

Testimony to the Hawaii State Legislature, 2010

Testimony of Kelley Withy, President of Hawaii State Rural Health Association

3/2010

The Hawaii State Rural Health Association would like to express our strongest support for HR22 regarding health care and recognition of the important role that care givers play.

We have conducted published research on the rural health care needs across the State and found that while all communities are unique, there are some themes that are common throughout the state. Needs that are commonly identified in our rural and underserved communities include:

1. Financial assistance (insurance coverage, medication, free services)
2. Expanding services that are available to rural communities (including telehealth, CHCs, community services)
3. Improving access to available services (**Long term care**, primary care, specialty care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, health care training and other services)
4. Decreasing drug use
5. Increasing health education and training opportunities for community members
5. Increasing the number of health care providers working in rural areas
6. Increasing cultural sensitivity of providers

Therefore we are fully in support of recognition of the important role of caregivers in providing for the needs of our rural communities.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kelley Withy, MD, PhD  
President, Hawaii State Rural Health Association