

JAN 23 2020

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE STATE HEALTH INSURANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the state health
2 insurance assistance program is a volunteer-based program
3 offering free health benefits counseling services to medicare
4 beneficiaries, their families, and soon-to-be retirees. The
5 state health insurance assistance program's mission is to
6 educate, advocate for, counsel, and empower individuals to make
7 informed health care benefit decisions. The state health
8 insurance assistance program is an independent program funded by
9 the United States Administration for Community Living and is not
10 affiliated with any insurance provider.

11 In Hawaii, the state health insurance assistance program
12 has two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) staff and over one
13 hundred volunteers. These statewide volunteers provide free,
14 local, unbiased, one-on-one assistance to over two thousand two
15 hundred residents each year. In 2019, three thousand one
16 hundred inquiries were made to the state health insurance
17 assistance program's statewide helpline and website.



1 Approximately 2,264 senior citizens received counseling, and
2 14,335 individuals were reached at community events. The state
3 health insurance assistance program averaged over twenty
4 inquiries and counseling sessions per day.

5 Although the state health insurance assistance program has
6 experienced significant growth during the past three years, it
7 still falls short of the three per cent penetration goal of the
8 medicare market in Hawaii, as set by the federal funders. Three
9 per cent of the medicare market in Hawaii approximates to seven
10 thousand five hundred senior citizens annually. However,
11 further growth is not possible at current staffing and funding
12 levels.

13 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds
14 to the state health insurance assistance program so that it can
15 grow and continue to reach additional senior citizens in Hawaii
16 with its important services.

17 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$275,000 or so much
19 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for state
20 health insurance assistance program, to be allocated in the
21 following matter:

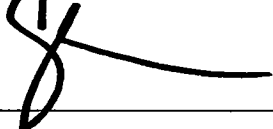


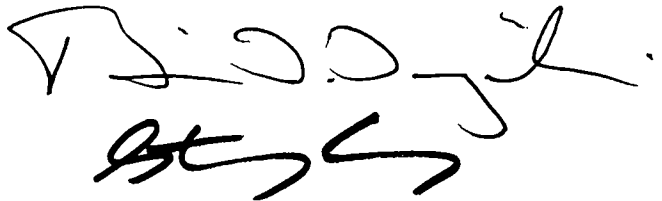
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- 1 (1) \$100,000 for service contracts to partner with the
- 2 medical community, such as federally qualified health
- 3 centers that currently serve older individuals;
- 4 (2) \$100,000 for staffing contracts to provide
- 5 programmatic support to the two full-time equivalent
- 6 (2.0 FTE) staff of the state health insurance
- 7 assistance program; and
- 8 (3) \$75,000 for volunteer recruitment and retention,
- 9 including developing and airing public service
- 10 announcements as well as other print and digital media
- 11 to promote the state health insurance assistance
- 12 program.

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

15 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.

16 INTRODUCED BY: 

Amor Mendez K.


S.B. NO. 3175

Report Title:

State Health Insurance Assistance Program; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the state health insurance assistance program.

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