A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that because of Hawaii's high cost of living and food prices that many low-income individuals and families struggle to purchase food. The supplemental nutrition assistance program, formerly known as the food stamp program, is a crucial means of providing necessary assistance in the purchasing of food for some of Hawaii's most disadvantaged citizens. In September 2016, 173,669 people in Hawaii participated in the supplemental nutrition assistance program, which is 5.1 per cent less participation than in September 2015. While Hawaii secures over $500,000,000 annually in supplemental nutrition assistance program moneys, the United States Department of Agriculture estimates of program participation rates in 2014 ranked Hawaii thirty-fourth among states in the percentage of eligible individuals that participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

The legislature also finds that if all individuals who are eligible for the supplemental nutrition assistance program were
to participate in the program then Hawaii would receive hundreds of millions in federal funding. Additionally, Moody's Analytics estimates that for every dollar given in supplemental nutrition assistance program funds, up to one dollar and seventy cents can be generated in the local economy.

The legislature further finds that many individuals that are eligible to participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program do not participate because they are unaware of their eligibility or of the supplemental nutrition assistance program's existence. Authorizing healthcare providers, non-profits, businesses, and faith-based organizations to assist those in need to apply for the supplemental nutrition assistance program may help with outreach and education about the benefits available through participation in the supplemental nutrition assistance program. Furthermore, authorizing these service providers to report to the legislature an aggregate collection of data about state supplemental nutrition assistance program participation creates a mechanism by which policy makers can better establish plans to maximize federal funding and increase food security. Each of these outcomes will result in the State having more supplemental nutrition assistance program
participants, which in turn will result in heightened food
security for low-income individuals and families, and more money
flowing into the State's economy.

The purpose of this Act is to authorize healthcare
providers, non-profits, businesses, and faith based
organizations to ask clients about participation in the
supplemental nutrition assistance program and to report
aggregate responses to the department of human services.

SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
amended by adding a new section to part II to be appropriately
designated and to read as follows:

"§346- Supplemental nutrition assistance program
participation. (a) Healthcare providers, non-profits,
businesses, and faith based organizations may provide
supplemental nutrition assistance program applications to
prospective applicants.

(b) Healthcare providers, non-profits, businesses, and
faith-based organizations that provide supplemental nutrition
assistance program applications to prospective applicants may
maintain a record of the distribution of the applications and,
upon request, may make the record available to the department of human services."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.
Report Title:
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Application

Description:
Authorizes healthcare providers, non-profits, businesses, and faith based organizations to assist in providing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications to prospective applicants in order to increase SNAP participation in Hawaii. (HB2154 HD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.