



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education and
Committee on Human Services & Housing

by

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H.B. 814, RELATING TO AGING

Chairpersons Chang and Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees on Higher Education and Human Services & Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on our budding effort to establish a Center on Aging. We are currently in the process of reorganizing this effort to ensure that it serves the interdisciplinary promise of the Center. The study of aging is one of the most interdisciplinary subjects at the University. I believe the University can do more and be even more attractive to extramural funding with greater internal coordination. I have personally engaged on this subject and am working with the Deans of Social Work, Law, Nursing, Medicine, Cancer Research, Education, and Social Sciences to work to connect the scholars on our campus that can work in Hawai'i to address the issues that our aging population present.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa currently has about 15 faculty members who teach and conduct research in gerontology, and most of them work closely with gerontologists at other UH campuses and in the community. At least 9 UHM schools/departments have aging-focused classes in their list of approved courses to help us develop the professionals to serve this growing population.

To give you an idea of the depth and breadth of our involvement in this area, here are a few examples of projects relating to Aging that we are involved in:

The John A. Burns School of Medicine, in addition to the Center on Aging, has a complete department of Geriatrics which was established in 2004, which in addition to providing training to the next generation of doctors, provides an interdisciplinary outpatient consultation program for elderly patients referred by their primary care physician. The department has 28 core faculty and 26 associate faculty members, and has large epidemiological studies such as: The Honolulu

Heart Program, The Honolulu-Asia Aging Study, the Women's Health Initiative, The Family Blood Pressure Program and The Pacific Genetic Epidemiologic Study of Aging

The Center on the Family also runs a Data Center which contains the most comprehensive collection of data and publications pertaining to Hawai'i's aging population.

Our School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene has a Gerontological Nurse Practitioner program, and also have a research program underway. The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is also building educational capacity in long-term care facilities in Hawai'i through continuing education and training, and attracting new nurses into the geriatric specialty area.

The School of Social Work offers a gerontology concentration which trains social workers to care for the elderly, and also conducts extensive research.

The School of Law offers an Elder Law program assists older individuals with legal issues, with the goal of enhancing, protecting and preserving their autonomy and independence as much as and long as possible. They accomplish this through education and direct services with an emphasis on preventive law.

The Archimedes project is working closely with a broad range of individuals and groups of people in Hawai'i to create Ho'alauna, a new technology solution that will enable Hawai'i's seniors to remain connected to their family, friends and community; control their home environment; and manage their healthcare.

The Colleges of Arts and Sciences hosts the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences offers courses and special multidisciplinary projects to encourage aging citizens from all walks of life to engage their minds, enrich their lives, and serve the community.

We are working with our Faculty Retirees Association to develop a robust relationship with our own UH retirees.

And, of course, we also offer a Senior Citizen Visitor Program allows Hawai'i's senior citizens to "visit" courses that are offered at the University free of charge.

Thank you for this opportunity to come and talk with you today, this is an area I have great personal interest in, and we must take a leadership role in coordinating all of these areas so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

We have included a request for this area in our BOR Biennium Budget request, and we welcome the Legislators assistance to boost our multidisciplinary approach to address issues of society and aging research, so long as it does not adversely impact our BOR Biennium Budget request.

Mahalo.