



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Comments Presented to the
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By

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Aloha, Chair Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments in support of Senate Bill 2493 SD2, which would clarify the sunset date on tobacco master settlement agreement monies for continued use of funds for operating expenses by the John A. Burns School of Medicine through 2015.

When JABSOM's Kaka'ako campus was built, the medical school also had to assume its own expenses for electricity, security and custodial services – costs that were previously absorbed by UH Mānoa. The tobacco settlement funding allows us to meet those expenses without resorting to the general fund.

More importantly, the legislature's investment in JABSOM is allowing us to grow MORE physicians. This year, in fact, despite a more than \$3 million dollar reduction in our state general funding, we will – without new state appropriations – increase the size of our incoming class from 62 to 64 students. This is a modest increase, to be sure, but one that required commitment from our faculty, staff and administrators, and something we would not be able to consider without the support you have given us in the tobacco settlement monies.

The increase is critical to continued healthcare services in the State. We have a significant shortage of physicians in Hawaii, one that is expected to grow as the population ages and requires more care. About 40% of all practicing physicians in Hawaii are graduates of JABSOM or its residency programs, making JABSOM the best source for doctors in our community.

The school of medicine educates and trains a total of 250 medical students year-round, and through partnering with our major local hospitals, we simultaneously train another 240 medical "residents": men and women with their medical degrees who are treating patients while mastering their skills in fields including primary care, pediatrics, obstetrics and family medicine. We have another ten students who are from disadvantaged backgrounds whom we are training for a fifth year of college study, so that they may become medical students. Additionally, we

have another 120 or so undergraduate and graduate students studying health sciences, including Public Health, Medical Technology and Communication Science Disorders.

We need to keep JABSOM on a course to success because we face a rapidly growing physician shortage, because we attract major funding into the community – 42 million dollars last year – that supports jobs in Hawai‘i providing research and outreach to benefit our community, and because we treat Hawai‘i’s people for tobacco-related disease and strive to reduce the tobacco addiction that costs our state more than \$350 million a year and destroys the quality of our citizens’ lives.

Please be assured that we are making every effort to reduce the amount of general fund support required for JABSOM. In addition to the state-imposed budget cuts this past year, we have instituted a “green initiative” that is projected to save one million dollars this year by shortening hours of operation – and at times shutting down completely – our medical education building. As you know, that is on top of the fact that our facility already is more efficient than many other state buildings because of features, including the energy saving seawater cooling system, which allowed JABSOM to be awarded a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification in 2008. Finally, tobacco cessation and tobacco dependence treatment for the people of Hawai‘i are prominent throughout the medical school’s curriculum and in extensive outreach throughout the state of Hawai‘i.

Thank for this opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.