REQUESTING FEDERAL RECOGNITION OF RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS.

WHEREAS, respiratory therapists, otherwise known as respiratory care practitioners, work under the medical direction of physicians and specialize in the evaluation, treatment, and care of people with breathing disorders and work with a wide variety of patients who suffer from conditions resulting from asthma, emphysema, heart failure, stroke, drowning, shock, and other causes; and

WHEREAS, under the federal Medicare part B program, the physician has a major role in determining utilization of health services furnished by providers, deciding upon admissions, orders tests, drugs, and treatments, and determining the length of stay; and

WHEREAS, federal Medicare part B conditions Medicare payment upon a physician's certification of the necessity of a provider's services and, in some instances, recertification of the continued need for those services; and

WHEREAS, Medicare patients purportedly have difficulty gaining access to respiratory therapists working outside of a hospital setting because Medicare requires health care providers to be state-licensed and not all states currently license respiratory therapists, Hawaii being one of only two states that do not; and

WHEREAS, efforts within the State to regulate the profession have been unsuccessful, and the State Auditor has consistently maintained that regulation of the profession is unwarranted because sufficient protections already exist and regulation would be costly; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that Hawaii's congressional delegation is requested to support legislation that directly recognizes respiratory
therapists as health care providers in the Medicare part B program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the members of Hawaii's congressional delegation.

OFFERED BY:

FEB 08 2010