



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
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Testimony COMMENTING on HB.784
RELATING TO HEALTH

REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 02-05-25, 9:30AM Room Number: 329

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 Governors executive budget request. The appropriation of
4 \$1,750,000 for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same amount for fiscal year 2026-2027.

5 **Department Position:** The Department would like to testify and offers comments.

6 **Department Testimony:** The Emergency Medical Service & Injury Prevention System Branch
7 (EMSIPSB) submits the following testimony on behalf of the Department of Health. We
8 acknowledge the intent behind this bill, particularly in addressing the challenges related to
9 distance and access to emergency services in underserved communities. Expanding access to
10 emergency medical services in these areas is an important step toward improving healthcare
11 delivery and ensuring timely care for individuals in remote regions.

12 However, we would like to raise a consideration regarding the call volume in these communities
13 and whether it justifies the use of traditional 911 services. Given the potentially lower frequency
14 of emergency calls, traditional 911 responses may not always be the most efficient or cost-
15 effective approach to meeting the community's needs.

16 Further evaluation of call volume and service efficiency may be necessary to determine the most
17 suitable solution for these areas. An alternative model worth considering is the use of Advanced

1 Life Support (ALS) services through programs like Community Paramedicine or Mobile
2 Integrated Health (MIH). These programs are designed to address both emergency and non-
3 emergency medical needs, offering care within the community at a potentially lower cost
4 compared to traditional 911 services. Community Paramedicine and MIH can provide targeted
5 care, including follow-up visits, preventative services, and chronic disease management, without
6 the need for costly emergency transports for non-urgent cases.

7 Incorporating alternative ALS services such as Community Paramedicine or MIH could
8 complement the bill's goals by providing additional support and services tailored to the unique
9 needs of the community, while also ensuring the most efficient use of available resources.

10 In conclusion, while the intent of the bill is clear and necessary, further consideration of the
11 community's specific needs, call volume, and available service models, such as Community
12 Paramedicine and MIH, may help ensure that the solution is both effective and sustainable.

13 **Offered Amendments:** None

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



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 784
RELATING TO HEALTH

House Committee on Health
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 5, 2025

9:30AM

Room 329

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, members of the House Committee on Health:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 784 which makes an appropriation for the operation of an additional ambulance for the island of Hawai'i to be based in Makalei.

OHA is the constitutionally established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians.¹ Among its statutory duties, OHA is required to (1) serve as principal public agency in the State of Hawai'i responsible for the performance, development and coordination of programs and activities relating to native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; (2) assess the policies and practices of other agencies impacting native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; and (3) conduct advocacy efforts for native Hawaiians and Hawaiians.²

In fulfillment of its mandates, OHA seeks to advance policies, programs and practices that increase access to quality, culturally informed healthcare for Native Hawaiians. HB 784 will expand critical emergency medical services infrastructure and mitigate transportation barriers, which is crucial for Native Hawaiians who live in rural areas on the island of Hawai'i. Given the island's significant growth and aging population³, an additional ambulance is necessary to help reduce death and disability among residents and visitors.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs respectfully urges this committee to **PASS HB 784**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Haw. Const. Art. XII § 5

² Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 10-3.

³ "Population and Economic Projections for the State of Hawaii to 2050," Research and Economic Analysis Division – Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism – State of Hawaii (April 2024) at p. 2; 6, https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/data_reports/LRF/2050-long-range-projections.pdf



HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS
C O R P O R A T I O N

"Quality Healthcare For All"

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice-Chair

February 5, 2025
9:30 AM
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 329 & Via Videoconference

H.B. 784

RELATING TO HEALTH

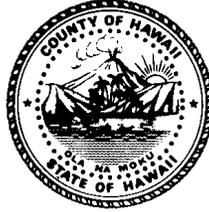
Makes an appropriation for the operation of an additional ambulance for the island of Hawai'i to be based in Makalei.

Edward N. Chu
President & Chief Executive Officer
Hawaii Health Systems Corporation

On behalf of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) Corporate Board of Directors, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony **in support of H.B. 784, Relating to Health.**

Ambulances play a crucial and time-sensitive role in transporting critically ill patients to area hospitals. For many emergency situations, such as if a patient is having a stroke, every second counts toward saving lives. Providing more resources for such services are something that our residents throughout Hawaii Island deserve.

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



HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

February 3, 2025

Committee on Health
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

RE: Support for HB784 Relating to Health; Makes an appropriation for the operation of an additional ambulance for Makalei, North Kona
Hearing: Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

Aloha,

On behalf of Council District 8 in North Kona, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to express strong support for HB784.

This measure seeks funding for an additional advanced life support ambulance to be stationed in Makalei, North Kona, to enhance emergency medical services on Hawai'i Island.

Currently, medic personnel at the Kailua-Kona Fire Station cover an extensive area—from Pu'uuanahulu to Sea View Circle—placing a heavy strain on emergency response times and increasing the workload for our dedicated first responders. As our community continues to grow, ensuring timely access to emergency medical care is essential for public safety.

The vast coverage area, challenging terrain, and increasing traffic congestion all contribute to delayed emergency response times. Given the time-sensitive nature of medical emergencies, establishing an additional ambulance in Makalei would significantly improve response capabilities, ensuring residents and visitors receive swift, life-saving care.

Positioning an ambulance in Makalei would also allow for better distribution of emergency resources, alleviating pressure on the Kailua-Kona unit, increasing overall efficiency, and ultimately enhancing public health and safety.

Mahalo for your time. We strongly urge you to pass HB784.

Sincerely,

HOLEKA GORO INABA, Ed.D.,
Council District 8, North Kona

HB-784

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 10:33:30 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuo Todd	Hawaii Fire Department	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 784

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kazuo Todd, and I serve as the Fire Chief of the Hawai'i Fire Department. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of House Bill 784, which would appropriate funding for an additional Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance to be based in the Makalei area of North Kona.

The need for this ambulance is critical. The Kailua Fire Station ambulance is currently the busiest on the island, often responding to multiple calls back-to-back, leaving North Kona underserved when that unit is unavailable. This results in longer response times, with ambulances from outside the area having to travel significant distances to reach 911 callers, delaying life-saving care. By positioning an ambulance at Makalei Fire Station, we shorten the response for the population fo North Kona, but also provide second in medical response to back up Kailua and the residents of this region.

North Kona's population has grown significantly, and the demand for emergency medical services has increased with it. Many residents also face barriers to primary healthcare access, with clinics located up to 30 miles away. As a result, emergency medical services have become the first point of healthcare for many in the community. An additional ALS ambulance would enhance response capabilities, ensuring timely prehospital care, reducing patient morbidity and mortality, and improving overall public health outcomes.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the Legislature to pass House Bill 784 and ensure that North Kona receives the emergency medical services it desperately needs. Mahalo for your time and dedication to the health and safety of our community.

Kazuo Todd
Fire Chief
Hawai'i Fire Department

HB-784

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:46:34 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Allen	American Medical Response	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing HB784 related establishing an ambulance in Makalei. AMR supports HB784. Mahalo.

HB-784

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:48:33 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Speedy Bailey	American Medical Response	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support.

HB-784

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:20:56 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 784 for the operation of an additional ambulance for the island of Hawaii to be based in Makalei. The island of Hawaii is largest island in our island chain and so is the need for our residents' lives to obtain quick and accessible transportation to the nearest hospital - a life and death issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to strongly support the passage of HB 784 this session.

Testimony in Support of an Additional Ambulance for North Kona

Presented to: Hawai'i State Legislators

Date: 2/5/25

By: Chad Sohriakoff, Fire Rescue Captain Kailua Kona

Good morning, Hawaii State Legislators my name is Chad Sohriakoff, and I am the Fire Rescue Captain at the Kailua Kona fire station. I would like to provide testimony here today to advocate for the urgent need for an additional ambulance in the North Kona District. As a first responder, I have witnessed firsthand the growing demand for emergency medical services in our community.

The district of Kona has experienced a significant increase in emergency calls due to population growth. The Kailua Kona fire station is the busiest Fire Station on the Island of Hawai'i. In 2024 alone the Kailua Kona fire Station received over 4,550 emergency calls.

Currently, our emergency response system in the district of Kona is under strain due to:

1. Longer Response Times- with limited ambulances, response times are increasing, putting lives at risk.
2. Overburdened EMS Personnel- our paramedics and EMTs are stretched thin, leading to burnout and staffing challenges.
3. Delays in Critical Care- In life-threatening situations, every second counts. A delay in emergency medical care can mean the difference between life and death.

Adding another ambulance to our emergency response fleet in Kona will:

- Reduce response times and improve patient outcomes.
- Enhance coverage across the county.
- Alleviate stress on our current EMS teams, improving their efficiency and well-being.

Investing in an additional ambulance is not just an expenditure; it is a critical investment in public safety and health. I urge this board to prioritize this request, ensuring that when residents call 911, help arrives swiftly.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Chad Sohriakoff

Fire Rescue Captain Kailua Kona Fire Station

HB-784

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:14:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roland Laliberte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB784.

HB-784

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:19:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JarraeTehani Manasas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support for HB784. As a resident of North Kona, this measure seeking funding for an additional life support ambulance stationed at Makalei, will greatly enhance the emergency medical services on Hawai'i Island.

As our community continues to grow and for public safety, first responders need an additional ambulance to ensure everyone has timely access to emergency medical care. Positioning an ambulance in Makalei would allow for better distribution of emergency resources and will increase efficiency to public health and safety.

Please support HB784. Mahalo for your consideration.

JarraeTehani Manasas, Kailua Kona Hawai'i