



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Lower and Higher Education

And

House Committee on Health
Friday, February 8, 2019 at 2:16 p.m.

By

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And

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HB 654 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chairs Woodson and Mizuno, Vice Chairs Hashem, Perruso and Kobayashi, and members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center strongly supports HB 654, 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 whether Hawai'i has the highest incidence in the country of liver and bile duct cancer due to liver fluke infection, aflatoxin ingestion, or intrahepatic bile duct dilation in Hawai'i.

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.

The UH Cancer Center supports HB 654. Funds allocated under this proposal will be specifically allocated to advance liver cancer research. *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.