



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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House Committee on Health
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by

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and

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SB 841 SD2 HD1 - RELATING TO SCHOOL HEALTH

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Creagan, and members of the House Committee on Health, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 841 SD2 HD1.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa School of Nursing (UH Mānoa Nursing) is in support of SB 841 SD2 HD1, with amendments, which establishes an interagency working group to create a comprehensive school health program.

Earlier this school year, UH Mānoa Nursing engaged with the Department of Education (DOE) in the Hawai'i Keiki Program: Healthy and Ready to Learn to place a school nurse in five complex areas across the State. Over the past eight months since its inception, Hawai'i Keiki nurses in the five complex areas have created school and student health policies, integrated school wellness planning, participated in Hawai'i Smiles, developed health content for newsletters and blogs, and enhanced regular communication with Public Health Nursing (PHN) and the Department of Health (DOH). This effort is a safety net partnership to increase access to healthcare for a vulnerable population – pre-kindergarten to high school keiki – by providing school health nursing and when required, primary care services in the public schools.

School health nurses are the coordinators of health in the schools. With the Hawai'i Keiki Program, UH Mānoa Nursing looks forward to contributing to the school health dialogue from the school nurse perspective and academic partner perspective. This bill adds depth and breadth to the school based health conversation and a cross-agency venue to discuss and develop system-wide strategies and school or complex area strategies, alike.

UH Mānoa Nursing agrees with the DOE and DOH recommended amendments and further requests that the House Committee on Health consider removing the section on Page 2, lines 13-17 that indicates "the transfer of PHN from the DOH to the DOE including supervisory issues that may arise and possible career pathways for PHN that

are transferred". PHNs offer an array of services well beyond school health, thus the discussion to plan a transfer of PHNs to DOE may limit their current scope of practice.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 841 SD2 and to submit recommended amendments.