



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

In reply, please refer to:
File:

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

SB 3228, Relating to Adjusting the Annual Pensions of Retired Patient Employees at Hansen's Disease Facilities

**Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D.
Director of Health**

February 22, 2008, 11:00 a.m.

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health supports this bill that would increase the Kalaupapa
2 patients' pensions.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** Act 213/07 appropriated general funds for adjustments in pensions for Kalaupapa
4 Settlement patient pensioners (FY 08 - \$4,243 and FY 09 - \$2, 708.) As long as the statutes are
5 amended to allow these pension adjustments, the pension increases can be paid utilizing the above
6 appropriated funds for FY 08 and FY 09. As for the out years, since this would be an on-going expense,
7 the \$2,708 should not be taken out as a non-recurring expense when our base budget for the upcoming
8 biennium budget preparation is calculated. However, we would need to address the difference between
9 the estimated \$5,039 and the \$2,708 for FY 10 and beyond.

10 **Purpose and Justification:** The Kalaupapa patient pensioners are not under the State's Employee
11 Retirement System (ERS) and therefore do not receive the annual cost of living increases as do the other
12 state pensioners. Separate and specific statutory language is required to increase their pension amounts.
13 The last increase to the Kalaupapa patients' pensions occurred in 1990. In 2002 a one time lump sum
14 bonus of \$200 was given to all the Kalaupapa patient pensioners who had at least 20 years of service and
15 was at least 70 years old or older.

- 1 The long intervals between pension increases for the Kalaupapa pensioners combined with their
- 2 advancing age make it imperative that legislation is enacted as soon as possible to get the increased
- 3 pensions to the Kalaupapa patients.
- 4 Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

February 22, 2008

11am

Room 211

Testimony on S.B. 3228

Relating to Adjusting the Annual Pensions of Retired Patient Employees At Hansen's
Disease Facilities

From: Pauline K. Hess

To: Chairman Senator Roz Baker, Vice-Chairs, and Members:

I am testifying in strong support of this bill.

I am Pauline K. Hess, daughter of a longtime resident and retired patient employee of Kalaupapa. My father, four uncles and one aunt were also patient residents of Kalaupapa.

The adjusted pension awarded with the passing of this bill is a small token of appreciation in comparison to the services provided by these dedicated community members. With their services and low wages the state would have had to hire employees with higher wages, benefits, housing and food.

It is time to raise and adjust their pensions. There are so few of them left and this pension adjustment is a small symbol to thank them for their services to the state and to their community.

I strongly urge you to pass SB3228. Thank you to the Senators for your continued support.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony/

Valerie Monson
175 Kealaloa Avenue
Makawao, Hawaii 96768
valeriemonson@yahoo.com

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

Senator Roz Baker, chair

Senator Shan Tsutsui, vice chair

DATE: Friday, Feb. 22, 2008

TIME: 11 a.m.

PLACE: Capitol Room 211

RE: SB 3228

Dear Chair Baker and Vice Chair Tsutsui,

I am writing in support of SB 3228, which would increase the pensions of those residents who were sent to Kalaupapa because of society's fear of leprosy.

Many of these individuals formed the foundation of the government work force at Kalaupapa for many years, yet they were paid a pittance, sometimes as little as 30 cents an hour. Their pensions are based on these small wages. In addition, they have not received cost-of-living increase in their pensions for many years, if ever.

As has previously been stated, the Kalaupapa patients held down jobs that required important skills and abilities. The Sisters of St. Francis, who staffed the Kalaupapa Hospital as nurses, have told me that they could not have functioned without the help of the orderlies and outreach nurses, who were patients. Patients also worked at office jobs, maintained the Kalaupapa Trail, taught school and were carpenters, plumbers, painters and truck drivers.

The Hawaii State Legislature realized this injustice and asked for an increase in the pensions during the 2007 session, but the money was never released because of a concern raised by the Attorney General's office that we still

don't understand. More than six months later, the patients of Kalaupapa are still waiting for the Attorney General to correct whatever was wrong.

Please pass this bill – in fact, it would be better if you could give people even bigger increases in their pensions – and please make sure that the patients receive the increases.

Thank you for your hard work and concerns on this important matter.

With aloha,
Valerie Monson