

HMSA



Blue Cross
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of Hawaii

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LATE

March 3, 2009

The Honorable Marcus Oshiro, Chair
The Honorable Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Re: HB 1782 HD1 – Relating to Health Information Exchange

Dear Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB 1782 HD1. HMSA supports the intent of this measure.

A health information exchange (HIE) is defined as the mobilization of healthcare information electronically across organizations within a region or community. A HIE provides the capability to electronically move clinical information among different health care information systems while maintaining the meaning of the information being exchanged. The goal of a HIE is to provide safer, more timely, efficient, effective, equitable, patient-centered care. This goal is one that works in concert with those which HMSA is currently promoting including e-prescribing and increased use of electronic medical records.

As you are aware, Hawaii is on its way to becoming a national leader in the field of health care technology. Earlier this year, HMSA launched its Online Care program, aimed at improving access to care throughout the Islands. Residents can speak with a local physician from HMSA's network of credentialed participating physicians 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week. In conjunction with this project HMSA is talking with other community entities to examine how an initiative such as a HIE could be developed in Hawaii.

It is also important to note that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 contains language encouraging the increased use of health information technology (HIT) through the awarding of grant monies to states. We appreciate changes being proposed to this measure to mirror the federal legislation. It does seem however that newly drafted language is actually more restrictive by requiring that designated entities interested in these projects engage in a procurement process. We believe that this will create additional burdens for organizations wishing to develop health information technology and could hinder the entire process. This requirement is not required in the federal law and we are unsure that its inclusion is necessary. We would suggest that the language in this measure be reviewed to be more inline with the federal law. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JD'.

Jennifer Diesman
Assistant Vice President
Government Relations