



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
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by
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SB 218, SD4 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Takamine, Vice Chair Kawakami and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying in support of this bill that establishes a statewide training stipend program for Mobile Intensive Care Technicians (MICTs).

The expansion of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Statewide, the aging EMS provider population, and the continued need to support our neighbor island communities requires that efforts be made to assure that all Paramedic students throughout the State have equal access to educational opportunities. Currently, the County of Hawai'i has stipend funds available and SB 218, HD4 will provide financial support for the other Counties through a stipend program.

Students from rural communities and distant sites have access through distant education to participate in paramedic education but sacrifice significantly when required to travel to O'ahu to complete their clinical and internship phases of Paramedic education. Kapi'olani Community College makes all efforts through constant review of resources on the neighbor islands to minimize student off-island experience. The lack of clinical sites on the neighbor islands requires that students complete their experience on O'ahu which is a costly expense for students.

Our studies show that most students who attend our Paramedic program are older, have families and community responsibilities. Oftentimes, although qualified, the expense of relocating to O'ahu precludes the students from completing the program. This is counter-productive to our efforts to produce quality graduates for the neighbor island communities.

Access to the program through a stipend program will not resolve all the issues related to the current personnel shortage in Hawai'i but it is an important component to maximize opportunities for students. The *Emergency Medical Services Strategic Planning for the Future* conference identified the personnel shortage in Hawai'i as a high priority, and your support for Senate Bill 218 will help in meeting the intent of the conference.

Kapi'olani Community College is committed to graduating quality Paramedics (MICTs) and supports all efforts to meet the personnel needs of the State.

Thank you for providing us the opportunity to testify on this bill.