



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented to the  
Senate Committee on Health  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations  
Monday, April 05, 2010  
3:00 p.m. Conference Room 016  
by  
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And  
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SCR 0211 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EXAMINE OVERLAP AND CONFLICTS AMONG STATUTES RELATING TO PATIENT CARE DIRECTIVES RECOGNIZED IN HAWAII, INCLUDING PHYSICIAN ORDERS FOR LIFE SUSTAINING TREATMENT, "DO NOT RESUSCITATE" ORDERS, AND ADVANCE HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVES

Managing end of life care well is essential to our success as a health system. Goals should be to know and honor patient wishes while assuring access medical care, pain management and comfort care in all settings.

The University of Hawai'i at Manoa's John A. Burns School of Medicine welcomes dialogue on consolidating and clarifying the statutes. It is important to underscore, however, that we fully support POLST as a key component of the process.

We believe directives for guiding care providers and their underlying legal statute should be kept simple and clear, such that patients who become incapacitated receive the care they prefer based upon decisions made prior to ("decompensation"—is this what you meant: the deterioration of one's health. )

Although patient preferences will always be somewhat situational and open to interpretation, the use of physician orders for life-sustaining treatment (POLST) or similar directives is the most humane and ethical means to meet the patient's preferences. The School supports this measure, given that it strengthens the applicability of POLST directives.

The School of Medicine is willing to assist in an ongoing conversation about end of life care in Hawai'i. Our Geriatric Medicine Department has received national recognition (Ranked #16 in the U.S. for Geriatric Medicine, 2009, *US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT*) for its leadership in end of life and other issues affecting our aging citizens. We believe in these issues so strongly, that all of our MD students are required to be schooled in Geriatrics and end of life care.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.