



## Hawai'i Primary Care Association

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### House Committee on Health

The Hon. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair

The Hon. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

## Testimony in Support of House Bill 1443

### RELATING TO HEALTH INSURANCE

Submitted by Beth Giesting, Chief Executive Officer

February 4, 2011 9:00 a.m. Agenda, Room 329

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association asks for your support for this measure, which places private insurance plans on par with Medicare by requiring insurers to provide benefits for smoking cessation services. The Affordable Care Act extended Medicare coverage to include tobacco cessation counseling **before the onset of tobacco related** disease.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths. In Hawaii, it may take 1,100 lives this year, cost us \$336 million in annual direct health care costs, and \$320 million in smoking-caused lost productivity. However, research shows that people want to quit. In 2009, 58% of smokers in Hawaii tried to quit. Providing health benefits to these smokers, such as coverage for two quit attempts per year, as recommended by the US Preventive Services Task Force, will achieve better health for our population and save us millions in health costs.

The Affordable Care Act makes significant investment in preventive health services, both clinical and emotional. Congressional lawmakers and President Obama saw the importance of shifting the health system from one that treats the sick to one that emphasizes healthy living. The health benefit covering tobacco cessation counseling and services provided to Medicare enrollees under the Affordable Care Act became effective August 25, 2010. Please provide the same opportunity for privately insured individuals to receive the help they need, and want, to successfully quit smoking.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.