



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
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By

Clementina D. Ceria-Ulep, PhD, RN
Interim Dean and Professor
Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing
(formerly the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene)

and

Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2220 HD1 – RELATING TO NURSING

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing (NAWSON) to provide testimony in strong support for HB 2220 HD1, provided that its passage does not replace or impact priorities in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.

This bill appropriates funding to the University of Hawai'i to increase the State's capacity to train new nurses and project future nursing workforce needs.

This funding will support 39 positions across the State. Funding was based on Fall 2021 need, but continues to represent the needs today. With equity in mind, the schools with greatest need for instructors will receive the greatest benefit. This strengthens the teaching capacity particularly for our partners in rural areas and at community colleges. While recruiting faculty is a challenge, we also know that introducing teaching to clinical faculty is a valuable pipeline into the nursing faculty career pathway. Thus, the additional transition to clinical instruction training and support this bill proposes will increase the resources and support these individuals need to be recruited and retained.

I serve as the Interim Dean for NAWSON, and have convened the University of Hawai'i Statewide Nursing Consortium, which is the collaborative of associate degree nursing programs and NAWSON that established academic progression standards and articulation agreements from the associate degree programs into the NAWSON bachelors in nursing program. The Consortium has existed since 2012, and through this work, more nurses across the state have access to baccalaureate education in nursing. In fact, though 32% of all registered nurses (RNs) in this state report that their initial nursing education was a licensed practical nurse (LPN) certificate (7%) or associate degree in nursing (25%), 75% of RNs report that their education is at the baccalaureate

level or higher. In addition to our success in helping nurses advance their education, through our work leading the Consortium, NAWSON has fostered strong relationships with the directors of fellow UH nursing programs.

In Fall 2021, I sounded the alarm regarding nursing faculty and instructors. Though we have had an increasingly difficult time recruiting new applicants, and expanding our instructor lines due to changes in clinical education standards in our state, we suddenly found ourselves at an intersection of increased demand for instructors, increased vacancies due to early retirements or departures as a result of COVID, and a need to support new faculty and instructors who may be expert clinicians, but new to teaching. This measure is the response to our call for help. NAWSON and our fellow UH schools of nursing thank you for hearing our needs and identifying solutions that will help us recruit the additional teaching roles needed, as well as dedicate resources to researching and projecting the future workforce needs. With the added instructor lines and workforce projections, we will be better able to right-size our teaching plans, which include adjusting admissions, to the needs of the future.

Upon recruitment of these positions, our state schools of nursing will be better able to accommodate the current teaching demands. Currently, all schools reported instructors and faculty are working on overload. It will help our schools right-size the instructor positions to the new clinical teaching environment. Since COVID, we have seen a reduction in allowed cohort sizes from one instructor to eight students down to one instructor to four to six students. It will also help us plan for the future. By increasing our knowledge about future nursing projections and right-sizing our current faculty and instructor staff, we will be better positioned to recalibrate our programs to meet the employer demands and profession needs in our state.

This measure is critical to the future of nursing in Hawai'i. Without this funding, we will be years behind in our ability to produce enough nurses. We appreciate your continuing support of nursing education and the nursing profession. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of the intent and funding proposed in this measure.