



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committees on Health and Labor and Public Employment
Wednesday, February 6, 2013 at 8:30 am
by
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HB 1483 RELATING TO THE HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS CORPORATION

Aloha Chairs Belatti and Nakashima and Members of the Committees:

The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), with the encouragement and support of the Hawai'i State Legislature, Hawai'i County and Hilo Medical Center, has invested time and expertise to promote the establishment of a post-MD residency training program for primary care medicine in Hilo. Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation's proposed interdisciplinary primary care training program is consistent with our hopes to increase the educational and training opportunities statewide for health careers.

Our Hawai'i Health Workforce Assessment, extended by the 2012 Legislature, continues to underscore the State's urgent need for healthcare providers. Right now, Hawai'i is short an estimated 635 physicians compared with average communities our size, including those on:

Hawai'i Island — 175
Kaua'i — 64
Lana'i — 10

Maui — 84
Moloka'i — 11
O'ahu — 291

With growing health care needs in our rapidly aging communities and the pending retirements of as many as 30% or more of local physicians in the next five years, there is much to be done.

Among other things this past year, JABSOM has launched a website to connect physicians to MD openings in Hawai'i, begun an educational loan repayment program for health care providers who commit to serve in our rural areas and extended our training of MD students to all the major islands from 'Ele'ele on Kaua'i to North Hawai'i on Hawai'i Island. We find that our MD students performing extended clerkship training on the neighbor islands are 45% more likely to choose to serve rural communities after they become physicians, and up to 80% of our MDs in post-MD residency programs remain to begin their own practices in the area. All over the country, enrollment at medical schools has outpaced growth in residency training programs. Additional graduate medical education, such as the program proposed in Hilo, is a priority need if our State hopes to retain and attract the health care workers our population needs now and will only need more urgently in the future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.