

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 2, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 646 – RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME.**

Hearing: February 4, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the bill's intent and offers comments.

PURPOSE: Requires the Department of Human Services to automatically enroll, or authorize the Social Security Administration (SSA) to automatically enroll, in the State's Medicaid program any individual in the State who receives federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Requires reports to the Legislature.

Hawai'i is one of 9 states whose Medicaid program falls under section 209(b) of the Social Security Act, which allows Hawaii more flexibility in setting eligibility criteria related to income and assets. States that are not 209(b) follow federally dictated eligibility standards and allow for automatic Medicaid eligibility for individuals whom the SSA determines to be eligible for SSI. Med-QUEST (MQD) appreciates opportunities to streamline processes in ways that better serve the people of Hawai'i. MQD is currently assessing this proposal to better understand all benefits, costs, and administrative changes that may be required to implement auto-enrollment for SSI recipients.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA

PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

February 04, 2025

The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Marten and Committee members:

SUBJECT: HB646 Relating to Supplemental Security Income

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB646**, which requires the Department of Human Services to automatically enroll, or authorize the Social Security Administration to automatically enroll, in the State's Medicaid program any individual in the State who receives federal Supplemental Security Income benefits. Requires reports to the Legislature.

Our mission at the Council is to advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities, ensuring they have the necessary resources to live full and productive lives. A significant barrier for many individuals receiving SSI is the complex and burdensome process required to secure Medicaid benefits. HB646 proposes a crucial change that will greatly benefit this vulnerable population by streamlining access to essential health care services.

Currently, individuals in Hawaii who qualify for SSI must undergo a separate application process for Medicaid, which can be daunting and time-consuming. This often leads to delays in accessing healthcare and can deter some from applying altogether. Automatic enrollment into Medicaid, as proposed by HB646, would eliminate these hurdles, ensuring that individuals with developmental disabilities receive the healthcare coverage they need promptly and without additional administrative burden. This legislation aligns with practices in thirty-three other states and Washington, D.C., where automatic enrollment has significantly increased Medicaid participation rates among SSI recipients. By adopting this approach, Hawaii can provide a more equitable healthcare system that promptly supports its residents' needs and ensures that more individuals with developmental disabilities have uninterrupted access to medical services, supportive therapies, and other health-related needs critical to their well-being.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB646**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator