

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 11 2022

RE: S.B. No. 2280
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-First State Legislature
Regular Session of 2022
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health, to which was referred S.B. No. 2280 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO DENTAL ASSISTANTS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to allow dental assistants to perform limited duties under the general supervision of a dentist in public health settings.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; Hawaii Dental Association; Hawaii Dental Hygienists' Association; Hawaii Dental Service; Hui No Ke Ola Pono, Inc.; and five individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Health, Board of Dentistry, and one individual.

Your Committee finds that the State lacks adequate and accessible dental public health infrastructure, particularly on the neighbor islands. This lack of access to sufficient dental care has led to devastating health outcomes among children, especially those in native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. Dental assistants could play an important role in improving access to dental health care across the State. However, dental assistants are prohibited from providing auxiliary support except under direct supervision. This prohibition affects the



efficiency and production of dental assistants when practicing in a public health setting, leading to fewer dental services being provided to vulnerable communities. This measure allows dental assistants to perform limited duties under the general supervision of a dentist in public health settings.

Your Committee acknowledges the testimony of the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition, which notes that the measure as written requires licensed dental hygienists to supervise dental assistants, when in fact both should be under the general supervision of a dentist. Your Committee also notes the testimony of the Department of Health, which raised concerns that the measure, as written, could be interpreted to foreclose dentists in private practice from implementing community-based oral health models to provide dental services to underserved Hawaii residents.

Therefore, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that licensed dental hygienists may direct the work of dental assistants but do not have supervisory responsibility over dental assistants;
- (2) Removing the requirement that a licensed dentist be employed in a public setting;
- (3) Inserting an effective date of January 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2280, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2280, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health,



JARRETT KEOHOKALOLE, Chair



