

Hawai'i Association of Professional Nurses (HAPN)



To: The Honorable Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair of the House Committee on Health

From: Hawai'i Association of Professional Nurses (HAPN)

Subject: HB799 – Relating to Health Care

Hearing: February 12, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Aloha Representative Takayama, Chair; Representative Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair; and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Association of Professional Nurses, we appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support with amendments** for HB799, which aims to address Hawaii's ongoing health care provider shortage, particularly in rural and neighbor island communities.

Hawaii continues to face significant challenges in ensuring adequate access to health care services. The state has long struggled to meet the growing demand for medical providers, particularly specialists, in rural areas. Many neighbor island residents must travel to Oahu for essential care, exacerbating health inequities and access barriers. The impacts of the 2023 wildfires on Maui have only worsened the provider shortage, with many practices forced to close or relocate, further straining the island's health care system.

HB799 takes a necessary step in ensuring access to care by reducing administrative barriers for organized ambulatory health care facilities. These facilities provide a crucial mechanism for health care providers to serve patients in underserved communities and are an essential component of a comprehensive and integrated health care system.

Proposed Amendments:

To further strengthen this bill and reflect the full range of qualified health care providers serving Hawaii's communities, we respectfully request amendments to ensure provider-neutral language throughout the bill. Specifically, we recommend replacing the term "**physician**" with "**physician, advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, or other qualified licensed health care provider**" in all applicable sections.

With these amendments, HB799 will:

- Support a diverse provider workforce by ensuring that all qualified licensed health care providers can practice in organized ambulatory health care facilities.
- Reduce unnecessary administrative barriers that prevent qualified health care professionals from delivering care in medically underserved areas.
- Expand access to timely and comprehensive care for patients in rural and neighbor island communities.

HAPN remains committed to advocating for policies that improve health care access and ensure that Hawaii residents receive timely, high-quality care. We urge the committee to support HB799 with our recommended amendments to promote a more inclusive, efficient, and equitable health care system for our state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Dr. Jeremy Creekmore, APRN
HAPN President



February 12, 2025 at 10:00 am
Conference Room 329

House Committee on Health

To: Chair Gregg Takayama
Vice Chair Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy
AVP, Government Affairs
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: **Submitting Comments**
HB 799, Relating to Health Care

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the healthcare continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, and assisted living facilities. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing more than 30,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **comments** regarding this measure, which seeks to remove the requirement for physicians practicing at organized ambulatory health care facilities to keep hospital privileges in the same geographic area. The measure further seeks to eliminate the need for written transfer agreements between ambulatory health care facilities and hospitals.

These changes would align state rules around ambulatory health care facilities with those recently changed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Recent updates to federal regulations removed the requirement for ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs) to maintain written transfer agreements with hospitals. These updates acknowledged that ASCs can provide safe care without formalized agreements, provided they have clear protocols in place for handling emergencies and patient transfers.

Requiring hospital privileges can be challenging for physicians, particularly those in rural or underserved areas. There are additional administrative and time commitments—including on-call obligations—that are associated with hospital privileges. Easing this requirement could help attract more providers to areas facing workforce shortages by reducing these administrative and logistical burdens.

We would note, however, that some members have concerns over the potential consequences of removing these requirements. Hospitals rely on physician participation for on-call rotations to ensure adequate emergency and specialty care coverage. Removing the hospital privilege requirement could reduce the pool of available on-call physicians, particularly in rural areas where staffing is already a challenge. This may inadvertently place additional strain on hospital resources and impact the availability of emergency care.

Balancing the benefits of reducing regulatory benefits with the need to maintain strong systems for care is important especially when considering care in rural areas. We appreciate the committee considering this measure and our comments on the matter.

HB-799

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:24:12 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Kurohara	Community First Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Community First Hawaii supports increasing access to healthcare, especially on neighbor islands where we have a severe physician workforce shortage and geography are barriers to our communities receiving care. Many of our neighbor island residents are having to fly to Oahu to receive care that could be afforded them if some of these barriers are removed.

HB799 addresses one of these barriers where physicians wanting to fly in and perform services in outpatient settings are prevented because of a 1986 requirement to have privileges at a nearby licensed hospital.

We support the intent of the bill to provide more access to care by physicians willing to fly to our neighbor islands to being additional healthcare services to our communities.

February 12, 2025

To: Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Members of the House Committee on Health (HLT)

From: Hawaii Association of Health Plans Public Policy Committee

Date/Location: February 12, 2025; 10am/Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

Re: Comments on HB 799 – Relating to Health Care

The Hawaii Association of Health Plans (HAHP) offers comments on HB 799. HAHP is a statewide partnership that unifies Hawaii's health plans to improve the health of Hawaii's communities together. A majority of Hawaii residents receive their health coverage through a plan associated with one of our organizations.

HAHP supports the intent of this measure to increase access and support our healthcare workforce. Hawaii is currently facing a shortage of healthcare providers, a challenge that is particularly acute in rural areas of the state especially on the neighbor islands.

HAHP supports all initiatives aimed at improving healthcare accessibility, including efforts to enhance access to physician specialists. By addressing these shortages, we can ensure that all residents receive the timely and comprehensive care they deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 799.

Sincerely,

HAHP Public Policy Committee

cc: HAHP Board Members



February 12, 2025

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

Re: HB 799 – RELATING TO HEALTH CARE

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

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to support HB 799, which authorizes physicians to practice at organized ambulatory health care facilities even if the physician does not have hospital privileges at a licensed hospital in the same geographic location as the ambulatory facility.

HMSA strongly supports efforts to increase access and support our healthcare workforce, particularly on the Neighbor Islands and in our state’s rural communities. Hawaii is currently facing a shortage of healthcare providers, a challenge that is particularly acute on Maui. The devastating Lahaina wildfires of 2023 exacerbated this crisis, necessitating intervention from federal, state, and county agencies to ensure that residents received adequate health services.

HMSA has received feedback from numerous Oahu-based physician specialists who are eager to travel to Maui to provide care in outpatient facilities. However, they face significant barriers due to a 1986 mandate that physicians must have local hospital privileges to practice in outpatient facilities. Because of our state’s unique geography, the conditions needed to get hospital privileges are nearly impossible to fulfill for providers who do not reside on the island where care is needed. Ultimately, this is denying vital care to Maui residents in need.

HB 799 would resolve the situation by aligning state law to current CMS regulations. It would remove what the federal government has described as “unnecessary, obsolete, or excessively burdensome” compliance requirements for healthcare providers and suppliers. The Burden Reduction Rule, which was published by CMS on September 30, 2019 deleted the Conditions for Coverage, which required an ambulatory surgery center to (1) have a written transfer agreement with a hospital, and (2) ensure that all physicians performing surgery in the ambulatory surgery center have admitting privileges at a local hospital.



For these reasons, we strongly urge you to consider HB 799, which will allow physicians willing to fly to Neighbor Islands to provide much-needed care at outpatient facilities. Mahalo for your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Kurisu', is positioned above the typed name.

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations



February 12, 2025

To: Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Members of the House Committee on Health (HLT)

From: Aloha Surgical Center

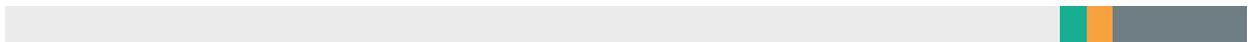
Date/Location: February 12, 2025; Conference Room 329

Re: Support for HB799 – Relating to Health Care

Aloha Surgical Center on Maui, which partners with physicians to provide surgical procedures that can be performed in an outpatient setting, writes **in support** of HB799.

The measure seeks to increase health care access to residents in rural areas of Hawaii by addressing the workforce shortage of medical specialists, particularly on Maui. By addressing these shortages, Hawaii can ensure its residents receive comprehensive care close to home, without the added time and expense of traveling to Oahu.

Thank you for the consideration.



HB-799

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:49:49 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard S Velasquez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

All Hawaii citizens especially our young people deserve the right to read and learn from all available sources. Books that provide a vareity of perspectives and help our people develop a wider view of the world .. From Classics to new authors , future generations will benefit from exposure to ideas and by learning through reading, how to consider different viewpoints and think critically

HB-799

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:50:10 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl M Moore	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose Bill HB799. This bill is vague and ambiguous in it's form. There are current books in the public and school libraries that directly violates the state's current Hawaii Child Pornography laws, Hawaii Revised Statutes section 707-751: Promoting Child Abuse in the Second Degree - Distributing Child Pornography. Allowing this bill is to allow the continuation of subjecting our youth to this dispicable content. Children's brains are developing and exposure this "adult only" content causes extreme stress, mental confusion and has the potential to induce long-term mental disorders. It goes against everything that the the Hawaii **Nā Hopena A‘o (“HĀ”)** represents. It is our duty to protect our children, the children of Hawaii and guide them towards being the best possible person that they can.

Malama Pono,

Cheryl Maliikapu-Moore

951.265.8696

HB-799

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:57:30 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mikian	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Mikian Rose Pelekai strongly oppose bill HB799