



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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By

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And

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HB 654 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center strongly supports HB 654 HD1 SD1, as long as it is in addition to the University's Biennium Budget request. This measure appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center to determine the etiologies for the high incidence of liver and bile duct cancer in Hawai'i and to investigate the role of liver fat, liver fluke infection, aflatoxin ingestion, and other potential causes, to identify biomarkers that can be utilized for public health interventions and to develop cancer prevention and other public health measures to reduce the burden of this disease.

The UH Cancer Center is one of only 70 institutions in the U.S. that hold the prestigious National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation, and is the only NCI-designated center in the Pacific. The NCI designation provides greater access to federal funding and research opportunities. More importantly, it gives the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific region access to innovative and potentially life-saving clinical trials without the necessity of traveling to the mainland.

The UH Cancer Center is a leader nationally in research focused on liver cancer. The State of Hawai'i ranks second in the nation in the incidence of liver cancer. While some of these cases are related to hepatitis, a known cause of this disease, the majority are not, and are related to abnormal accumulation of fat in the liver, other infectious organisms such as liver flukes, and environmental toxins. Faculty at the UH Cancer Center have been recognized as international leaders in research into the causes of liver and bile duct cancer and have been selected as members of National commissions engaged in Federal policy recommendations. Additionally, faculty affiliated with UH Cancer Center and its National Community Oncology Research Program direct several novel clinical trials for patients with liver and bile duct cancers.

Because liver cancer is not a major health problem in most areas of the US, this disease has received less attention and funding from the NIH for research. Funds

allocated under this measure will greatly advance our knowledge of the etiologies of this disease to the benefit of the people of Hawai'i.

The UH Cancer Center supports HB 654 HD1 SD1. Funds allocated under this proposal will be specifically allocated to advance liver cancer research. Annual progress reports will be submitted to the legislature. *Only the UH Cancer Center is positioned to perform this critically important research in the State of Hawai'i.*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.