



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
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By
John Morton
Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 1157 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENT IMMUNIZATIONS

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of HB 1157 HD1 SD1 and requests an amendment. HB 1157 HD1 SD1 exempts post-secondary students who attend classes exclusively online or through distance learning from providing evidence of immunizations as required by Title 11, Chapter 157, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR).

Post-secondary online education and distance learning programs expand access to higher education and workforce development opportunities. Online and distance learning programs provide more flexibility in location and schedule for students who are working, have family demands or have other challenges participating in on-campus, in-person classes. With the legislative support appropriated in 2018, the UH is increasing its online learning opportunities, beginning with a new, fully online Associate in Arts (AA) program which begins with an optional college readiness class on July 2, 2019.

Currently, HAR requires that all post-secondary students provide immunization records with evidence of identified vaccinations. These rules, last updated in 2001, apply to all enrolled students, whether students are attending in person or remotely via technology. DOH's prior testimony on House Draft 1 indicated that the public health concern is for students in "traditional, congregate post-secondary school classroom or dormitory settings" which does not apply to students participating exclusively in online or distance courses.

HB 1157 HD1 SD1 introduced a new provision to the online exemption which requires students to provide immunization records "if the student needs to go on campus for any reason including but not limited to the use of facilities or meeting with professors or instructors... prior to entering the campus." UH believes the new provision is not necessary to achieve public health objectives and would not achieve the educational objective of streamlining enrollment processes to increase access for students via online programs. UH prefers the language found in the HD1.

In closing, I wish to thank the Legislature for their support of expanding opportunities for Hawaii's residents through online and distance education. We request your support for amendments to this bill to streamline enrollment for online students.