SB 639 – RELATING TO KUPUNA CARE

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

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 639, which specifies that 10 percent of the moneys in the Hawai‘i Tobacco Settlement special fund be allocated to and expended by the Department of Health for purposes of the kupuna care and the kupuna care givers programs.

The University of Hawai‘i receives a portion of the tobacco settlement funds which is allocated to the University’s revenue-undertakings fund for the medical school facility. When John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) was built, the medical school also had to assume its own expenses for electricity, security and custodial services – costs that were previously absorbed by UH Mānoa. The tobacco settlement funding allows us to meet those expenses.

We appreciate the commitment to the kupuna care givers program that supports qualified caregivers by providing up to $70 per day to cover the cost of adult care, chore services, home-delivered meals, homemaker services, personal care, respite, or transportation. We also recognize the important services the program provides in light of Hawai‘i’s growing aging population. However, so that JABSOM may continue to educate and train future generations of physicians, we ask that the appropriation allocated to the University from the Hawai‘i Tobacco Settlement special fund be preserved at its current percentage.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.