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

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 8, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB1477 HD1 – RELATING TO SOCIAL SERVICES.**

Hearing: March 10, 2025, Time 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this bill and agrees with the proposed statutory amendments in Sections 2 and 3 of the HD1. However, DHS respectfully requests further amendments to Section 1 to clarify the purpose of the bill.

PURPOSE: Clarifies that the monthly needs allowance afforded to individuals living in certain long-term care facilities is not intended to replace or affect funds received for the domiciliary care rate; together, the monthly needs allowance and the domiciliary care rate make up the State Supplemental Payment. Effective 7/1/3000.

DHS appreciates the Committee on Human Services and Homelessness' amendments,

- (1) Removing the specific statutory reference to the starting date for the increase in needs allowance and state supplemental payment;
- (2) Deleting as unnecessary the appropriation for the Department of Human Services' Community-Based Residential Support Program;
- (3) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

However, DHS respectfully notes an error in the House Committee Report Number 266, page 2, stating that the measure proposes an increase of the needs allowance. This bill proposes to increase the domiciliary care rate by \$45; as drafted, it does not propose an increase in the needs allowance.

Additionally, DHS requests that Section 1 be revised to clarify that the purposes of the Act:

- (1) Increases the domiciliary care rates;
- (2) Clarifies that the State Supplemental Payment ceiling amounts in section 346-53(c)(1) and (2), Hawaii Revised Statutes, include both the personal needs allowance to individuals receiving care in these facilities and the domiciliary care rate for providers; and
- (3) Adds the statutory reference of the State Supplemental Payment in section 346D-4.5 that addresses the needs allowance.

As drafted, Section 1 is confusing and subject to misunderstanding. Alternatively, DHS proposes the following:

SECTION 1. The Social Security Administration issues one monthly payment to eligible recipients receiving care, or their representative payee, that includes supplemental security income and the State supplemental payment. The State supplemental payment includes the personal needs allowance for the individual receiving care and a domiciliary care rate for the provider.

The purpose of this Act is to increase the domiciliary care rates for certain providers and clarify that the needs allowance and the domiciliary care rates are included in the State supplemental payment ceiling amounts.

DHS agrees with the current draft of Sections 2 and 3.

DHS requests an effective date of October 1, 2025, to give the Social Security Administration time to implement the new domiciliary care rate amount. However, the time frame is based on the prior federal administration. If DHS learns of a different time frame as this bill progresses, DHS will update the Legislature.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and proposed amendments to this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA**
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

March 10, 2025

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Buenaventura, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB1477 HD1 Relating to Social Services

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB1477 HD1**, which clarifies that the monthly needs allowance afforded to individuals living in certain long-term care facilities is not intended to replace or affect funds received as a state supplemental payment for domiciliary care and shall be supplemental to any funds provided to a recipient as a state supplemental payment for domiciliary care.

The monthly needs allowance is a crucial resource for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), supporting their independence, dignity, and active participation in their communities. This allowance helps cover essential personal expenses such as communication services, hygiene products, and transportation—expenses that directly impact an individual's ability to engage meaningfully in daily life. This bill provides necessary clarification to ensure that the needs allowance remains supplemental to state payments, preventing unintended reductions in financial support and allowing individuals to retain greater control over their personal resources.

Although recent legislative efforts aimed to strengthen financial assistance for individuals with I/DD through increases in both the needs allowance and state supplemental payments, the current structure has resulted in the unintended offset of one payment against the other. The proposed bill corrects this issue by ensuring that individuals receive the full benefits as originally intended. For those residing in long-term care settings, maintaining financial autonomy is not just a matter of practicality—it directly affects their ability to participate in social activities, pursue personal interests, and maintain a sense of self-determination.

Furthermore, financial stability plays a key role in reducing reliance on crisis interventions and emergency services by enabling individuals to proactively manage their well-being. Ensuring that the needs allowance remains intact also aligns with broader efforts to promote equity and inclusion, reinforcing the state's commitment to supporting all residents, including those with disabilities, in leading full and engaged lives. For these reasons, we strongly urge the passage of this bill to uphold the financial protections and autonomy of individuals with I/DD.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB1477 HD1.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



March 7, 2025

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senators Troy N. Hashimoto, Jarrett Keohokalole, and Kurt Fevella, Committee Members

RE: HB 1477 RELATING TO SOCIAL SERVICES – SUPPORT

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Committee Members,

I am submitting this letter in support of HB 1477 on behalf of Easterseals Hawaii. Easterseals Hawaii served 2,025 Hawaii community members with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in 2024. Our purpose is to create a more equitable world where people with I/DD can choose their own path.

HB 1477 aims to improve financial support for individuals with I/DD living in long-term care facilities, as well as their service providers. It ensures that funds are properly allotted and resolves discrepancies in existing law by preventing the needs allowance increase enacted last year for individuals in such facilities from being deducted from the state supplemental payment increase. This bill is an imperative step in ensuring that recipients receive the entirety of the financial relief they need and are entitled to.

Easterseals Hawaii supports HB 1477 and respectfully requests your “aye” vote.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this letter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Liebert Lewis", is positioned above the typed name.

Rachel Liebert Lewis
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy
Easterseals Hawaii
PublicPolicyAndAdvocacy@eshawaii.org