



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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House Committee on Higher Education
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By

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H.B. 1811 RELATING TO A NURSING PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
HAWAII'S LEEWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chair Chang and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity today to present testimony on House Bill 1811, which proposes to establish a new nursing program at our Leeward Community College (LCC). As stated in the Bill, the shortage of nurses continues, and the Leeward and West Oahu regions are underserved when it comes to the availability of training and educational facilities in the region. The Bill also notes the high numbers of students in this region who say they want a nursing career upon graduation. In response to these island-wide issues, Kapi`olani Community College (KCC) has developed a Nursing Education Satellite Program (NESP), that is a part of the Board of Regents (BOR) approved 2007-2009 biennium budget request, and has already begun offering the program in Waianae.

Many components of this Bill match the directions being developed by KCC and LCC. Currently the colleges are working together to implement a number of health sciences initiatives in the Waianae region. By Fall of 2007, the KCC-LCC partnership is planning to serve a cohort of 10-20 students in the RN program. Money has been budgeted to make appropriate classroom and facilities modifications at LCC in order to accommodate this partnership. In this way, UHCC aims to deploy nursing training opportunities as quickly as possible to the residents of the Leeward CC region.

This collaboration will lead to increased output of both Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) and Registered Nurses (RN). It is KCC's plan to offer this program each Fall semester at LCC. Simultaneously, KCC and LCC are building the capacity to meet the growing need for health care workers in long term care. This includes expansion of Certified Nurse Aide programs, development of an LPN program in partnership with the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, and planning for training for Adult Residential Care Home workers and Family Caregivers.

As noted above, the current BOR approved budget requests 10 new positions at KCC to hire the nursing faculty needed to not only deliver its established nursing program to aspiring students throughout the island, but also to provide the resources needed to

help our residents who have foreign nursing certification and experience pass the LPN or RN licensure examinations and thus allow them to be employed in the field.

LCC will not be the only KCC satellite site for nursing education on Oahu. Pre-baccalaureate nursing programs are planned to be offered at Waianae Health Academy in Fall 2008, and at Windward Community College in Summer 2009. However, the successful implementation of KCC's strategy to meet the nursing needs of our communities, island wide, is dependent upon our ability to acquire the resources detailed in the current BOR approved budget request.

In addition to the resources, to establish the nursing program at LCC, HB1811 proposes to appropriate \$300,000 to coordinate the prerequisite course-offering for the RN program at LCC. KCC has already planned to place a counselor in its satellite program so that students can be guided and assisted in how to meet these prerequisites. These funds would help KCC's counselor to work with LCC to provide these courses for students in the Leeward and Waianae areas of the island. We support this aspect of the Bill provided that if any funds are appropriated, they not displace the priorities of the Board of Regent's budget request.

Establishing a new degree program requires BOR approval. The BOR approval process requires an analysis of needs, demands, and capacities and a recommendation from the administration that approving such a new program is the best use of available resources. That analysis is not complete, and it will include the recommendation of the statewide Nursing Consortium established by the Legislature recently. If the University determines that it makes sense to establish a new nursing program on Oahu, a formal budget request will be forthcoming for legislative consideration.

The goal of deploying assets to the Leeward region to accommodate the nursing needs of that region and the state is underway. The planning regarding the management structure of that deployment is being discussed and researched. We appreciate the continued interest in nursing workforce development, as expressed in HB 1811.