



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

HCR 229

Requesting the Legislative Reference Bureau to evaluate the impact of the physician "on-call" crisis on the Queen's Medical Center Trauma Center to provide emergency medical services in the State of Hawaii and to recommend appropriate public and private sector government responses to the "on-call" crisis to ensure continued access to trauma level care.

Testimony Presented Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

March 31, 2005

by

T. Samuel Shomaker, MD, JD
Acting Dean
John A. Burns School of Medicine
University of Hawaii at Manoa

Testimony Presented Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

March 31, 2005
State Capitol, Conference Room 329, 10:30 a.m.

by

T. Samuel Shomaker, MD, JD
Acting Dean, John A. Burns School of Medicine
University of Hawaii at Manoa

HCR 229

Chair Arakaki, Vice Chair Green and Committee members.

Thank you for giving the John A Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) the opportunity to testify on HCR 229, requesting the Legislative Reference Bureau to evaluate the impact of the physician "on-call" crisis on the Queen's Medical Center Trauma Center to provide emergency medical services in the State of Hawaii and to recommend appropriate public and private sector government responses to the "on-call" crisis to ensure continued access to trauma level care. I am Sam Shomaker, Acting Dean and on behalf of the School, I wish to express support for this resolution. The crisis in securing adequate physician call coverage for the Trauma Center at Queen's Medical Center, as well as for other emergency specialty services in hospitals across the state, is threatening access to basic medical services for critically ill patients need to have the best chance of survival. The problem is complex and multi factorial. Issues include the growing cost of malpractice insurance and the increased liability associated with caring for these patients, reimbursement policies that favor paying for elective care over emergency services, changing demographics in the physician work force, and the lack of a coordinated statewide trauma service.

Given the close partnership that exists between the medical school and the state's hospitals, JABSOM has been participating in the discussions organized by the Health Care Association on this issue. As finding workable solutions to this problem is critical to the health and welfare of our state's citizens, the School pledges to participate in the study to be conducted by the Legislative Reference Bureau pursuant to this resolution. The School will do its best to play an appropriate role in addressing this critical issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.