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March 19, 2025

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

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HR 34/ HCR 39 REQUESTING THE HEALTH DATA ADVISORY COUNCIL TO CONFIRM THE NUMBER OF UNINSURED CHILDREN STATEWIDE AND PER COUNTY IN 2025 AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES MED-QUEST DIVISION TO ESTIMATE COSTS AND COLLABORATE WITH THE STATE HEALTH PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY ON POLICY CHANGES NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR CHILDREN.**

Hearing: March 20, 2025, 10:15 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 & via Videoconference, State Capitol

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

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this resolution requests the Health Data Advisory Council of the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) to confirm the number of uninsured children statewide and per county in 2025; and to examine at least sixty days of de-identified privacy-assured hospital and emergency department claims or discharge data, or both, through available and reliable data sources, including the impacts of any changes that may occur in Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services coverage policies; and that the Med-QUEST Division (MQD) of DHS is requested to estimate the state-related cost of increasing the coverage of children between the ages of six to eighteen from the current two years of continuous coverage following Medicaid eligibility to up to twelve years of continuous coverage by Med-

QUEST, as necessary; and to estimate the number of remaining uninsured and underinsured children from birth to age eighteen who are ineligible by virtue of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services regulations for Med-QUEST coverage and estimate the state-related cost of Med-QUEST coverage for these children; and that MQD and SHPDA are requested to collaborate to propose policy changes that may be needed to achieve the goal of universal health insurance coverage for children in the State, including consideration of any new developments in Medicaid funding resulting from federal policy changes; and to submit a report on the data, findings, and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026.

The DHS Med-QUEST Division (MQD) operates Hawaii's Medicaid program, QUEST Integration (QUEST), and ensuring access to health coverage for Hawaii's residents, including keiki, is a major goal of our program. Currently, nearly half the children in Hawaii are covered by QUEST, and as noted in this resolution, MQD has recently obtained approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide continuous coverage for children zero to six and two years continuous coverage for children aged six to nineteen. This resolution requests that we research the costs to the state to expand continuous coverage for the child's entire childhood, as well as the costs to cover children who do not qualify for Hawaii's Medicaid program and to collaborate with SHPDA on other policy considerations and costs in a report to the Legislature. MQD worked on a related resolution and report to the 2024 legislature. Building on that work while also taking into consideration the additional research needed, MQD foresees that it will have the capacity to do this research on the numbers of children and the costs and will be pleased to collaborate with SHPDA on the recommendations and report to the legislature.

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