

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

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To: House Committee on Health

From: Carlotta Amerino, Director

Date: February 12, 2025, 10:15 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

Re: Testimony on H.B. No. 1431
Relating to Oral Health

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would establish an Oral Health Task Force. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) offers **comments** on proposed bill subsection 2(g), on page 8 at lines 13-14, and supports the amended version of subsection (g) proposed by the Department of Health.

As introduced, bill subsection 2(g) would fully exempt the Task Force from the Sunshine Law, part I of chapter 92, HRS. That exemption would preclude all public testimony and participation in the Task Force's work, undermining not only the Sunshine Law's stated purpose of ensuring that the formation and conduct of public policy is conducted as openly as possible, but also the Task Force's purpose of looking into systemic issues with oral health services and recommending improvements. Without public input during the Task Force's work the issues identified may be incomplete, and the recommendations may lack public support. OIP supports the amended version of subsection (g) proposed by the Department of Health, which would allow Task Force members more flexibility to talk about oral health issues outside a meeting while still ensuring public attendance and

participation in meetings of the full Task Force and requiring a record of those meetings in the form of minutes. OIP understands the Department of Health's proposed version of subsection (g) to be as follows:

(g) Less than a quorum of task force members may discuss task force business together outside a meeting provided that they report the matters discussed at the next duly noticed meeting of the task force, and that no commitment to vote is made or sought. Such discussions shall be a permitted interaction under Hawaii Revised Statutes §92-2.5.

Thank you for considering OIP's testimony.



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, M.D.
ADMINISTRATOR

1177 Alakea St., #402, Honolulu, HI 96813 Phone: 587-0788 Fax: 587-0783 www.shpda.org

February 10, 2025

To: House Committee on Health
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair;
Representative, Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair; and
Honorable Members

From: John C (Jack) Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA

Re: HB 1431 – RELATING TO ORAL HEALTH

POSITION: SUPPORT

Testimony:

SHPDA fully supports the intent of this bill to promote oral health and close the access gaps to it across the state and particularly in rural areas.

SHPDA, under statutory authority granted by this Legislature, collects claims data for all dental care provided by dental and health insurers in Hawaii. This data is part of the All-Payer Claims Database (APCD) which will become operational in 2025. The APCD is being developed by SHPDA in partnership with the DHS Med-QUEST program and the University of Hawaii. Extracting the de-identified and privacy-assured dental data and turning into useful information for monitoring dental health for all residents statewide will still take some additional time to fully organize and publish, but fortunately it is in development. We also fully support the staff position for the Department of Health the bill proposes, and which is strongly indicated.

SHPDA further believes the proposed oral health task force will greatly benefit from this data when it is available. There are many gaps in oral health for keiki and for residents of all ages, including kupuna, that need to be identified and addressed as a significant aspect of the Governor's Hawaii the Health State vision that SHPDA is charged with fulfilling.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify,

Jack Lewin MD, Administrator SHPDA



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Health
Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 10:15 a.m.

by

Clementina D. Ceria-Ulep, PhD, RN
Dean & The Queen's Health Systems Endowed Professor
School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene

And

T. Samuel Shomaker, Dean
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1431 – RELATING TO ORAL HEALTH

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of HB 1431**.

This measure establishes an oral health task force to review the status of oral health in the State and make recommendations to improve the oral health infrastructure in Hawai'i. This initiative is in collaboration with the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition, of which faculty from University of Hawai'i at Mānoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene (SONDH) and John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) both are engaged in and collaborate with.

The recommended members of the Task Force include a faculty member of the SONDH which includes the Department of Dental Hygiene. The faculty is to be appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives. In addition, the Task Force will include a representative of JABSOM, to be appointed by the President of the Senate.

This Task Force will fill an important role in our state by creating the dedicated entity which will review information on the status of oral health in the State and make recommendations to improve oral health infrastructure in Hawai'i. Benefits of this Task Force include stronger cross-sector collaboration on oral health issues, up-to-date analysis of community oral health status, increased awareness of the importance of oral health, and clear, actionable recommendations for improvements.

SONDH wishes to recognize the incredible talent and dedicated experts in oral health that are faculty of the school. These faculty commit to enhancing access to oral health

care through the education and training of the future dental hygienist workforce. In addition, Dr. Deborah Mattheus, PhD, APRN-Rx, CPNP, FAAN, Endowed Professor in School Health & Professor, is the Senior Practice Director and Dental Sealant Program Director for the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn Program. Dr. Mattheus was a recipient of the Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS) Scholarship, Honolulu Chapter for her doctoral research study on the prevention of early childhood caries in primary care practice and has served as the Hawai'i State Oral Health Champion designated by Harvard University's Center for Integration of Primary Care and Oral Health (CIPCOH). We would like to recommend her as a candidate to serve on the task force.

The UH JABSOM recommends Dr. Jill Omori, Director of the Office of Medical Education, and Dr. Matthew Oishi, part-time faculty in charge of the oral health curriculum for the medical students, as qualified experts who would offer high value contributions to this Task Force.

The SONDH and JABSOM look forward to serving on this important task force.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELawe KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 11, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
House Committee on Health

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1431 – RELATING TO ORAL HEALTH.**

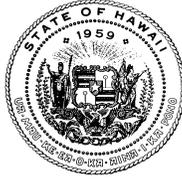
Hearing: February 12, 2025, Time 10:15 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent and defers to the Department of Health on implementation.

PURPOSE: This bill establishes an Oral Health Task Force to review the status of oral health in the State and make recommendations to improve the State's oral health infrastructure. Establishes one full-time equivalent program specialist V position. Appropriates funds.

DHS appreciates the Legislature's continued investment in and attention to the oral health needs of Hawaii's residents. DHS Med-QUEST division will be glad to participate as a member of the task force.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 1431
RELATING TO ORAL HEALTH

REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: 02/12/2025, 10:15AM, CR 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The proposed measure appropriates funds out of the State's general
2 revenues for fiscal year 2025-2026 and fiscal year 2026-2027 and the establishment of a
3 permanent 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) position to the Department of Health ("Department")
4 to administer and oversee a contract to hire a consultant to facilitate the work of the oral
5 health task force. The Department requests that this measure be considered as a vehicle to
6 provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the priorities and requests outlined
7 in the Governor's executive budget request.

8 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure offering comments and
9 proposed amendments.

10 **Department Testimony:** The Family Health Services Division (FHSD) provides the following
11 testimony on behalf of the Department.

12 An oral health task force would be beneficial to convene stakeholders to review
13 information on the status of oral health in the state and make recommendations to improve
14 oral health infrastructure in Hawai'i. The task force will be instrumental in identifying those key
15 elements and additional staff resources necessary to rebuild a public health dental program in
16 the Department, improve overall oral health in the state, and reduce gaps in oral health.

1 An oral health program is a critical part of all state public health departments. However,
2 the DOH Dental Health Division was eliminated as part of the 2009 budget cuts. Oral health
3 disease is a particularly critical issue in Hawai'i with many children and adults suffering from
4 preventable dental disease. Access to dental care is a challenge since most of the primary and
5 specialty oral health providers are in the urban areas of the City and County of Honolulu. The
6 lack of access to oral health care is particularly serious in rural communities on the neighbor
7 islands and in low-income urban/rural areas of O'ahu.

8 Rebuilding the Department's oral public health program will help to fulfill the basic core
9 public health functions of assessment, assurance, and policy development and meet the dental
10 health mandates of Hawai'i Revised Statutes Title 19, Chapter 321, Part V §321-61 to §321-63.

11 Based on the specialized topic and comprehensive membership of this task force, it may
12 be difficult to recruit members that currently work together on oral health issues as part of
13 their employment or associations. Part I, Chapter 92, Hawai'i Revised Statutes would prohibit
14 these professional interactions during their tenure on the task force. We propose an
15 amendment that will create a permitted interaction under HRS §92-2.5.

16 The DOH appreciates the funds to convene the task force. The establishment of 1.0
17 permanent FTE position may not be necessary since there is a current Governor's executive
18 budget request to reestablish the Department's Oral Health Program, including establishing 2.0
19 permanent FTE positions.

20 **Offered Amendments:**

21 ADD: SECTION 2. (g) Less than a quorum of task force members may discuss task force business
22 together outside a meeting provided that they report the matters discussed at the next duly
23 noticed meeting of the task force, and that no commitment to vote is made or sought. Such
24 discussions shall be a permitted interaction under Hawaii Revised Statutes §92-2.5.

25 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
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February 10, 2025

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Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair;
Representative, Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair; and
Honorable Members

From: John C (Jack) Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA

Re: **HB 1431 – RELATING TO ORAL HEALTH**

POSITION: SUPPORT

Testimony:

SHPDA fully supports the intent of this bill to promote oral health and close the access gaps to it across the state and particularly in rural areas.

SHPDA, under statutory authority granted by this Legislature, collects claims data for all dental care provided by dental and health insurers in Hawaii. This data is part of the All-Payer Claims Database (APCD) which will become operational in 2025. The APCD is being developed by SHPDA in partnership with the DHS Med-QUEST program and the University of Hawaii. Extracting the de-identified and privacy-assured dental data and turning into useful information for monitoring dental health for all residents statewide will still take some additional time to fully organize and publish, but fortunately it is in development. We also fully support the staff position for the Department of Health the bill proposes, and which is strongly indicated.

SHPDA further believes the proposed oral health task force will greatly benefit from this data when it is available. There are many gaps in oral health for keiki and for residents of all ages, including kupuna, that need to be identified and addressed as a significant aspect of the Governor's Hawaii the Health State vision that SHPDA is charged with fulfilling.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify,

Jack Lewin MD, Administrator SHPDA



Hawaii Dental Association

Committee: House Health Committee

Time/Date: 10:15 am, February 12, 2025

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 329 and via Videoconference

Re: HB 1431, HD1, Relating to Oral Health

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the committee,

The Hawaii Dental Association (HDA) is a professional association comprised of approximately 950-member dentists. **We are in support of HB 1431**, relating to health. This bill establishes an Oral Health Task Force to review the status of oral health in the State and make recommendations to improve the State's oral health infrastructure.

HDA's number one priority is patient safety. As dentists seek to promote oral health in our state, they are in the best position to assess and monitor the population's oral health status, community needs, and assets; inform and educate people about oral health; mobilize community partners to leverage resources; develop, champion, and implement policies, laws, and plans that support oral health efforts; reduce barriers to care; assure a competent and skilled public and private oral health workforce; and improve public oral health functions through ongoing evaluation and continuous quality improvement. HDA is a proud collaborator with the Hawaii Oral Health Coalition, the Department of Health and its Med-Quest Division, other professional organizations and the state Board of Dentistry.

HDA is a statewide membership organization representing dentists practicing in Hawaii and licensed by the State of Hawaii's Board of Dentistry. HDA members are committed to protecting the oral health and well-being of the people of Hawaii, from keiki to kupuna and everyone in between.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1431.



ALOHA CARE

To: The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager
Sarielyn Curtis, External Affairs Specialist

Hearing: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 10:15 AM, Conference Room 329

RE: **HB1431 Relating to Oral Health**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB1431**. This measure establishes an Oral Health Task Force to review the status of oral health in the State and make recommendations to improve the State's oral health infrastructure; establishes one full-time equivalent program specialist V position; and appropriates funds.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 70,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 37 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

Oral health is an essential aspect of a person's overall health and quality of life. Good oral health is important for all, but especially for healthy pregnancies, avoiding heart disease, diabetes complications and other conditions. Poor oral health is the cause for a wide range of health conditions that affect one's ability to eat, speak, smile, and have positive self-esteem, which has a significant impact on mental health. ¹

In 2022, the legislature approved \$29.9 million to reinstate an adult Medicaid dental benefit, with services becoming available January 1, 2023. We are grateful for the Legislature and the Med-QUEST Division for this tremendous win for better oral health care for our community. However, even with the recently restored benefit, Hawai'i's oral healthcare system is not meeting the needs of residents.

Establishing an oral health task force of key stakeholders to assess our State's oral health system will give us an opportunity to systematically review and understand our State's needs, current resources and infrastructure, and identify next steps for improving oral health outcomes for our residents. We must continue to invest in our community's health, and this measure is step in the right direction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB1431**.

¹ [The role of self-esteem in the development of psychiatric problems: a three-year prospective study in a clinical sample of adolescents - PMC](#)

HB-1431

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:35:56 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arlene Kiyohara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1431

Chairperson, Committee Members, and Esteemed Legislators:

My name is Arlene Kiyohara, and I serve as a community pediatrician here in Honolulu. In my practice, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges that many children face due to inadequate access to dental care. Too often, I see young patients suffering from preventable dental problems such as severe tooth decay, gum disease, and other oral health issues. These conditions are not only painful and disruptive to a child’s daily life, but they can also lead to infections, difficulties with eating, and frequent absences from school—factors that adversely affect their overall health and development.

The root of many of these issues is a systemic lack of access to quality dental services. In Hawaii, socioeconomic disparities and geographic barriers mean that many families simply cannot obtain the regular, preventive dental care their children need. As a result, what should be a routine aspect of healthcare turns into an emergency, sometimes requiring more extensive—and more costly—interventions down the line.

HB1431 is a critical piece of legislation that seeks to expand government support for dental health services in our state. By bolstering funding, improving access to preventive dental care, and integrating oral health more fully into the broader framework of pediatric healthcare, this bill will help to reduce the disparities that leave so many of our children at risk. This proactive approach not only addresses immediate dental health concerns but also sets the stage for long-term improvements in our community’s overall health outcomes.

I firmly believe that investing in our children’s dental health is an investment in their future. By supporting HB1431, our state can take significant steps toward ensuring that all children—regardless of their background or where they live in Hawaii—have the opportunity to grow up healthy, pain-free, and ready to succeed.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I appreciate your commitment to improving the health and well-being of our youngest citizens.

Sincerely,

Dr. Arlene Parubrub Kiyohara, MD
Honolulu, Hawaii
