



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

Written Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Health  
Wednesday, March 19, 2014 at 8:30 a.m.

by  
Dean Jerris Hedges, MD  
JOHN A. BURNS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### HCR 141 – URGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN TO MITIGATE IMMEDIATE AND FUTURE CRITICAL SHORTAGES OF PHYSICIANS IN THE STATE OF HAWAII.

Aloha, Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Morikawa and members of the Committee on Health, mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

The University of Hawai'i medical school is grateful to the Hawai'i State Legislature for its support of the data collection and analysis by our faculty and staff which has helped us document the severe physician shortage in Hawai'i and subsequently develop and implement efforts to ease the shortfall.

We have expanded our class size during a period of declining revenues and through our MD Program (266 students) and MD Residency Programs (235 MDs), we are proud to be the largest single producer of new physicians in the workforce, with an estimated 50% of MDs actively practicing in Hawai'i having trained at JABSOM or serving on our teaching faculty.

MDs with whom we have spoken in Hawai'i support the \$60 licensing fee which the Legislature approved because they understand the need to quantify and mitigate the severe shortage. (In 2012, Hawai'i was more than 600 physicians short of the number it should have for its population, we expect updated figures next month.)

We also have sought private and federal funding to inaugurate the Student Loan Repayment Program, to help reimburse the not insignificant educational debt held by MDs and Advanced Practice Nurses who commit to serve at least two years in Hawai'i communities for which they are most needed, including practices on Lāna'i, Moloka'i, Maui, Kaua'i, Hawai'i Island, and on O'ahu at the state prison, in Wai'anae, Kalihi and Waimanalo.

We are grateful that Wahiawā General Hospital has partnered with JABSOM to train family medicine doctors for 20 years. Together, we have produced 106 Family Medicine Residency graduates, the majority of whom are practicing throughout the State. We are grateful, too, for the investments the Queen's Medical Center, the hospitals of Hawai'i

Pacific Health, Kuakini Health Systems, and the contributions of health centers (and more than 1,200 volunteer faculty throughout Hawai'i) continue to make supporting post-MD training in Medicine, Surgery, Psychiatry, OB-GYN, Pediatrics, Geriatric Medicine and Family Medicine.

In every state, the cost of training primary care providers is borne in some fashion with state assistance, in addition to federal funds. Residency training of MDs in specialties such as Family Medicine benefits not just JABSOM and Wahiawā General Hospital, but the entire state.

Our hope, in fact, is to expanding training of primary care, because the need is so great. The more GME slots which are open in Hawai'i, the more likely we are to retain physicians in our State. An estimated 80% of physicians practice in the communities in which they complete their Residency (GME) training.

JABSOM has been coordinating the legislatively mandated Hawai'i Medical Education Council that provides workforce analyses and strategic planning for GME training. These efforts will continue in conjunction with the leadership of the UH affiliated teaching hospitals, including the Hilo Medical Center – now beginning its first class of four residents in Family Medicine July 2014.

JABSOM is unable to use State teaching funds to deliver patient care for the explicit benefit of our affiliated teaching hospitals. However, through a university affiliated practice plan, university-affiliated practitioners are able to contract with the local teaching hospitals at fair market value to deliver clinical services benefiting those hospitals and helping create the clinical learning environment needed for both medical students and resident learners.

JABSOM is supportive of the spirit of this resolution and asks that the legislature also carefully review the future recommendations from the Hawai'i Medical Education Council that will outline areas by which state support can directly off-set some of the educational expenses currently borne by Hawai'i teaching hospitals. Indeed, an existing special fund overseen by the Hawai'i Medical Education Council could help off-set the educational expenses of affiliated teaching hospitals providing primary care residency training. The UH directed provision of new General fund support via this vehicle would be extremely valuable for Wahiawā General Hospital and other facilities carrying a disproportionate GME training cost.

Mahalo.