
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many Hawaii
2 residents are unable to obtain timely and appropriate health
3 care and behavioral health care due to shortages of primary,
4 specialty, and behavioral health care providers. Vulnerable
5 residents, including the elderly, and rural residents experience
6 even greater barriers to health care provider access. These
7 barriers include issues relating to fixed or limited financial
8 resources, lack of physical mobility or other disabilities,
9 cognitive impairment, transportation, and a lack of readily
10 accessible physicians and other health care providers.

11 Telehealth is a viable solution to maximize existing local
12 resources and increase patient convenience and compliance.
13 However, the best available data indicates that the use of
14 telehealth is limited in the State. No more than fifteen per
15 cent of practicing providers in the State report a telehealth
16 experience, even though the State has some of the most
17 progressive telehealth laws in the nation.



1 Preliminary findings from the 2017 State Telehealth Summit
2 confirm that provider comfort and patient expectations are the
3 most significant barriers to greater telehealth adoption.
4 Department of health research, including direct observation of
5 strong telehealth programs in other jurisdictions, reveals that
6 staff support is needed to ensure that both the patient and
7 technology are situated correctly for a telehealth encounter.
8 Ideally, staff support should be situated at both the health
9 care provider's and the patient's locations. However, support
10 staff for the patient is critical when the patient is in a non-
11 traditional health care setting, including a home, community
12 center, or school.

13 The legislature further finds that establishing a
14 telehealth pilot project will help provide the State's health
15 care providers and patients the benefits of telehealth, increase
16 provider adoption of telehealth, support health care workforce
17 development related to telehealth, and evaluate the clinical and
18 administrative efficacy of various telehealth delivery models.
19 The legislature notes that establishing a rural health care
20 pilot project to pay an availability fee to eligible health care
21 providers servicing rural areas will help encourage providers to



1 prioritize these rural areas. In turn, an increase in provider
2 prioritization of these rural areas will increase rural
3 residents' access to previously less-than-accessible medical
4 specialties.

5 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish and
6 fund telehealth and rural health care pilot projects.

7 SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall implement a
8 telehealth pilot project.

9 (b) The telehealth pilot project shall:

- 10 (1) Assist residents at two distinct project sites, both
11 of which shall have a medically underserved area
12 designation by the United States Department of Health
13 and Human Services; provided that one site shall be
14 located in a county with a population of less than
15 five hundred thousand and the other site shall be
16 located in a county with a population of more than
17 five hundred thousand;
- 18 (2) Utilize telehealth as the primary means to deliver
19 health care; and
- 20 (3) Include at least one federally-qualified health center
21 or rural health clinic in each project site.



1 (c) Within six months of the exhaustion of all telehealth
2 pilot project funds, the department of health shall make
3 available to the public an evaluation report on the telehealth
4 pilot project's outcomes, including the quality of care, patient
5 satisfaction, training and workforce development issues, and the
6 financial sustainability of telehealth activities.

7 (d) Chapters 103D and 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, shall
8 not apply to procurements made pursuant to this Act for a period
9 of twelve months following the effective date of this Act;
10 provided that the department of health shall only obtain goods
11 and services for the telehealth pilot project in a manner that
12 is cost-effective and provides the most benefit to the
13 telehealth pilot program on contractual terms that are most
14 advantageous to the State; provided further that the execution
15 period of all procurements shall not exceed the term of the
16 telehealth pilot project.

17 SECTION 3. (a) The department of health shall implement
18 and administer a rural health care pilot project.

19 (b) The rural health care pilot project shall:

20 (1) Assist residents in three distinct rural areas, one
21 each on the islands of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai;



1 provided that the area selected on the island of Maui
2 shall be in the Hana district;
3 (2) Pay a \$250 availability fee to each contracted
4 licensed physician or nurse practitioner providing
5 health care services in one or more of the areas
6 selected pursuant to paragraph (1); provided that each
7 physician or nurse practitioner shall practice in a
8 specialty that is difficult for rural residents to
9 access, including but not limited to cardiology,
10 gastroenterology, endocrinology, dermatology,
11 nephrology, and psychiatry; provided further that the
12 availability fee shall be separate from, and in
13 addition to, any charges billed by the physician or
14 nurse practitioner; and
15 (3) Reimburse each contracted physician or nurse
16 practitioner for any costs, including airfare, lodging
17 costs, and a per diem, that the physician or nurse
18 practitioner deems necessary to provide in-person
19 health care services to patients in the areas selected
20 pursuant to paragraph (1).



1 (c) Within six months of the exhaustion of all rural
 2 health care pilot project funds, the department of health shall
 3 submit to the legislature an evaluation report on the rural
 4 health care pilot project's outcomes, including the quality of
 5 care, patient satisfaction, training, and workforce development
 6 issues, the financial sustainability of the pilot project, and
 7 any proposed legislation.

8 (d) The department of health shall contract with eligible
 9 physicians and hospitals, including but not limited to those
 10 within the networks of Hawaii Pacific Health, The Queen's Health
 11 Systems, and Kaiser Permanente, to carry out the rural health
 12 care pilot project.

13 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
 14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
 15 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for
 16 the telehealth pilot project established pursuant to section 2
 17 of this Act.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
 19 health for the purposes of section 2 of this Act.

20 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
 21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so



1 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for
2 the rural health care pilot project established pursuant to
3 section 3 of this Act.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
5 health for the purposes of section 3 of this Act.

6 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2060.



Report Title:

DOH; Telehealth; Rural Health Care; Pilot Projects;
Appropriation

Description:

Requires the department of health to implement a telehealth pilot project and publish an evaluation report on the telehealth pilot project outcomes. Exempts the telehealth pilot project from public procurement requirements for a period of twelve months, with certain conditions. Requires the department to implement and administer a rural health care pilot project to provide physicians and nurse practitioners serving selected rural areas with an availability fee and reimbursements for certain expenses and submit to the legislature an evaluation report on the rural health care pilot project outcomes. Appropriates funds to support the pilot projects. Effective 7/1/2060. (HD1)

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