UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

SB 2674 Relating to Nursing

Testimony Presented Before the Senate
Committees on Health and Education

February 6, 2008 at 1:15 p.m.

by
Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
Presented by
Mary G. Boland, DrPH, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor
School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa

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SB 2674, Relating to Nursing

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, Chair Ige, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the Committees, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2674, Relating to Nursing. The University strongly supports this bill which amends section 457-7(f), Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to provide an additional means to qualify for licensure as a registered nurse by allowing a graduate with a completed portion of a master's entry program in nursing (MEPN) to apply for a license as a registered nurse by examination.

The proposed amendment clarifies that students of a qualified MEPN program are eligible to enter the nursing workforce after successfully completing the designated portion of the curriculum. SB 3130 Relating to Nursing, proposes a similar amendment that was heard on Monday, February 4, 2008 by the Senate Committee on Health.

There are more than 60 accelerated or fast track programs with entry at the Master's level across the country. The MEPN is designed for adult learners with no prior nursing experience/education, have a baccalaureate degree or higher in another field other than nursing and are leadership bound and seeking a career in advanced practice nursing. The program equips students with entry-level professional nurse competencies as a foundation for advanced practice roles.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene developed the new MEPN program in response to the nursing shortage and student interest. The program is built upon the curriculum expertise of faculty, institutional experience with accelerated education, and in partnership with the health care community, students, and national experts. State funding was allocated to offer the innovative program in an effort to address workforce need.

The UHM MEPN program received provisional approval by the Hawai'i State Board of Nursing. It consists of an intensive pre-licensure year structured as three continuous semesters transitioning into a specialty nursing pathway. The program does not replace the generic baccalaureate nursing program but provides an additional program pathway

to prepare nurse professionals. At the completion of the pre-licensure component, students meet the American Association of Colleges of Nursing designated baccalaureate competencies.

Passage of this measure will assist in addressing the nursing workforce shortage by enabling nurse professionals to enter the workforce in a shorter amount of time and contribute to increasing the pool of advanced practice nurses and potential future faculty.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am pleased to answer any questions.