

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY GEORGINA K. KAWAMURA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND HEALTH
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 793

February 5, 2009

RELATING TO PHYSICIANS

Senate Bill No. 793 establishes a Hawaii Rural Physician Loan Program and special fund for qualified students who agree to practice in rural and non-rural health professional shortage areas of the State as designated by the Department of Health. The bill also includes loan forgiveness provisions based upon years of employment as a licensed physician in health professional shortage areas of the State. The program would be financed by the Hawaii Rural Physician Loan Program special fund created by this bill. The fund would generate revenues through legislative appropriations, grants, loan payments, proceeds from operations, and interest. Senate Bill No. 793 appropriates an unspecified sum of general funds each year to carry out the program and also for deposit into the special fund.

We are opposed to this bill and cannot support the use of general funds for new programs due to the State's current fiscal situation. As a matter of general policy, this department does not support the creation of any special or revolving fund which does not meet the requirements of Sections 37-52.3 and 37-53.4 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes. Special or revolving funds should: 1) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries of the program; 2) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 3) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. It is difficult to determine whether the fund will be self-sustaining.



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February 4, 2009

To: Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Norman Sakamoto, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health
Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Josh Green, MD, Vice Chair

From: Hawaii Medical Association
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Re: SB 793 RELATING TO PHYSICIANS TUITION LOAN
REPAYMENT

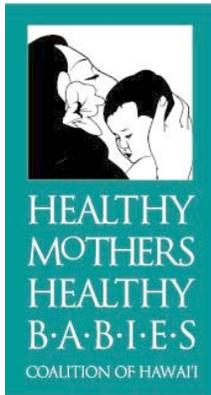
Chairs & Committee Members:

Hawaii Medical Association supports this legislation to help alleviate the shortage of health care on the neighbor islands and rural areas. However, this is not a substitute for medical liability reform or for increasing reimbursements to physicians and hospitals, which are among the lowest in the nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

PLEASE DELIVER:
Thursday
2/5/09
1:15 pm
CR 225

Hawaii Medical Association
1360 S. Beretania St.
Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96814
(808) 536-7702
(808) 528-2376 fax
www.hmaonline.net



February 3, 2009

Committee: Committee on Higher Education and Committee on Health

Bill: SB793

Honorable Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Members of the Committees

My name is Jackie Berry, Executive Director of Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii. **HMHB IS IN STRONG SUPPORT OF THE INTENT OF SB 793.** This Bill would establish a Hawaii Rural Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program to provide student loan repayments to physicians who practice in underserved communities on the neighbor islands. We would like to suggest an amendment to include Rural areas of Oahu.

One of the central components to ensuring access to health care is having qualified physicians to provide the services. As we all know, there are areas of the State of Hawaii that have very serious shortages of physicians. The data on access to prenatal care indicates that a major reason for late and inconsistent prenatal care is access to physicians, particularly on the island of Hawaii and in the rural areas of Oahu. Getting appropriate and timely prenatal care is a major indicator affecting birth outcomes.

We urge your support for the passage of this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration of this issue and our testimony.



Hawai'i Primary Care Association

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808.524.0347
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To: **The Senate Committee on Higher Education**
The Hon. Jill Tokuda, Chair
The Hon. Norman Sakamoto, Vice Chair

The Senate Committee on Health
The Hon. David Y. Ige, Chair
The Hon. Josh Green, MD, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 793
Relating to Physicians
Submitted by Beth Giesting, CEO
February 5, 2008, 1:15 p.m. agenda, Room 225

The Hawaii Primary Care Association urges your support for this bill. We believe loan programs are a very powerful tool for recruiting and retaining health care professionals in underserved areas. It is all too apparent that Hawaii has an urgent need for such a program at this time.

We would like to request the following change to the bill in §304A- (a) (1):

“Are or will be enrolled in an education and training program for physicians **with training based in Hawaii** [~~administered by the University of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine that leads to eligibility for a license under chapter 453~~];

This preference is made as Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, in partnership with an accredited Medical school in Arizona, also offers medical training with a focus on developing physicians oriented toward delivering primary care in community health center-based settings. We greatly respect JABSOM’s programs but believe that these additional candidates should also be prioritized for loan repayment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Hawaii State Rural Health Association
P.O. Box 82 Pahala, HI 96777
Phone / Fax (808) 928-0101

2008-09

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February 5, 2009

Re: Testimony for SB793 regarding health

The Hawaii State Rural Health Association would like to express our strongest support for SB793. We have conducted published research on the rural health care needs across the State and found that while all communities are unique, there are some themes that are common throughout the state. Needs that are commonly identified in our rural and underserved communities include:

1. Financial assistance (insurance coverage, medication, free services)
2. Expanding services that are available to rural communities (including tele-health services)
3. Improving access to available services (Long term care, primary care, specialty care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, health care training and other services)
4. Decreasing drug use
5. Increasing health education and training opportunities for community members
5. Increasing the number of health care providers working in rural areas
6. Increasing cultural sensitivity of providers

The Hawaii State Rural Health Association supports legislation that will increase services to rural communities, including legislation that supports expanding the health workforce, developing assistance programs for rural areas, and expanding the facilities available to rural citizens. We expect this to be done in culturally appropriate ways with significant grass roots community involvement at all steps of the process.

Therefore the Hawaii State Rural Health Association fully supports SB793 because it will increase the number of health care providers available to provide care in rural areas and thereby increase access to healthcare services throughout the State of Hawaii, particularly the rural areas. Without interventions such as these, the growing health crisis will get worse and lives will be lost that need not be.

Sincerely,

Judy Mikami
President, Hawaii State Rural Health Association

HMSA



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

February 5, 2009

The Honorable David Ige, Chair
The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair

Senate Committees on Health and Higher Education

Re: SB 793 – Relating to Physicians

Dear Chair Ige, Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of SB 793 which would create the Hawaii Rural Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program to provide student loan repayments to physicians who practice in federally designated health professional shortage areas of the state. As you may know, the HMSA Foundation has supported the development of the UH's family medicine training program in Hilo through a three year grant of \$535,000 beginning in 2007.

We believe that programs such as these enhance physician recruitment for Neighbor Island practices by exposing students to Neighbor Island life, culture and communities and we encourage the legislature to support these worthwhile efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We would respectfully urge the Committee's support of this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jennifer Diesman'.

Jennifer Diesman
Assistant Vice President
Government Relations



Testimony to the Senate Committees on Higher Education and Health
Thursday, February 5, 2009 at 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 793 RELATING TO PHYSICIANS

Chairs Tokuda and Ige, Vice Chairs Sakamoto and Green, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Jim Tollefson and I am the President and CEO of The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Senate Bill No. 793 relating to Physicians.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,100 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

This measure provides loan repayment assistance to graduates of the John A. Burns school of medicine who practice medicine in underserved communities on the neighbor islands for a minimum of three to five years.

The quality of healthcare that Hawaii has enjoyed for years is now in jeopardy. It is on the verge of declining because healthcare providers are no longer being paid for essential services at a level sufficient to cover annually increasing costs. The health care system must be maintained and challenges must be addressed.

Therefore, The Chamber supports prescriptions of improvements of the quality of our health care system that will increase long term care capacity and access statewide. We believe providing incentives, such as to graduates of the John A. Burns school will help address the shortage of doctors, especially on the neighbor islands, as well as keep the providers in Hawaii.

In light of the above, The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii supports SB 793. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

**TESTIMONY OF ROBERT TOYOFUKU ON BEHALF OF THE HAWAII
ASSOCIATION FOR JUSTICE (HAJ) FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE
CONSUMER LAWYERS OF HAWAII IN SUPPORT OF SB NO. 793,
RELATING TO PHYSICIANS**

February 5, 2009

To: Chairperson Jill Tokuda and Chairman David Ige and Members of the Senate
Committee on Higher Education and Members of the Senate Committee on Health:

My name is Bob Toyofuku and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaii
Association for Justice (formerly known as CLH*) in Support of S. B. 793.

Our organization has been involved in the issue of shortage of physicians in rural
areas for several years and has done research on this issue. The measures in this bill are a
positive approach in attempting to solve the shortage of health care providers in rural
areas. HAJ wholeheartedly supports this bill and is of the opinion that funds should be
appropriated at this time in spite of the current economic situation.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S.B. No. 793.

* CLH has changed its name to conform to the name of its national organization the
American Association for Justice.

Senate Bill 793, Relating to Physicians
Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair, Higher Education
Senator David Ige, Chair, Health
Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009, 1:15 p.m., Conference Room 225
State Capitol

TESTIMONY BY SATORU IZUTSU, PhD.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am appearing as a private citizen with extensive knowledge of medical education in Hawai'i, to support –in concept -- Senate Bill 793.

It is important for you to understand that the John A. Burns School of Medicine does not have a mechanism to administer the financial aspects of loan repayment or collection in setting of defaults. I would respectfully suggest that another state entity with such infrastructure might be assigned to those aspects of the program.

I am aware that the medical school is pleased to disperse the funds and assist with selection of worthy candidates.

One additional suggestion is that the bill should specify physician training that occurs in Hawai'i.

Thank you for your consideration.

LATE

**Hawaii State Legislature, Senate Health Committee
S.B. 793, RELATING TO PHYSICIANS.
Testimony of Kelley Withy, M.D.
February 4, 2009**

As a physician workforce researcher in Hawaii, I fully support the creation of a loan repayment program for physicians who practice in areas where there are not enough health care providers. My research team is in the process of analyzing where the greatest shortages are. The PRELIMINARY analysis of the licensed physicians working in Hawaii indicates an urgent need for more primary care providers and orthopedists on the Big Island, psychiatrists on Maui, rheumatologists, neurologists, cardiologists and nephrologists in most rural areas of the state, and a growing need for primary care providers, including geriatricians, statewide.

In addition, our focus group research indicates that the greatest barrier to work in rural areas is financial, including the high cost of living. Loan repayment is a practical and immediate method of enticing doctors to go to the shortage areas. While it alone will not solve the entire problem, as part of a plan that includes pipeline programs, increased training, regionalization of care, reliable transportation, modern information sharing and a collaborative model of patient care, will go a long way to meeting the local healthcare needs. You also should keep in mind that there is a federal grant program called State Loan Repayment Program that may provide matching funds for scholarships provided by states to support primary care providers in underserved areas. As a recipient of many federal grants, I offer my assistance in applying for such funding.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony, I am happy to provide any additional information you may require.