



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0474  
RELATING TO FALL PREVENTION**

SENATOR SAN BUENAVENTURA JOY, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: March 12, 2025

Room Number: 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (Department) requests that this measure be  
2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the  
3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governor's executive budget request. The appropriation of  
4 \$100,000 for fiscal year 2025-2026 and for fiscal year 2026-2027.

5 **Department Position:** The Department strongly supports the intent of this measure and requests  
6 amendments.

7 **Department Testimony:** The Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System  
8 Branch (EMSIPSB) provides the following comments on behalf of the Department. EMSIPSB  
9 recognizes the critical importance of fall prevention among seniors, particularly given the  
10 alarming statistics related to unintentional falls. As highlighted in the bill, unintentional falls  
11 among seniors aged sixty-five years and older in Hawaii are the leading cause of fatal injuries  
12 (an average of forty-nine percent) and injury-related emergency room visits (an average of sixty-  
13 one percent).

14 Act 153, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014, established a fall prevention and early detection  
15 coordinator position within the Department of Health. EMSIPSB currently has an existing  
16 funded position that is dedicated to addressing senior fall prevention at the state level which  
17 enables a coordinated statewide approach. However, funding for public education and awareness  
18 campaigns has decreased over the past few years.

1 The EMSIPSB supports increasing fall prevention efforts and requests that the funding instead  
2 be used for interventions. An appropriation of \$100,000 would better be utilized to support our  
3 comprehensive Fall Prevention Campaign. This campaign is conducted twice annually, in June  
4 and September, aligning with National Fall Prevention Day. Currently, our budget will only  
5 allow for a limited campaign in September for our annual statewide fall prevention  
6 campaign. This campaign would include the following:

7 **Broadcast Media:** The campaign will feature press releases from the Hawaii Department of  
8 Health, morning talk show interviews on all four major networks, and the introduction of two  
9 new Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Additionally, our PSAs will be broadcast a total of  
10 700 times on five stations, including KIKU, during each campaign flight.

11 **Community Outreach:** We will organize one-on-one interactions between kupuna and  
12 pharmacists to review medications for safety. Presentations at senior facilities and organizations,  
13 "Home Safety Workshops" at a major hardware chain, and "Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall  
14 Prevention Workshops" will be conducted to re-certify statewide instructors. Additionally, we  
15 will use posters on city EXPRESS buses to further reinforce the campaign message.

16 **Materials and Travel:** Funds will cover the production and distribution of educational materials,  
17 such as brochures and magnets on fall prevention, and the costs associated with travel to  
18 neighbor islands to support our outreach and education efforts. This includes expanding our  
19 FREE pharmacy Medication Reviews to up to 80 locations across four islands and increasing the  
20 number of in-person presentations using a PowerPoint program on "How to Prevent Fall  
21 Injuries."

22 **Offered Amendments:** The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the department of  
23 health for [~~the full-time equivalent fall prevention and early detection coordinator position~~  
24 established by Act 153.] the current Fall Prevention Campaign.

25 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the  
26 sum of \$ **100,000** or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the  
27 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for [~~one full-time~~

1 equivalent (1.0 FTE) fall prevention and early detection coordinator position established by Act  
2 153, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014.] the current Fall Prevention Campaign.

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

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

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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB474 HD2**  
**Relating to Fall Prevention**

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR  
SENATOR HENRY J.C. AQUINO, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao  
Director, Executive Office on Aging  
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: March 12, 2025  
1:10 P.M.

Room Number: 225  
Via Videoconference

- 1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
- 2 of Health, **supports HB474 HD2.**
- 3 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates funds for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same
- 4 sum for fiscal year 2026-2027 for an unspecified number of full-time equivalent fall prevention
- 5 and early detection coordinator positions within the Department of Health (DOH).
- 6 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to the DOH for an
- 7 unspecified number of fall prevention and early detection coordinator positions. Falls are a
- 8 serious health risk for older adults, as it can lead to fractures, pain, medication complications,
- 9 loss of mobility and long-term care admission. According to the CDC in 2020, 36,000 fall
- 10 related deaths in adults, ages 65 and older was reported, making it the leading cause of injury
- 11 death for that age group. Older adult falls cost \$50 billion in medical costs annually, with 3/4 of
- 12 those costs paid by Medicaid and Medicare.

1           Implementing a coordinated, statewide approach can prevent and reduce the impact of  
2 falls among older adults in Hawai‘i. Appropriating funds to the DOH Emergency Medical  
3 Services and Injury Prevention System Branch (EMSIPSB) will continue their work on fall  
4 prevention and help older adults to protect their health and live a longer, better quality of life.  
5 **Recommendation:** EOA supports this measure and defers to the DOH EMSIPSB on its  
6 implementation.  
7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-474-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:30:11 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Fall Prevention bill HB474.HD2

**HB-474-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:25:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathleen Wyatt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino, and Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this bill. I am fully in favor of HB474 HD2. It is one dear to my heart since I have had two serious falls. It is widely known that seniors who fall and end up with broken hips and other bones often do not fully recover. Their physical decline can be devastating. Falls can be quite costly. Fall prevention, especially for seniors, is very important and having a coordinator(s) would be a positive addition to saving our kupuna and saving the state of Hawai`i millions of dollars related to costs of recovery and institutional placement.

Thank you for your time,

Kathy Wyatt