



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Health  
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by

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And

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### SB 2058 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII HEALTH CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

Aloha, Chair Green, Vice Chair Baker and members of the Committee. Mahalo for allowing us to testify today in support of SB 2058, to help further attract and retain health workers in rural communities of our State, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), with the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, were honored to help organize Hawai'i's first educational loan repayment program for MDs, Physician Assistants and Advanced Practice Nurses. We are excited to tell you how the program is making a difference in many of our Island communities.

After the Hawai'i State Legislature authorized the UH Mānoa schools of medicine and nursing to establish the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment Program, JABSOM Professor Dr. Kelley Withy, MD, of the Hawai'i Area Health Education Center worked to obtain funding from the U.S. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and generous donations from HMSA, The Queen's Medical Center and AlohaCare.

The program began with loan repayment agreements for five health professionals. This past year, a committee selected 11 more health care providers eligible to receive up to \$40,000 to repay their student loans in exchange for their commitment to work in a Health Profession Shortage Area in Hawai'i for two years. Our newest recipients include family nurse practitioners on Lāna'i, Moloka'i, Hawai'i Island and in Wai'anae on O'ahu; an obstetrician on Maui; pediatricians in Kalihi and Wai'anae on O'ahu and a psychiatrist at Hālawā prison.

These are people who are making a difference in communities where they are needed the most. Among the critical services these 11 are providing are helping sex and child abuse assault victims, performing the initial health screenings in family clinics and working with the homeless and migrant workers.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to tell you a little about our most recent loan recipients, the 11 who received awards totaling \$394,474.

Dr. Jasmine Waipa is working in Waiʻanae.

“I attend the deliveries of many babies that I eventually care for in my clinic,” said Dr. Jasmine Waipa, a loan repayment recipient and pediatrician at the Waiʻanae Coast Comprehensive Health Center. Waipa is a graduate of Kamehameha Schools, Harvard University and Stanford School of Medicine. “My interests are in health disparities, adolescent medicine, obesity and preventable chronic disease in children,” said Waipa.

Aileen Duran is working on Lānaʻi.

Aileen Duran, a graduate of Farrington High School and the UH Mānoa Family Nurse Practitioner Program, noticed a real need for bilingual providers when she was training on Lānaʻi. A speaker of Tagalog and Ilokano, Duran accepted a full-time position as a Family Nurse Practitioner at the Lānaʻi Community Health Center in July.

Erik Anderson is working at Kalihi-Palama.

Loan repayment award recipient Erik Anderson is a native of Kailua, Oʻahu. He graduated from ʻIolani School, the University of California-Santa Cruz and earned his master’s degree at the UH Mānoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene to become an Adult and Geriatric Nurse Practitioner. “During my education at UH, I had the pleasure of doing a clinical rotation at Kalihi-Palama Health Center,” said Anderson. “I enjoyed working with the patients from Kalihi, including the new Micronesian immigrants.” Anderson has joined the adult medicine team at Kalihi-Palama.

Denise Houghtaling is working on Molokaʻi

Denise Houghtaling, hired this year as a Family Nurse Practitioner at the Molokaʻi Community Health Center, is also a loan repayment award recipient. She grew up in Washington State, but has lived in Hawaiʻi for seven years. She is currently in a doctorate program through Johns Hopkins and doing a Capstone Project that focuses on providing services to victims of sex and child abuse on Molokaʻi.

Dr. Christopher Lawlis is working at Hālawā Correctional Facility.

Dr. Christopher Lawlis, who joined the state as a psychiatrist at Hālawā Correctional Facility this year, is a new father who wants to raise his children in Hawaiʻi. His loan repayment award helps make that possible. “I am very interested in homeless and chemical dependence issues”, said Dr. Lawlis, and I believe the incarcerated can be helped to get back on track.”

Jennifer Morita is working in Waiʻanae.

Jennifer Morita, from Pālolo on Oʻahu, graduated from Kaimukī High School and attended the UH Mānoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene. “I grew up in a single parent household,” said Morita. During her training at the Institute for Human Services, Kōkua Kalihi Valley and on the Waikī Care A Van, she honed skills and a passion to help the underserved, particularly Native Hawaiians, Micronesians and women currently in domestic violence settings. She is a Family Nurse Practitioner at the Waiʻanae Coast Comprehensive Health Center and a loan repayment recipient.

Dr. Alicia Turlington is working at Kalihi-Palama.

Dr. Alicia Turlington, Pediatrician at Kōkua Kalihi Valley Health Center, grew up on Kaua'i. She completed her medical training at the UH-JABSOM Pediatrics Residency Program. While still a pediatrician-in-training, she was assigned to a clinic at Kōkua Kalihi Valley. "I started there in 2008 as a trainee and have been there ever since," said Dr. Turlington, who now helps train current UH pediatric residents in addition to treating children at the health center.

Hokulani Porter is working in Wai'anae.

Loan repayment award recipient Hokulani Porter, who is part-Hawaiian, grew up seeing many of the health issues that Native Hawaiians experience in her own family. "That motivated me to enter nursing," said Porter. The holder of a Master's Degree, she is a Family Nurse Practitioner at the Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center. "I believe we play an active role serving as the first layer of detection of health deterioration," Porter said. "The patient visit can be a catalyst to engage patients, educating and empowering them to make lifestyle interventions to promote health and prevent disease," she said.

Dr. Duffy Casey is working on Maui.

Dr. Duffy Casey, an Obstetrician at Community Clinic of Maui, had lots of international experience when he moved to Hawai'i four years ago. Clinical rotations on the neighbor islands exposed him to the small-town life on Maui, which he loves. He is a 2013 loan repayment recipient.

Anjalie Graham is working on Hawai'i Island.

Loan repayment award recipient Anjalie Graham is a Family Nurse Practitioner at West Hawai'i Community Health Center. "We conduct homeless clinics weekly and I enjoy providing that kind of care," Graham said. "I hope to take part in a new migrant worker health program starting at West Hawai'i," she said.

Lisa Garrett-Guadnola is working in Wai'anae.

Lisa Garrett-Guadnola comes to the Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center by way of Detroit, where her parents worked in an automobile assembly line. During a Master's program in nursing, she worked with Catholic Charities of Hawai'i in Ma'ili. "It was my first introduction to the Wai'anae Coast, and I felt right at home," she said.

Right now, Dr. Withy is in the process of receiving new applications from recruits interested in the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment Program. We are proud of the recipients so far, and we believe that with State support, the loan repayment program can continue to grow, to attract or help retain additional health workers for our citizens. In the face of a growing health worker shortage, the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment Program is a great investment in our State's future.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.