



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Health  
Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.

By  
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Dean  
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### HB 156 – RELATING TO REIMBURSEMENT OF PHARMACISTS

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and members of the committee:

My name is Carolyn Ma, and I am the Dean for the UH Hilo Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP). The college fully supports this bill that will require all insurers, mutual and fraternal benefit societies and health maintenance organizations to recognize services provided by pharmacists.

Pharmacists are considered the drug therapy experts among health care professions. Training of pharmacists includes foundational sciences with advanced years of study including extensive curriculum in pharmacology, medicinal chemistry, disease pathophysiology and drug therapeutics. Successful completion of the curriculum from a U.S. accredited college of pharmacy results in the terminal degree, the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD). Graduates are then eligible to sit for the national licensing exam (NABPLEX). Successful passing of the NABPLEX, allows an individual to practice as a Registered Pharmacist (RPh) who is then regulated by the Dept. of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) through a state Board of Pharmacy.

In addition, many pharmacy school graduates will continue on to post-graduate residency programs for further clinical training in general pharmacy practice as well as in specialty areas that include but are not limited to ambulatory care, community pharmacy, oncology, nutrition, nuclear medicine, psychiatry and mental health, and critical care medicine. Specialty practice pharmacists may also be board certified by the Board of Pharmacy Specialties, a division of the American Pharmacists Association (APHA). This extensive education fully supports our practice of pharmacy activities outlined in Hawaii revised statute (HRS) 461, Pharmacists and Pharmacy, and Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) 16-95 Pharmacists and Pharmacies.

Pharmacists are the most accessible health care professionals and work with health care colleagues in a number of different practice areas such as in acute care hospitals, ambulatory care clinics and long term care facilities. Health care colleagues such as physicians, nurses, psychologists, naturopaths, dieticians, public health professionals rely on pharmacists as a vital source of drug therapy expertise and as partners in safe,

effective and cost efficient drug therapy management for best practices in patient care. However, with the exception of reimbursement for the activity of dispensing of medications, all other related pharmacy practice activities (counseling, therapy management, vaccinations) provided by pharmacists are not eligible for reimbursement. This bill is not requesting that pharmacists practice as primary care providers, but that we are reimbursed for our expertise and services we provide to patients.