices, reduced hours or convert to telehealth services in 2020.

Support from the Hawaii State Legislature in partnership with JABSOM as well as HMSA and Queens Medical Center through the State Loan Repayment Program has helped to recruit physicians to Hawaii practice over the last 3 years.

While the state's ability to put monies toward the loan repayment program this year is extremely limited, HMA supports the transfer of residual funds from The Physician Workforce Fund toward this program. It is an important priority for Hawaii physicians to sustain quality healthcare in Hawaii and maintain the delivery of vital services to our underserved areas, particularly in the neighbor islands. This program must be sustained in order to support the education of young physician trainees and improve our Hawaii physician workforce that is critically low.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify on this issue.

Associated Press. Shortage of Hawaii Doctors Worsens During COVID-19 Pandemic.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/hawaii/articles/2021-01-06/shortage-of-hawaii-doctors-worsens-during-covid-19-pandemic>

Hiraishi K. "Hawaii Doctor Shortage Worsens Under Pandemic." Hawaii Public

Radio. Jan 5, 2021. <https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/post/hawai-i-doctor-shortage-worsens-under-pandemic>

HMA OFFICERS

President – Michael Champion, MD President-Elect – Angela Pratt, MD
Immediate Past President – Jerry Van Meter, MD Treasurer – Elizabeth A. Ignacio, MD
Executive Director – Thomas Kosasa, MD



**Testimony to the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Wednesday, February 10, 2021; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 313, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT.

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 0313, House Draft 1, RELATING TO PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would:

- (1) Eliminate a requirement that not less than 50% of assessment fees deposited into the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) Special Fund be used for purposes identified by the Hawaii Medical Education Council;
- (2) Eliminate the monetary cap on expenditures from the JABSOM Special Fund; and
- (3) Allow the JABSOM Special Fund to provide:
 - (A) Loan repayment to physicians who commit to working in medically underserved areas of the State as part of the Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program; and
 - (B) Scholarships for qualifying medical students.

As amended, the bill would take effect on July 1, 2060, to facilitate continued discussion on this issue.

Testimony on House Bill No. 0313, House Draft 1
Wednesday, February 10, 2021; 2:00 p.m.
Page 2

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

The State of Hawaii is experiencing a severe shortage of health care professionals in the workforce, especially in rural areas. Recent studies note that the current shortage of physicians is at 20% of the total full-time equivalent positions throughout the State. The shortage is especially severe in the fields of primary care, infectious diseases, colorectal surgery, pathology, general surgery, pulmonology, neurology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, family medicine, cardiothoracic surgery, rheumatology, cardiology, hematology/oncology, and pediatric subspecialties of endocrinology, cardiology, neurology, hematology/oncology, and gastroenterology.

This bill would provide additional State resources to enhance the quality and stock of Hawaii's future healthcare workforce. **Accordingly, the HPCA strongly supports this important measure.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



ANNE E. PERREIRA-EUSTAQUIO
DIRECTOR

JOANN A. VIDINHAR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

www.labor.hawaii.gov

Phone: (808) 586-8844 / Fax: (808) 586-9099

Email: dlir.director@hawaii.gov

February 10, 2021

To: The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair,
The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2021

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol

From: Anne E. Perreira-Eustaquio, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: H.B. No. 313 HD1 RELATING TO PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

HB313HD1 proposes to repeal the monetary cap of the John A. Burns school of medicine special fund and the requirement that no less than fifty per cent of the physician workforce assessment fees be deposited into the special fund. In addition, the bill authorizes the special fund to provide for loan repayment to certain physicians and scholarships to qualifying medical students.

DLIR supports this measure provided it does not conflict with the priorities identified in the Governor's Biennium Budget request.

II. CURRENT LAW

Section 304A-2171, HRS requires that no less than fifty per cent of the physician workforce assessment fees deposited into the John A. Burns school of medicine special fund be used for purposes identified by the Hawaii medical education council and has a set monetary cap for the special fund.

III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL

DLIR, through funding for mini grants provided by the legislature to the Hawaii Healthcare Workforce Advisory Board, has witnessed the significance of providing loan repayment for healthcare practitioners. The grants serve as a means of maintaining and expanding the medical workforce in medically underserved areas of

the state.

DLIR supports this measure provided it does not conflict with the priorities identified in the Governor's Biennium Budget request and defers to the Legislature on the funding of the program.