A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AGING.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that falls and fall-related injuries among the elderly impact individuals, families, the community, and the State's health care system. Fall prevention is a major concern for the safety and well-being of the State's elderly residents, the fastest-growing segment of Hawaii's population.

Among the elderly in Hawaii, falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries (an average of forty-four per cent) and injury-related hospitalizations (an average of eighty-three per cent). On average, every five hours in Hawaii an elderly person is injured so severely in a fall that hospitalization is necessary. Falls among Hawaii's elderly also result in a yearly average of eighty-two deaths and nearly one thousand eight hundred hospitalizations.

The legislature further finds that hospital costs associated with fall-related injuries average over $65,000,000 a year. This total does not include the additional significant
costs associated with skilled nursing care and rehabilitation. Among Hawaii seniors hospitalized for a fall, forty-three per cent are discharged to skilled nursing facilities for additional care, and twelve per cent are moved to rehabilitation facilities.

The legislature additionally finds that access to fall prevention services and programs would significantly reduce these costs. In addition, the early detection of fall occurrences would reduce both costs and suffering by expediting treatment, minimizing serious long-term consequences, reducing the extent of the injury, and in some instances, avoiding death.

Falls among the elderly are a significant public health issue. Yet, currently, there are insufficient resources to develop a coordinated statewide approach to reduce and promptly detect falls among the elderly. The legislature therefore finds that the department of health's emergency medical services and injury prevention system branch should be permitted to establish and maintain a program dedicated to fall prevention and early detection for the elderly. This program shall serve as a focal point for statewide injury prevention and detection efforts to ensure multidisciplinary support, coordination of prevention and
detection efforts, and continuity of implementation and accountability.

The purpose of this Act is to establish a fall prevention and early detection coordinator within the emergency medical services and injury prevention system branch of the department of health to coordinate the provision of public and private fall prevention and early detection services for the elderly.

SECTION 2. Chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§321- Fall prevention and early detection coordinator. There is established within the emergency medical services and injury prevention system branch a fall prevention and early detection coordinator to coordinate the provision of public and private fall prevention and early detection services for the elderly."

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the trauma system special fund the sum of $81,985 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 to establish and fill one full-time equivalent fall prevention and early detection coordinator position.

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The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of health for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.
Report Title:
Kupuna Caucus; Fall Prevention and Early Detection Coordinator; Appropriation

Description:
Establishes a Fall Prevention and Early Detection Coordinator position within the Department of Health's Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch. Appropriates funds. (HB2053 CD1)

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