



# **UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

## **Legislative Testimony**

---

Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Health  
March 11, 2013 at 3:00pm

by

May Okihiro, MD

Director, Hawai'i Initiative for Childhood Obesity Research and Education

Department of Pediatrics

John A. Burns School of Medicine

and

Jerris Hedges, MD

on behalf of Deans and Directors in the  
College of Health Sciences and Social Welfare  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### **SCR15 – URGING THE FORMATION OF A WORK GROUP TO DEVELOP NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

Chair Green, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

Obesity is the most significant risk factor for adult obesity and chronic disease such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The development of obesity involves a complex interplay of factors impacting the nutrition and physical activity of people in Hawai'i. Reversing the obesity and chronic disease epidemic will take a multi-faceted and comprehensive approach involving multiple sectors of the community.

Employed adults spend about a quarter of their lives at work and research has shown that the demands of the work environment impact eating and activity patterns (Schulte 2007) and ultimately obesity and obesity-related illness outcomes. Obesity and related diseases, in turn, impact worker productivity. Healthy environments, including work environments that support healthy eating, can have a powerful, positive influence on employee health and wellness.

SCR15 will establish a Task Force to draft nutrition guidelines for Hawai'i State agencies and tools and recommendations to implement these guidelines. The creation and implementation of these foods and beverage guidelines will help the State support workforce health, wellness and productivity.

For these reasons, we strongly support this concurrent resolution.