



Hawai'i Primary Care Association

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Senate Committee on Human Services

The Hon. Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
The Hon. Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health

The Hon. David Y. Ige, Chair
The Hon. Josh Green, MD, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2469 **Relating to the Emergency & Budget Reserve Fund** **Submitted by Beth Giesting, Chief Executive Officer** **February 4, 2010, 2:15 p.m., Room 016**

The Hawaii Primary Care Association strongly supports this bill to ensure adequate funding for essential services in the face of our state and national economic crisis. Each of the items identified for funding in SB 2469 is important to the health and well-being of Hawaii. Each contributes substantially to preventing far worse calamities and costs than we currently experience.

The Hawaii Primary Care Association particularly asks your support for:

- Section 10 that calls for adequate funding for health care provided to the uninsured by restoring \$3.5 million eliminated from the budget last year at a time when funds were most needed.
- Section 13 that appropriates \$332,000 to subsidize the costs of the emergency room at Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center.
- Section 14, which would continue funding for the Immigrant Health Initiative, a program that cost just \$550,000 and served 1,667 low income immigrants last year.
- Section 15, which would restore \$600,000 funding for the "Keiki Care" program.
- Sections 20-23, which would restore funding for Outstationed Eligibility Workers at community health centers and pay for outreach in high risk communities to ensure that vulnerable individuals are linked to public benefits for which they are eligible. These workers find the uninsured who are eligible for Med-QUEST and other programs and assist them to submit complete applications so they can get needed health care. Given the drastic cuts in MQD staffing, this community-based service is needed more than ever.
- Section 27, which would restore adult dental services to Med-QUEST beneficiaries. In last year's legislative budget, the State cost was estimated to be \$3.1 million, which would attract a federal match of \$4.2 million.
- Section 28, which would ensure adequate funds for Medicaid for next year. Without adequate funding, cuts to Medicaid may leave many more economically strapped Hawaii residents with no access to full health care. This will result in personal peril and additional strains on the network of community health centers and hospitals which would be left to cope with significantly greater uncompensated care. Cuts to the State Medicaid budget are magnified in lost federal revenues and an overall depletion of economic support for Hawaii's health care industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this measure and for considering the needs of the growing number of uninsured residents of Hawaii, as well as many other people who are more vulnerable than ever during this unsettling time.