

Testimony of  
Jonathan Ching  
Government Relations Director

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

February 7, 2025  
8:45 a.m.  
Conference Room 329  
Via Videoconference

**Re: HB 951, Relating to Prescription Drugs.**

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 951, which allows a patient seen in-person by another health care provider in the same medical group as the prescribing physician to be prescribed an opiate prescription for a three-day supply or less via telehealth.

**Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i SUPPORTS HB 951.**

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i is one of the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plans, serving 12.6 million members nationwide, and more than 271,000 members in Hawai‘i. In Hawai‘i, more than 4,200 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai‘i Permanente Medical Group physicians and advance practice providers work in our integrated health system to provide our members coordinated care and coverage. Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i has more than 20+ medical facilities, including our award-winning Moanalua Medical Center. We continue to provide high-quality coordinated care for our members and deliver on our commitment to improve the health of our members and the people living in the communities we serve.

HB 951 permits patients who have seen their provider in-person to be prescribed a limited supply of opiates by another healthcare provider within the same medical group via telehealth. Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i supports this bill because it provides timely access to pain management while still protecting patients from the harmful effects of overprescribing, inappropriate long-term use, and addiction.

Acute pain requires prompt intervention, and this bill ensures patients receive immediate pain relief even when their regular provider is unavailable. Under current law, patients in this situation must quickly see another provider to satisfy the face-to-face requirement. This is challenging due

to the provider shortage and the redundant treatment consumes resources that could benefit other patients.

HB 951 allows providers in the same medical group who have access to the patient's history to fill that gap by prescribing only three days of opiates. By limiting the supply of opiates to three days, this bill balances the need for timely pain relief with the responsibility to prevent opioid-related harm. **This safeguard ensures appropriate and safe pain management, minimizes the risk of misuse and addiction, and still provides enough time for the patient to get in touch with their usual provider or schedule an appointment to see a new provider.**

Allowing providers to prescribe a three-day supply of opiates based on another provider's evaluation, within the same medical group, offers significant benefits. **It enhances access to pain management, ensures continuity of care, improves patient convenience, optimizes healthcare resources, enables swift response to acute pain, and adheres to clinical guidelines.** For these reasons, Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports this measure as a proactive step toward improving patient care and outcomes.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair  
Representative Sue Keohopaku-Lee Loy, Vice-Chair  
Members of the House Health Committee

Fr: TY Cheng on behalf of Aloha Green Apothecary.

Re: Testimony **In Support** on **House Bill (HB) 951**

RELATING TO PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

Allows a patient seen in-person by another health care provider in the same medical group as the prescribing physician to be prescribed an opiate prescription for a three-day supply or less via telehealth.

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

Aloha Green Apothecary (“Aloha”) is a state-licensed medical cannabis dispensary licensee operating on Oahu. Aloha **supports** HB951 which alleviates access issues for patients by allowing limited access to medicine through telemedicine.

Aloha submits that telemedicine is a well-accepted form of communication post-COVID pandemic and that it is cruel to allow a patient who so suffers from symptoms while waiting to access medicine due to bureaucracy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



February 6, 2025

The Honorable Gregg Takayama  
Chair, House Committee on Health  
Hawaii House of Representatives  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 404  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy  
Vice Chair, House Committee on Health  
Hawaii House of Representatives  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 332  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: ATA ACTION SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 951**

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

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing to you to express our support for House Bill 951 which allows health care providers to prescribe a three-day supply of opiates via telehealth so long as the health care provider practices in the same medical group as the prescribing physician, and the original prescribing physician has performed an in-person examination.

ATA Action, the American Telemedicine Association's affiliated trade association focused on advocacy, advances policy to ensure all individuals have permanent access to telehealth services across the care continuum. ATA Action supports the enactment of state and federal telehealth coverage and fair payment policies to secure telehealth access for all Americans, including those in rural and underserved communities. ATA Action recognizes that telehealth and virtual care have the potential to truly transform the health care delivery system – by improving patient outcomes, enhancing safety and effectiveness of care, addressing health disparities, and reducing costs – if only allowed to flourish.

Our organization believes that HB 951 would be a rational step forward for telehealth policy in Hawaii. HB 951 appropriately balances the need for timely patient care with responsible prescribing practices by allowing patients who have been evaluated in-person by a prescribing physician within the same medical group to receive a short-term, three-day supply of an opiate prescription via telehealth. This policy aligns with the best practices in telemedicine, ensuring that patients receive appropriate treatment while reducing unnecessary barriers to care.

Telehealth has proven to be an essential tool in modern healthcare, improving access for patients—especially those in rural and underserved communities—while maintaining high standards of care. By allowing continuity of care from within a trusted medical group, this legislation ensures patients can receive necessary short-term pain relief without undue delay, especially in urgent or post-operative scenarios. Moreover, HB 951 allows patients, especially those in rural regions which may lack treatment facilities, qualified health providers, or access to medications without the need for transportation.

**ATA ACTION**

901 N. Glebe Road, Ste 850 | Arlington, VA 22203  
[Info@ataaction.org](mailto:Info@ataaction.org)



ATA Action commends the Hawaii Legislature for continuing to advance telehealth. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful in your efforts to advance common-sense telehealth policy in Hawaii. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further the telehealth industry's perspective, please contact me at [kzebley@ataaction.org](mailto:kzebley@ataaction.org).

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Zebley", is written over a light gray dotted rectangular background.

Kyle Zebley  
Executive Director  
ATA Action