

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



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No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2919  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII STATE HOSPITAL

by  
Clayton A. Frank, Director  
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Shan T. Tsutsui, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 23, 2010; 10:05 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

Senator Kim, Senator Tsutsui, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) **strongly opposes** Senate Bill 2919 which requires PSD to provide security for the State's secure psychiatric rehabilitation facility located in Kaneohe beginning September 1, 2010. PSD does not have the appropriate staff to provide security for the State Hospital, nor does the Department have the financial resources to assist the Department of Health with security functions at any of its facilities.

The Corrections Division of PSD is primarily staffed by Adult Correctional Officers (ACO) whose work classification does not include "security officer or hospital orderly." The Corrections Division does not have the staff to divert to the State Hospital without severely compromising the safety and security of our correctional facilities, which places the staff, inmates, and public at risk.

In addition, the Sheriffs Division is staffed by Deputy Sheriffs, who are sworn law enforcement officers, not security officers or hospital orderlies. The Sheriffs Division does not have enough staff to place Deputy Sheriffs at the State

Hospital as they currently do not have the staff required to provide for the daily operations of the new Kapolei courthouse. To place Deputy Sheriffs at the State Hospital for “patients” is a poor use of our very limited law enforcement resources that are in more demand from our Judiciary and other State Departments.

Further, it should be noted when PSD had security officer positions that were assigned to the State Hospital, their duties and responsibilities **did not include** any security functions within the hospital itself, but rather they were stationed at gate entrance area and conducted perimeter checks. The security officers were not authorized nor allowed to enter hospital wards and/or treatment areas. Unfortunately there appears to be a misperception and/or misunderstanding that the presence of the security officers would somehow reduce and/or prevent assaults on staff within the hospital which is inaccurate. Some may have developed a false sense of security regarding the presence of security officers at the State Hospital. However, the security officers **were not** hospital orderlies, mental health aides, nor part of the hospital staff.

The duties and responsibilities of the security officers were not to enter the hospital to provide for the safety and security of the staff but rather to help control the gate entrance and to conduct perimeter checks of the facility grounds which is considerably different than the duties and functions of hospital orderlies and/or mental health aides.

While PSD understands the legislature’s concerns with security at the State Hospital, PSD no longer has any security officer positions to provide security personnel at the State Hospital. The job classifications of both ACOs and Deputy Sheriffs are incompatible with the needs and functions of what is needed at the Hawaii State Hospital. For these reasons and others previously stated, **PSD strongly opposes SB 2919**, and respectfully request this measure be held.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.