UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

HCR 158
ENCOURAGING A COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AT THE
UNIVERISTY OF HAWAI`I AT HILO

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education

March 31, 2004

by

Rose Y. Tseng
Chancellor, University of Hawai`i at Hilo

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

March 31, 2004

by

Rose Y. Tseng
Chancellor, University of Hawai`i at Hilo

HCR 158 ENCOURAGING A COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI`I AT HILO

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Tamayo and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo recognizes the critical shortage of pharmacists throughout the country, including Hawai'i, and the serious negative effects on the quality of heath care created by this shortage. With the increased complexity of medications and a continually growing sector of our population on multiple medications, assuring optimum drug therapy outcomes will require highly trained drug therapy experts. In recognition of the need for a higher level of training, the current minimal educational requirement for new licensure as a pharmacist is the Doctor of Pharmacy degree.

In conducting the feasibility study for a College of Pharmacy at UH Hilo, we have been encouraged by the interest and support of the local health care system. The Hawai'i Pharmacists Association has been a strong supporter of the proposed College, both to train new pharmacists and to provide much needed continuing education to the local pharmacy community. The hospitals and Community Health Centers on all of the major Islands, as well as the chain and independent pharmacies have validated the need for locally trained pharmacists and confirmed their willingness to provide sites for the clinical training of students in the program. There has been a strong feeling that providing training in the more rural setting of the Big Island will be of benefit in recruiting and retention of pharmacists on the neighbor islands and rural areas of Oahu. In addition, the administration of the John A. Burns School of Medicine has been supportive of the proposed College and we have discussed the desirability of joint clinical training for medical and pharmacy students.

The educational model examined in the feasibility study would have students spending the first two years of their pharmacy education in residence at the UH Hilo Campus for didactic and laboratory coursework, with the final two years of primarily clinical training based at locations throughout the State. Thus faculty and students would be present on all the major islands during their final two years. This model will support the recruitment and retention needs of the State, while also distributing the expertise of pharmacy faculty widely.

We believe that a UH Hilo College of Pharmacy has the potential to have an economic impact on the State as well. The expertise of a resident pharmacy faculty could support a growing industry in natural medicines, and could provide the base for research and development partnerships with Asian drug companies. A Pharmacoeconomic Center at the College, like many on the mainland, would also provide a source of expertise for the State in dealing with the many contemporary drug related problems, policies and issues.

The proposed College of Pharmacy can help address the manpower needs for highly trained pharmacists who can deliver pharmaceutical care sensitive to the unique cultural and ethnic makeup of the entire State, especially rural and neighbor islands where the needs are most acute. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo College of Pharmacy will complete the triad of health professional degrees offered by the University of Hawai'i, alongside Medicine and Nursing. It will also offer access for local residents to obtain a pharmacy education at an affordable resident tuition, rather than the $30,000 and higher annual tuition costs at private colleges.

With your support of this Resolution, we would present to you at your next legislative session a specific funding plan for the creation of a College of Pharmacy at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo.