



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**  
Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Health  
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By

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SB 2961 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Arakaki, Vice Chair Green and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today in support of Senate Bill 2961 SD1.

The purpose of this bill is to increase the tax per cigarette to 9 cents after 1/1/2007, 11 cents after 1/1/2008, and 13 cents after 1/1/2009. Along with the Department of Health and the Hawaii Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund, it will earmark 50 percent of the tax to the university's Cancer Research Center of Hawaii.

You will be hearing from Dr. Carl-Wilhelm Vogel, director of the Cancer Research Center of Hawai'i, about how the monies earmarked for the Center will provide a vital and sustained infusion of resources, allowing not only for the Center's new state-of-the-art facilities in Kakaako, but also allowing the Center to obtain the coveted distinction as a "comprehensive" NCI-designated cancer center.

I'd also like to impress upon you the urgency of the situation and why we need to act now. We have the opportunity here to establish a world-class cancer treatment center that will allow Hawai'i citizens diagnosed with cancer to receive the best healthcare possible right here at home. They will have access to state-of-the-art facilities, renowned and respected physicians and researchers, and the latest clinical trials and

treatment techniques, while being comforted in knowing that their support system of family and friends, their 'ohana, is right within reach.

We also have the opportunity here to make a significant impact on dissuading Hawai'i citizens from smoking, especially our youngsters. As you may know, the University of Hawai'i took a step in this direction in 2003 when it enacted a system-wide tobacco products policy that not only prohibits smoking in various outdoor areas on all 10 campuses, but it also prohibits the sale of tobacco products on campuses, the sponsorship of campus events or organizations by tobacco companies, and provides for cessation guidance to individuals who wish to quit smoking.

The University of Hawai'i is committed to ensuring the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff, and to providing for and improving healthcare for our Hawai'i community. As such, we are equally supportive of the bill's provisions to make the other 50 percent of the increased tobacco tax revenues available to the Department of Health and the Hawaii Tobacco Prevention and Control trust fund for tobacco use prevention and cessation and other health prevention and education programs.

On behalf of the university, I'd like to thank Sen. Rosalyn Baker for introducing this bill and for recognizing the importance of moving forward on this effort to improve cancer care and research in Hawai'i.

Passage of this bill will enable the university and the Cancer Research Center to fulfill its vision of a comprehensive Cancer Research Center that will integrate research and clinical studies, simultaneously improving the quality of cancer care in Hawai'i while increasing the volume of research in the life sciences. We will be able to treat our residents, allowing them to remain at home here in Hawai'i, and we will be able to develop new groundbreaking treatment techniques and perhaps, maybe one day, even a cure.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2961 SD1.