



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the Joint Senate Committees on Higher Education and Health

April 4, 2006

by

Mary G. Boland, DrPH, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor
School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SCR 138/SR 85: Encouraging the Entrance of Men into the Nursing Field

Chair Baker, Chair Hee, and Members of the Committees, I thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution 138 and Senate Resolution 85. We appreciate your commitment to addressing Hawai'i's nursing shortage.

Men comprise a small percentage of the RN workforce although their numbers continue to grow. Preliminary findings from the 2004 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses showed an increase of men licensed as RNs from 5.4% to 5.7% in 2004¹. In Hawai'i, the percentage is slightly higher as men constitute 6.5% of the nursing workforce (CINH)².

Hawai'i's educational programs are the pipeline for the State's nursing workforce and a gender disparity in education leads to the lack of diversity in the workforce. While men are underrepresented in nursing schools, the percentage is higher than that of the workforce. Nationally, men represent 9% of those enrolled in baccalaureate nursing programs³. The percentage of men in the baccalaureate nursing program at UH Manoa is significantly higher than the national average, comprising 25% of our enrollment in Fall 2005.⁴

¹ Bureau of Health Professions, HRSA, US DHHS. "Preliminary Findings – The Registered Nurse Population: National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses". March 2004.

² Kooker, B. & Winters-Moorhead, C. "Nursing Workforce in Hawai'i: Charting Our Progress". March 2005, Presentation to the 18th Annual Pacific Nursing Research Conference

³ American Association of Colleges of Nursing. "2005 Annual Report: State of the Schools", September 2005.

⁴ UH Manoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, annual survey data reported to AACN, December 2005.

The School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene supports this resolution to attract more men into the nursing profession using a collaborative approach. Among the reasons men do not pursue nursing are role stereotypes, few mentors, gender biases, and a misunderstanding about the practice of nursing. Building on the school's successes, UHM will commit to enhancing collaboration in this initiative through targeted outreach and other strategies. Given the severity of the nursing shortage, attracting students into nursing is important.

Simultaneously, the educational capacity of nursing programs must be expanded. Successful recruitment efforts, although necessary to maintain momentum for addressing the shortage, will only increase the already competitive admissions for limited spaces in nursing programs. In Fall 2005, UH nursing programs turned away a total of 355 qualified applicants. At its present level, UH nursing funding is inadequate to produce the next generation of practicing nurses. We strongly urge the Senate to fund all UH nursing programs to increase its enrollments.

We appreciate your support of a multi-faceted approach to the nursing shortage and are committed to full partnership with the legislature. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.