

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 LAWE LAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE



January 30, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1245 – RELATING TO PHARMACISTS.**

Hearing: Friday, January 31, 2025, Time 1:34 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill, provides comments, and requests amendments.

PURPOSE: Beginning 1/1/2026, mandates reimbursement for services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State.

DHS appreciates the importance of whole-person integrated health care as well as the current shortage of health care professionals in our state making timely access to that care challenging. For Medicaid, licensed pharmacists acting within their scope of practice are currently able to bill for their services under a pharmacy's billing number. If this bill aims to mandate that pharmacists be able to bill independently, DHS will need to implement some technical changes to the provider enrollment system as well as policy changes in the Medicaid State plan.

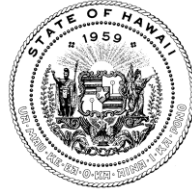
Section 8 mandates that DHS submit any necessary State Plan amendments within an unspecified timeframe. DHS requests that no date be specified given the complicated

timeframe for drafting the amendment(s), consulting with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), publishing and seeking public comment, and incorporating public comments before the amendment can be submitted to CMS.

We also note that if we do not receive approval for the change, we cannot implement it, which may put DHS in non-compliance with the proposed state law. Thus, we respectfully request that the effective date for implementation be contingent on federal approval.

Section 3 adds a pharmacist to a list of providers who are “Qualified Providers” who can bill for their services in the Federally Qualified Health Center’s unique prospective payment system (PPS). As background, a PPS rate pays the same amount for each eligible encounter regardless of the service, with a defined set of services eligible for the PPS encounter rate and a defined set of qualified providers who are allowed to bill for the PPS encounter. Pharmacists can be employed by FQHCs but are classified as “qualified non-physician providers.” Thus, pharmacists can contribute to services that are billable but cannot bill independently in the FQHC setting and, therefore, should not be added to the list of providers who can. For this reason, DHS also requests that Section 4 amending section 346-53.64, Hawaii Revised Statutes, be deleted from the measure.

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



LATE

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: (808) 586-2850
Fax Number: (808) 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I. HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, January 31, 2025
1:34 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & via Videoconference

On the following measure:
S.B. 1245, RELATING TO PHARMACISTS

Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

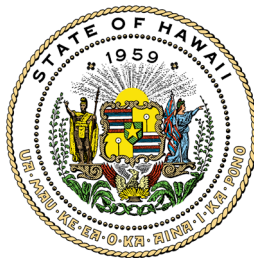
My name is Gordon Ito, and I am the Insurance Commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Insurance Division. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to mandate reimbursement for services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State beginning January 1, 2026.

The new sections of HRS chapter 431, article 10A and chapter 432, article 1, created in Sections 2 and 3 of the bill, respectively, include subsections (a) that provide in part that health plans "shall recognize pharmacists licensed pursuant to chapter 461 as **participating providers**[.]" (page 2, lines 9 to 11 and page 3, lines 8-9) (emphasis added)). The term "participating provider" seems as if it could be reasonably interpreted to mean a provider who has contracted with a health plan. However, the subsections (b) include the definition "'participating registered pharmacist' means a pharmacist

licensed pursuant to chapter 461 who has contracted with the” health plan (page 2, lines 17 to 20 and page 3, lines 15 to 18). With this “participating registered pharmacist” definition defined by the existence of a contract, it is unclear what is meant by “participating provider”. This issue may lead to confusion and statutory interpretation issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

S.B. NO. 1245, RELATING TO PHARMACISTS.

LATE

Hearing: Friday, January 31, 2025, 1:34 p.m.

The Office of the Auditor offers comments on S.B. No. 1245, which will mandate coverage for services provided by registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice under private and public health insurance plans in the State.

We were asked to assess the social and financial impacts of an identical health insurance proposal introduced in the 2023 Regular Session as S.B. No. 165 and issued Report No. 23-12, *Proposed Mandatory Health Insurance Coverage for Pharmacists Services*. We determined that the bill did not mandate health insurers to cover services provided by registered pharmacists because S.B. No. 165 applied only to those pharmacists who contracted with insurers. The bill, however, did not require insurers to contract with pharmacists. Insurers had complete discretion whether to contract – or not – with a pharmacist, meaning insurers would control whether their policies provided coverage for services provided by registered pharmacists. We determined that the proposed mandated coverage is not new insurance coverage. See Report No. 23-12, <https://files.hawaii.gov/auditor/Reports/2023/23-12.pdf>.

Because of the similarities between S.B. No. 1245 and the bill that we reviewed in 2023, we do not believe the mandate, *in its current form*, requires the Legislature to request another assessment under Section 23-51, HRS.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō‘ike Mana‘o I Mua O Ka ‘Aha‘ōlelo

LATE

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, January 31, 2025 at 1:34 pm

By

Bonnie Irwin, Chancellor

and

Rae Matsumoto, Dean

Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy
University of Hawai‘i at Hilo

SB 1245 – RELATING TO PHARMACISTS

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 1245. The University of Hawai‘i at Hilo (UH Hilo) supports SB 1245, which mandates reimbursement for services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State.

Pharmacists are among the most trusted and accessible health care professionals, with about 90% of Americans living within 5 miles of a pharmacy. With their doctoral level of training, pharmacists can provide high quality services, particularly related to the safe and effective use of medications. Most relevant to Hawai‘i is the improved access to health care services when pharmacists are able to provide preventative care such as a vaccinations and health screenings (eg. blood pressure, A1C testing for diabetes), and chronic disease state management (eg. regular visits with their pharmacists within their health systems to monitor disease states that are treated with medications and make adjustments as needed). This facilitates access to high quality health care while reducing the burden on physicians for routine chronic disease state management once the diagnosis is made.

For example, a pharmacist may receive a physician referral for a specific area of care (diabetes, blood pressure, asthma). To address the patient’s specific need, the pharmacist must initially conduct a review of the entire medication profile from a generalist standpoint. For example, a diabetes certified pharmacist may receive a referral to initiate and maintain a diabetes medication(s) and monitor the disease. In order to manage the diabetes itself, the pharmacist must address the entire medication profile and all of the patient’s disease states, especially chronic diseases that include major organ systems such as heart, kidney, and liver. Ongoing management through regularly scheduled visits with the patient of all medications and diseases is performed

on a routine basis, with the patient being part of the pharmacist's panel for ongoing management. In this way, a patient with a chronic disease state can receive high quality of care from a doctoral level trained health professional, while relieving the burden on physicians.

These pharmacist services are routinely provided in select in-patient, out-patient and community/retail settings in Hawai'i, but because pharmacists are unable to be directly reimbursed for many of these services, building budget models that can sustainably pay for and expand these needed services are a challenge. SB 1245 will provide a path forward.

It should be noted that a similar bill was introduced in the 2023 legislative session (SB693) and a subsequent audit (SCR17) for financial and social assessment of pharmacy services under the medical benefit did not find any additional costs to the State or Hawai'i healthcare plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1245.

To: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

From: Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health System

Date: January 31, 2025

Re: Comments on SB1245 – Relating to Pharmacists

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 10,000 affiliated physicians, caregivers, and dedicated medical staff statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on SB 1245, which mandates reimbursement for services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State.

Queen's supports the intent of SB 1245, which mandates reimbursement for services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State. We believe this measure will ultimately provide greater access to health care services, particularly for our neighbor island patients; QHS hospitals, Molokai General Hospital and North Hawaii Community Hospital, serve rural communities that have limited access to care in many cases.

Allowing reimbursement to registered pharmacists to safely provide certain health care services is a cost-effective measure that brings us closer to meeting the health care needs of our community and helps strengthen the integrated care team model that has proven so effective for many of our most vulnerable patients. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

The mission of The Queen's Health System is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.

Testimony of
John M. Kirimitsu
Counsel

Before:
House Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

January 31, 2025
1:34 pm
Conference Room 225
Via Videoconference

Re: SB 1245 Relating to Pharmacists

Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1245 relating to pharmacists.

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii requests an amendment.

Kaiser appreciates this bill's intent to mandate reimbursement for services provided by pharmacists within their scope of practice. However, as currently drafted, Kaiser is concerned that this bill includes *inconsistent definitions* of participating pharmacists, who are subject to reimbursement under this bill. The inconsistent definitions of participating pharmacists results in lack of clarity and leads to significant confusion.

In Section (a) of the bill, health plans are required to recognize “pharmacists licensed pursuant to chapter 461 as participating providers” and shall include coverage for care provided by a participating registered pharmacists practicing within the scope of their license[.]” Under this definition, health plans are presumably mandated to reimburse ALL pharmacists licensed under Chapter 41 as “participating providers”, including non-contracted pharmacists. We do not believe that this mandate for out of network pharmacy coverage aligns with the bill's intent.

Alternatively, in Section (b) of this bill, health plans are required to reimburse “participating registered pharmacists . . . who have contracted with the insurer to provide health care services to its insureds.” This definition is *consistent* with our interpretation of the bill mandating reimbursement for contracted pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice under Chapter 461.

Therefore, Kaiser requests the following amendments, on Page 2, lines 6-16, and Page 3, lines 4-14, to provide consistency towards this bill's definition of participating pharmacist (deleted language is ~~stricken~~):

"§431:10A- Services provided by participating registered pharmacists; coverage.

- (a) Each individual or group policy of accident and health or sickness insurance delivered or issued for delivery in this State after December 31, 2025, ~~shall recognize pharmacists licensed pursuant to chapter 461 as participating providers and~~ shall include coverage for care provided by a participating registered pharmacist practicing within the scope of their license for purposes of health maintenance or treatment to the extent that the policy provides benefits for identical services rendered by another health care provider.
- (b) For the purposes of this section, "participating registered pharmacist" means a pharmacist licensed pursuant to chapter 461 who has contracted with the insurer to provide health care services to its insureds."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

January 31, 2025

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: SB1245– RELATING TO PHARMACISTS

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on SB1245, which mandates reimbursement for services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State.

HMSA values Hawaii's pharmacists and their critical role they play in caring for patients and members. We want to ensure that we support pharmacists to maximize their skillset and practice to the top of their license, however, we believe this bill could unintentionally create confusion, overlap, and prevent the ideal team-based care model (pharmacists working with physicians as part of a holistic care team), which could have unintended consequences. The current bill language also lacks any mechanism to strategically select what services pharmacists should be reimbursed for further adding to the potential confusion noted previously.

We note that we participated in and provided data for the State Auditor's sunrise analysis of proposed mandatory health insurance coverage for pharmacist service in 2023, Report No. 23-12. As some of the flexibility and waivers from the PHE are set to expire, as this bill impacts Hawaii's telehealth statute, we are still analyzing the potential broader impacts to telehealth laws in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB1245.

Sincerely,



Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations

January 31, 2025

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: SB1245– RELATING TO PHARMACISTS

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on SB1245, which mandates reimbursement for services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State.

HMSA values Hawaii's pharmacists and their critical role they play in caring for patients and members. We want to ensure that we support pharmacists to maximize their skillset and practice to the top of their license, however, we believe this bill could unintentionally create confusion, overlap, and prevent the ideal team-based care model (pharmacists working with physicians as part of a holistic care team), which could have unintended consequences. The current bill language also lacks any mechanism to strategically select what services pharmacists should be reimbursed for further adding to the potential confusion noted previously.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB1245.

Sincerely,



Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations

LATE

Date

To: Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)

From: Hawaii Association of Health Plans Public Policy Committee

Date/Location: January 31, 2025; 1:34 p.m./Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony with comments on SB 1245 – Relating to Pharmacist Reimbursements

The Hawaii Association of Health Plans (HAHP) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on SB 1245. 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 thanks the legislature for its efforts to increase access to health care services in Hawaii. While we support reimbursement of in-network pharmacists practicing within their scope, this bill as written lacks clarity on the specific scope of services that pharmacists would be reimbursed for.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 1245.

Sincerely,

HAHP Public Policy Committee

cc: HAHP Board Members



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, January 31, 2025; 1:34 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 1245, RELATING TO PHARMACISTS.

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 1246, RELATING TO PHARMACISTS.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would mandate reimbursement for services provided by pharmacists within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State.

Due to significant and longstanding shortages in Hawaii's health care work force, most primary care providers have had to find new ways of delivering services to meet the ever present needs of patients. This has especially been the case in dealing with chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, and heart maladies to name a few.

FQHCs have found patient education and constant interaction between providers and patients to be extremely effective in improving health care outcomes. Because of physician shortages, FQHCs have begun to rely on teams consisting of a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, pharmacist, and medical assistants to oversee the patient's management of chronic diseases. Each professional has a specific role that complements the activities of others. In this arrangement, the pharmacist does more than merely dispense medication.

For example, in diabetes management, the pharmacist meets with the patient to explain when and how to use diagnostic tools such as glucose monitors, and instructs the patient on the use of injectable medications. These activities supplement and reinforces the therapeutic treatments that are conducted by the physician and advanced practice nurse. The medical assistants provide logistical and other support services needed by the patient and partner providers.

In the case of pharmacists, because these types of services are currently not eligible for insurance reimbursement, FQHCs have had to find other resources to offset these costs. As such, there are limits to the number of patients who can be serviced in this manner. Yet, due to the benefits demonstrated in patient outcomes, it is clear that this approach works, and will be how health care is provided moving forward.

Because of this, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this measure

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

Friday, January 31, 2025 at 1:34 PM
Via Video Conference; Conference Room 225

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

Re: **SB 1245 – Testimony In Support
Relating to Pharmacists**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

HPH writes in SUPPORT of SB 1245 which mandates reimbursement for services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State. The mandate would become effective as of January 1, 2026.

Hawai'i continues to face a shortage of healthcare providers, particularly in rural areas and the neighbor islands. Each county within the State contains a region that is a medically underserved area. While stakeholders across the healthcare community are working together to attract and retain qualified providers in the state, there are other steps which can be taken to fully utilize existing resources. One such resource is the pharmacists already practicing in our local healthcare communities.

Pharmacists can help bridge the gaps created by the physician shortage. A pharmacist's skill set includes educating patients on how and when to check blood sugar, ways to avoid and manage hypoglycemia, how to take their medications correctly to avoid adverse effects, and various medication utilization techniques. Additionally, patients are three times more likely to stay out of the hospital when pharmacists provide clinical services after a hospital discharge.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic pharmacists have demonstrated how invaluable their services are. Pharmacists practicing at local pharmacies in every community are more accessible and provide a wide range of health care services. The practice of pharmacy

has evolved to encompass a greater focus on the provision of services. As such, pharmacists should be reimbursed for the patient care they provide.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



January 30, 2025

[submitted electronically via: capitol.hawaii.gov]

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura
Chair, Committee on Health and Human Services
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) appreciates the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on [Senate Bill \(SB\) 1245](#) (Chair Buenaventura). SB 1245 will allow for the reimbursement of services provided by participating registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State beginning January 1, 2026. Realigning financial incentives in our healthcare system to allow for health plan reimbursement under the medical benefit of services provided by pharmacists ensures patients have more time with their most accessible healthcare professional, their pharmacist. It also correctly aligns the current role of the pharmacist with their extensive education and training to practice at the top of their license.

We also support the submitted testimony from the Hawai'i Pharmacists Association.

Substantial published literature documents the proven and significant improvement in patient outcomes¹ and reduction in healthcare expenditures² when pharmacists are optimally leveraged as the medication experts on patient-care teams. The expansion of programs that increase patient access to health care services provided by their pharmacist in Hawai'i is aligned with the growing trend of similar programs in other states, such as California, Colorado, Idaho, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and others. In states where such programs have already been implemented, health plans recognize the value of the pharmacist and invest in the services they provide to capitalize on the positive therapeutic and economic outcomes associated with pharmacist-provided care.³

¹ Giberson S, Yoder S, Lee MP. Improving Patient and Health System Outcomes through Advanced Pharmacy Practice. A Report to the U.S. Surgeon General. Office of the Chief Pharmacist. U.S. Public Health Service. Dec 2011. Available at:

https://www.accp.com/docs/positions/misc/improving_patient_and_health_system_outcomes.pdf

² Murphy EM, Rodis, JR, Mann HJ. Three ways to advocate for the economic value of the pharmacist in health care. Journal of the American Pharmacists Association. August 2020. Available at:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1544319120303927>

³ CareSource Launches Pharmacist Provider Status Pilot. Published August 4, 2020. Available at

<https://www.caresource.com/newsroom/press-releases/caresource-launches-pharmacist-provider-status-pilot/>

Given the unique patient population and barriers to care due to the primary healthcare worker shortage⁴ in Hawai'i, APhA firmly believes that considering a payment model that includes reimbursement for pharmacists' services is the missing piece to allow other professionals to utilize pharmacists under their training as the medication experts on patient care teams. As the most accessible healthcare professionals with nearly 90% of the U.S. population living within five miles of a community pharmacy,⁵ pharmacists are vital care providers, especially for those living in underserved and remote communities. Patient access to pharmacist-provided care can address health inequities while reducing hospital admissions, increasing medication adherence, and decreasing overall healthcare expenditures by recognizing and covering the valuable healthcare services pharmacists provide, similar to Hawai'i's recognition of many other healthcare providers.

As you may be aware, many of Hawai'i's neighborhood pharmacies,^{6,7} especially those in rural communities⁸, are closing because the unsustainable reimbursement model in the drug supply chain is enhancing healthcare disparities. Without immediate changes, the current payment model is putting many independent pharmacies out of business and creating "pharmacy deserts" in minority and underserved communities, where the neighborhood pharmacy may be the only healthcare provider for miles.⁹

Creating programs that allow for the direct reimbursement of services provided by pharmacists through Med-Quest, Medicaid Managed Care Organizations, and private health plans opens additional revenue opportunities for these pharmacists to maintain their practice and provide valuable health care services necessary for many Hawai'i communities. It is also important to note that these programs are not expected to raise costs for health plans, as published literature has shown that pharmacist-provided care results in cost savings and healthier patients.^{10,11} This strong return on investment supports why many other states have established comparable programs. For example, Oregon identified in its fiscal legislative analysis that the creation of a similar program that would permit pharmacists to engage in clinical pharmacy practice and provide patient care services to patients would have "minimal expenditure impact on state or local government."¹²

⁴ Counties with the biggest primary health care worker shortages. NursingEducation. Published August 25, 2021. Available at <https://nursingeducation.org/counties-with-the-biggest-primary-health-care-worker-shortages/>.

⁵ Berenbrok LA, Tang S, Gabriel N, Guo J, Sharareh N, Patel N, Dickson S, Hernandez I, Access to Community Pharmacies: A Nation-Wide Geographic Information Systems Cross-sectional Analysis, *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association* (2022), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.japh.2022.07.003>.

⁶ <https://www.khon2.com/local-news/longs-drugs-to-close-ewa-beach-location-ensures-continuity-of-pharmacy-services/>

⁷ <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2024/12/20/don-quiote-close-waipahu-store-after-18-years/>

⁸ Hawryluk M. Large parts of rural America are becoming drugstore deserts. These small towns found an escape. *The Washington Post*. Published December 15, 2021. Available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/12/03/drugstore-desserts-rural-america/>

⁹ Guadamuz, Jenny. Et. al. Fewer Pharmacies In Black And Hispanic/Latino Neighborhoods Compared With White Or Diverse Neighborhoods, 2007–15. *Health Affairs*. May 2021, available at: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.01699>

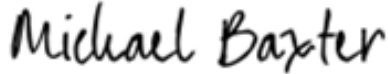
¹⁰ Giberson S, Yoder S, Lee MP. Improving Patient and Health System Outcomes through Advanced Pharmacy Practice. A Report to the U.S. Surgeon General. Office of the Chief Pharmacist. U.S. Public Health Service. Dec 2011. Available at: https://www.accp.com/docs/positions/misc/improving_patient_and_health_system_outcomes.pdf

¹¹ Murphy EM, Rodis, JR, Mann HJ. Three ways to advocate for the economic value of the pharmacist in health care. *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*. August 2020. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1544319120303927>

¹² FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION Measure: HB 2028 A. Seventy-Eighth Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2015 Regular Session. Available at <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2015R1/Downloads/MeasureAnalysisDocument/28866>.

For these reasons, APhA strongly supports SB 1245 and respectfully requests your “AYE” vote. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact E. Michael Murphy, PharmD, MBA, APhA Senior Advisor for State Government Affairs, by email at mmurphy@aphanet.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Baxter". The script is cursive and fluid.

Michael Baxter
Vice President, Government Affairs
American Pharmacists Association

cc: Senator Troy N. Hashimoto
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Senator Kurt Fevella

About APhA: APhA is the largest association of pharmacists in the United States advancing the entire pharmacy profession. APhA represents pharmacists in all practice settings, including community pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, specialty pharmacies, community health centers, physician offices, ambulatory clinics, managed care organizations, hospice settings, and government facilities. Our members strive to improve medication use, advance patient care and enhance public health. **In Hawai'i, with 900 licensed pharmacists and 1,470 pharmacy technicians, APhA represents the pharmacists and student pharmacists that practice in numerous settings and provide care to many of your constituents.** As the voice of pharmacy, APhA leads the profession and equips members for their role as the medication expert in team-based, patient-centered care. APhA inspires, innovates, and creates opportunities for members and pharmacists worldwide to optimize medication use and health for all.



January 30, 2025

Hawai'i Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

ASHP Supports SB 1245 Relating to Pharmacists

Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee,

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) strongly supports S.B. 1245 as introduced. This bill will broaden Hawai'i residents' access to high quality essential healthcare services statewide, including in rural and underserved areas, by ensuring health plans include pharmacists in their medical provider networks and reimburse pharmacists for providing covered services to eligible enrollees.

ASHP is the largest association of pharmacy professionals in the United States, representing 60,000 pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians in all patient care settings, including hospitals, ambulatory clinics, and health-system community pharmacies.

Pharmacists are highly capable, but highly underutilized, as clinicians.

The COVID-19 pandemic and corresponding public health emergency (PHE) demonstrated the crucial role of pharmacists as essential healthcare providers. During and after the PHE, the U.S. Government authorized pharmacists nationwide to independently order and administer a variety of immunizations, test for COVID-19 and prescribe antiviral medications for treatment of COVID-19 infection. States are also recognizing the value of pharmacists and adopting laws to bolster availability of pharmacist-provided services – including Hawaii Act 104 (2024), which broadened patients' access to immunizations from pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

Additionally, Hawai'i pharmacists are permitted to enter into collaborative practice agreements with physicians and other health care practitioners. Collaborative practice agreements empower pharmacists to optimize patient drug therapy regimens by assessing, monitoring, initiating and modifying the patient's medications at frequent intervals between physician visits through a team-based process.

Approximately 69 percent of all primary care encounters involve medication therapy.¹ Non-optimized medication use is estimated to cause 275,000 excess deaths and cost \$528.4 billion each year in the United States.² Pharmacists integrated into the care team enhance focus on patient-specific prescribing options, actual medication use at home and rapid achievement of therapeutic goals and desired outcomes. A 2023 study

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahcd/namcs_summary/2018-namcs-web-tables-508.pdf

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29577766/>

estimated that authorizing pharmacists nationwide to initiate and modify antihypertensive medications would save over \$1 trillion and 30.2 million patient life years over 30 years.³

Pharmacist provider recognition is essential to overcoming barriers to access in healthcare.

Despite state and Federal policies recognizing pharmacists as qualified and highly capable clinicians, many insurers still do not permit pharmacists to enroll as providers and do not provide a means of coverage for clinical pharmacist services that are not directly tied to prescription dispensing. Lack of provider recognition renders pharmacists unable to submit claims for services that are both covered by the plan and within the pharmacist's scope of practice, effectively blocking patients' access to medically necessary treatment from a pharmacist. The added burdens of time, distance, out-of-pocket costs and reduced convenience in unnecessarily seeking out a different provider collectively serve as a barrier to accessing cost-efficient preventative health care services, leading to poorly managed chronic disease states and increasing overall health expenditures.

SB 1245 does not require health plans to cover any additional services that were not previously covered.

SB 1245 requires health plans to permit pharmacists to provide services that would have otherwise been covered when provided by a physician or non-physician practitioner. The bill prevents health plans from denying patients' access to existing covered benefits solely based on the type of provider rendering the service.

SB 1245 does not expand pharmacist scope of practice.

SB 1245's coverage requirements only extend to services provided within a pharmacists' lawful scope of practice as defined under state and federal law.

ASHP urges you to support passage of SB 1245. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill. If you have any additional questions or would like further information, please contact Kyle Robb (krobb@ashp.org).

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Robb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kyle Robb, PharmD

ASHP Director of State Policy & Advocacy

³ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2811317>

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 8:28:08 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toby Taniguchi	Testifying for KTA Super Stores	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

Thank you for your time and considerations.

Jan. 31, 2025 1:34 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice-Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SB1245 — RELATING TO PHARMACISTS

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and other members of the committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its support for [SB1245](#), which would mandate reimbursement by both public and private health plans for services provided by pharmacists acting within their scope of practice.

Enactment of this bill would be another step toward providing more healthcare options and access for Hawaii residents. Moreover, it would give lawmakers more flexibility to explore expanding pharmacist scope of practice in the future without creating confusion about reimbursement issues.

[Research](#) indicates that state scope-of-practice restrictions — such as restrictions on the ability of pharmacists to independently prescribe and adapt certain medications — can impede the delivery of optimal care.

In some cases, increasing the scope of practice for pharmacists would provide alternatives for patients seeking help with simple issues, such as quitting the use of tobacco, which in turn would reduce the burden on local doctors and lower the cost of care.

This could be especially beneficial in rural areas, where Hawaii's doctor shortage contributes to limited options and longer waits for care.

Providing a mechanism to encourage broader use of pharmacists would be a good way to help reduce healthcare costs in our state while improving overall care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Testimony presented before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
January 31, 2025

Dr. Corrie L. Sanders on behalf of
The Hawai'i Pharmacists Association (HPhA)

Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Pharmacists Association (HPhA) is in strong support of SB1245 that mandates reimbursement for services provided by registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice under the medical benefit by both private and public health plans. The current lack of a payment pathway for our profession significantly hinders pharmacists from providing services outside of medication dispensing and vaccination, despite having years more training in pharmacotherapy and medication management than any other healthcare profession.

The University of Hawai'i Daniel K. Inouye School of Pharmacy was established to train and retain local talent, yet we have not created a model that reimburses for many services instilled in pharmacists during four years of doctoral-level training. By aligning financial incentives and reimbursing pharmacists for their services under the medical benefit, similar to any other healthcare provider, there will be greater access to the vital services pharmacists are trained to provide. Without such a pathway, other healthcare professionals will continue to serve in place of pharmacists as medication experts despite significant gaps in education and training.

Physicians in Hawai'i do not have the financial resources to cover their own practices, let alone consider expansion. The capitated reimbursement model is intended for 'many hands to make light work,' and yet, there remains only a single revenue stream. In order for 'many hands to make light work' there need to be additional revenue streams to reflect the value of the hands that are serving our patients with the highest quality care possible. The economic and administrative challenges that have been reported repeatedly by physicians year after year indicate that the financial structure of a single revenue source system restricts, rather than supports, access to care. We are detracting from what seems to be an innovative care model by financially handcuffing pharmacists while allowing only selective providers a means to leverage their expertise.

SB1245 was previously introduced in 2023 as SB693 and triggered a financial audit through SCR17 that concluded pharmacist-provided services would not add additional costs to the state. We remain strong in advocating for a payer-agnostic assessment that shows no favoritism towards one billing model over another. This uniformity across payment plans is instrumental so pharmacists in community settings can provide critical care to a diverse population of patients spanning all areas of need. There is no other provider in the state whose ability to bill is limited in this way. And as the most accessible healthcare professionals in the state, pharmacists should not be the exception.

The pharmacy profession has drastically evolved over the past twenty years, and it's time for Hawai'i statute to reflect this evolution in knowledge and skill. Payment for pharmacist clinical services under the medical benefit is the missing piece for pharmacists to contribute to a true team-based care model. Not only is SB1245 needed for pharmacists to be financially

leveraged to utilize our training as medication experts, SB1245 is critical to ensuring that our patients and ohana receive the level of care they deserve.

Upon connecting with other stakeholders in the state prior to this hearing, we acknowledge there are concerns surrounding language for the inclusion of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) in this initiative. **We kindly request that FQHCs remain included at this time as we work through solutions with the Medicaid team in order to retain this payer-agnostic model and incentivize the inclusion of pharmacists at these important locations.**

On behalf of The Hawai'i Pharmacists Association, mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Corrie L. Sanders". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized "C" and "S".

Corrie L. Sanders, PharmD., BCACP, CPGx
President, Hawai'i Pharmacists Association



50 EAST PUAINAKO STREET
HILO, HAWAII 96720

PHONE: 808-959-4575

LATE

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Necole Miyazaki Pharm D., Pharmacy Manager for an independent pharmacy on the Big Island and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 693, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Necole Miyazaki
Pharmacy Manager
50 E. Puainako Street
Hilo, HI 96720

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 12:39:21 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alyssa Pang	Testifying for Times Pharmacy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice

Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)

January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alyssa Pang, Director of Times Pharmacy on the island of Oahu and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill SB1245, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Pang

Director of Pharmacy, Times Pharmacy

1620 N School Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

DATE: January 30, 2025

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura
Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Tiffany Yajima

RE: **S.B. 1245 - Relating to Pharmacists**
Hearing Date: Friday, January 31, 2025 at 1:34 p.m.
Conference Room: 225

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

We submit this testimony on behalf of Walgreen Co. ("Walgreens"). Walgreens operates stores at more than 9,000 locations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In Hawaii, Walgreens has 13 stores on the islands of Oahu and Maui.

Walgreens **supports** S.B. 1245, which mandates reimbursement for services provided by registered pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice by private and public health plans in the State. Walgreens also offers suggested amendments for consistency and clarity.

The practice of pharmacy has evolved alongside significant changes in healthcare delivery. Patient demand on the healthcare system is expected to increase significantly and outpace current provider supply over the next few years. As a result, pharmacists today play a vital role in health care and are increasingly providing patient care services beyond the traditional prescription dispensing function.

Pharmacists are now offering patient care services such as medication therapy management, immunizations, health screenings, chronic disease management, and patient education and counseling. In addition, over the past decade the legislature has expanded on pharmacy services and given pharmacists the ability to perform tasks such as prescribing and dispensing contraceptive supplies (Act 67 (2017)), ordering and performing certain CLIA-waived tests (Act 103 (2023)), and most recently, allowing pharmacists the ability order immunizations and for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy interns the ability to administer minor immunizations (Act 104 (2024)).

This measure is the next step to ensure that pharmacists are fairly reimbursed by health plans in the State for the clinical services they provide within their scope of practice. This will also help to ensure that pharmacies can continue to serve our

communities. Pharmacists are accessible, especially in underserved areas, making them a vital resource for healthcare delivery. They also help with cost savings by preventing hospital readmissions and managing chronic conditions thereby reducing overall healthcare costs and increasing positive patient outcomes.

It is for these reasons that Walgreens is in strong support of this measure. For clarity and consistency, Walgreens would suggest several amendments provided below. Specifically, these amendments incorporate language that more explicitly imposes payment and reimbursement obligations on health plans. With these amendments, Walgreens asks the committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

SECTION 2. Chapter 431, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to article 10A to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§431:10A- Services provided by participating registered pharmacists; coverage. (a) Each individual or group policy of accident and health or sickness insurance delivered or issued for delivery in this State after December 31, 2025, shall
(1) recognize pharmacists licensed pursuant to chapter 461 as participating providers; and
(2) shall ~~include~~ provide coverage for a ~~care service~~ provided by a participating registered pharmacist practicing within the scope of their license for purposes of health maintenance or treatment to the extent that the policy provides ~~benefits coverage~~ for ~~identical the same~~ services rendered by another health care provider;
(3) shall pay or reimburse a pharmacist or pharmacy for the cost of a service performed by a pharmacist within the scope of their license.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "participating registered pharmacist" means a pharmacist licensed pursuant to chapter 461 who has contracted with the insurer to provide health care services to its insureds."

SECTION 3. Chapter 432, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to article 1 to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§432:1- Services provided by participating registered pharmacists; coverage. (a) Each individual and group hospital or medical service plan contract delivered or issued for delivery in this State after December 31, 2025, by a mutual benefit society shall:

- (1) recognize pharmacists licensed pursuant to chapter 461 as participating providers;
- (2) ~~and~~ shall ~~include provide~~ coverage for ~~care a service~~ provided by a participating registered pharmacist practicing within the scope of their license for purposes of health maintenance or treatment to the extent that the plan contract provides ~~benefits coverage~~ for ~~identical the same services~~ rendered by another health care provider;
- (3) ~~Shall pay or reimburse a pharmacist or pharmacy for the cost of a service performed by a pharmacist within the scope of their license~~



LATE

January 30, 2025

Testimony in SUPPORT for SB1245: RELATING TO PHARMACISTS

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Health and Human Services Committee Members:

As a rural healthcare provider, access to comprehensive, high-quality healthcare services is our mission at Moloka'i Drugs. On behalf of our employees and patients, I am testifying in favor of SB1245, a bill to mandate reimbursement for our Moloka'i-based pharmacists who provide services within the current pharmacists' scope of practice.

We believe this measure will provide greater access to healthcare services, especially on the rural island of Molokai with 7,000 residents. Many of our people, especially our *kupuna*, have limited access to on-island healthcare, especially with only one airline and no ferry providing challenging transportation to O'ahu, Maui, and even the mainland for medical services and procedures.

Our staff pharmacists currently provide services that we do not garner extra payment from payers and/or insurance companies. Additional service we would be able to provide to more Moloka'i patients with financial leverage created by this bill would include delivering and counseling on durable medical equipment (electric beds, wheelchairs, commodes, canes, etc.); giving immunizations off-site; consulting homebound patients via phone calls; management of chronic disease states, including diabetes; helping patients put on and monitor their continuous glucose monitoring systems which are designed to help people with diabetes track blood glucose levels without "finger pricks."

This week, two of our Honolulu-based medical providers (a podiatrist and an orthodontist) had their Mokulele Airlines' flights cancelled to Molokai. Two weeks ago, we had no flights for five days. I personally had to take an almost four-hour boat ride from Kaneohe to Molokai to get home. Because of these transportation challenges, more responsibility is put on our medical providers on Molokai to take care of situations on-island since our off-island providers are not always able to fly in from Honolulu.

Our Moloka'i-based pharmacy providers live full-time on our island and know our people. Paying for their services will provide high-quality healthcare and healthier community members. Thank you for your consideration and for your vote for SB1245

Sincerely,

Kimberly Mikami Svetin /s/

Kimberly Mikami Svetin
President
Moloka'i Drugs, Inc.
P.O. Box 558
Kaunakakai, HI 96748
Work 808-553-5790



LATE

January 30, 2025

To: Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee

From: East Hawaii Independent Physicians Association (dba Big Island Docs)

Subject: Support for SB1245

Dear Senators,

We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Bill No. 1245, which mandates reimbursement for pharmacists' services. Big Island Docs represents 50 independent private practice providers on Hawai'i Island delivering care to over 50,000 patients.

As healthcare providers in Hawai'i, we see firsthand the growing challenges in patient access to care, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The provider shortage continues to strain our healthcare system, making it essential to fully utilize all qualified professionals—including pharmacists.

Pharmacists play a vital role in patient care by providing immunizations, medication management, health screenings, chronic disease management, and other essential services. However, without a payment mechanism for these services, their ability to support patients to the fullest extent of their training is severely limited.

At Big Island Docs, we rely on close collaboration with local pharmacists to enhance patient care. SB 1245 would ensure that pharmacists can continue providing these critical services, improving healthcare outcomes, reducing unnecessary hospital visits, and increasing access to care—especially for patients with chronic conditions who require ongoing management.

On behalf of our membership, we strongly urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynda Dolan".

Lynda Dolan, MD
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brenda Camacho".

Brenda Camacho, MD
VP & Treasurer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Shikuma".

Craig Shikuma, MD
Medical Director, BIHC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Kalua".

Erin Kalua, MD
Secretary

www.bigislanddocs.com

Mailing Address: 670 Ponahawai St., Suite 117 | Hilo, HI 96720

Phone: (808) 797-3113 | Fax: (808) 935-4472



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB1245, RELATING TO PHARMACISTS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
January 31, 2025

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Health & Human Services Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** SB1245, RELATING TO PHARMACISTS. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, the Party believes that the wellbeing of all of Hawai'i's people is of the utmost importance and supports efforts toward a goal of reducing health disparities in Hawai'i's rural and underserved communities.

SB 1245 mandates reimbursement for services provided by pharmacists within their scope of practice by both private and public health plans in the State of Hawai'i. This legislation is a critical step toward addressing our state's ongoing healthcare provider shortage while improving patient access to essential medical services.

Hawai'i is currently facing a significant physician shortage, with medically underserved areas present in every county, as identified by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. This gap in healthcare services poses a threat to the well-being of our residents, particularly those in our rural and underserved communities.

Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals capable of bridging these gaps in care. Their expertise extends beyond medication dispensing to include essential clinical services such as:

- Educating patients on chronic disease management, including diabetes and hypertension.
- Providing medication therapy management to reduce adverse drug reactions and hospital readmissions.

- Delivering preventative care, including immunizations and health screenings.
- Supporting care transitions, ensuring patients adhere to prescribed treatments following hospital discharge.

Studies have shown that pharmacist-provided clinical services significantly improve patient outcomes. For example, patients who receive pharmacist-led care after hospital discharge are three times more likely to avoid readmission. Expanding the recognition of pharmacists as participating providers under private insurance and Medicaid will ensure that patients receive the necessary support for medication adherence and chronic disease management.

By passing this bill, the Legislature would align Hawai'i with other states that have successfully integrated pharmacists into their healthcare reimbursement structures. This will lead to:

- Greater access to healthcare services for our underserved populations.
- Improved patient health outcomes and reduced hospitalizations.
- Cost savings for the healthcare system through preventative care and better chronic disease management.

We, the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, urge the Committee to pass this critical legislation to enhance access to care, maximize the healthcare workforce, and improve the overall health of Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB1245, RELATING TO INSURANCE. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.



50 EAST PUAINAKO STREET
HILO, HAWAII 96720

PHONE: 808-959-4575

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Megan Arbles, Pharm D., Director of Pharmacy Operations for an independent pharmacy on the Big Island and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 1245, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i continues to face a shortage of healthcare providers, particularly in rural areas. Each county within the State contains a region that is a medically underserved area. While stakeholders across the healthcare community are working together to attract and retain qualified providers in the state, there are other steps which can be taken to fully utilize existing resources. One such resource is the pharmacists already practicing in our local healthcare communities.

SB 1245 would provide coverage for licensed pharmacists' services under the medical benefit of private and public health plans enabling pharmacists to continue providing healthcare services in Hawai'i. I believe that ensuring providers already practicing within our communities are properly leveraged to utilize the fullest scope of their statutorily granted authority will only serve to increase quality of and access to medical services throughout the State.

My team and I currently practice in the community, retail setting. Some examples of services that we currently provide without direct reimbursement are medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure screening and education, diabetes screening, and point-of-care testing. Additional services we would be able to provide with financial leverage created by this bill would be medication therapy management, chronic disease state management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing and dispensing, smoking cessation, behavioral counseling and interventions, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Pharmacists are the most accessible healthcare providers, yet we are not able to provide care to our fullest potential due to the lack of reimbursement. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacists would improve the quality of and access to care. It is widely known that Hawaii's healthcare system is in need of more providers to provide healthcare services to ethnic minority and rural populations, which make up a vast majority of the State's demographic. SB 1245 would create a long overdue payment pathway under the medical benefit of private and public health plans for services provided by pharmacists within their scope of practice.

I respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to see fit to pass SB1245. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Megan Arbles
Director of Pharmacy Operations
50 E. Puainako Street
Hilo, HI 96720

Testimony to support SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
January 31, 2025

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1245

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Camlyn Masuda and I am an Associate Specialist and Clinical Pharmacist with the University of Hawai'i at Hilo Daniel K Inouye College of Pharmacy. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB1245, a bill to mandate reimbursement for pharmacist provided services that already exist within a pharmacist's scope of practice.

I currently practice in a family medicine physician office setting. Some examples of services that I currently provide without direct reimbursement include medication reviews and counseling about how to decrease the risk of side effects from medications and teaching people on how to use medications that come in devices (insulin, Ozempic). Additional services we would be able to provide with financial leverage created by this bill would be consultation and management of chronic disease states and thorough medication reviews and finding lower costs for medications for patients. While our patients appreciate the extra services that we provide, which are within our scope of practice, in order to sustainably offer and expand access to these services, we need to be paid for them.

A story that I have about being embedded as a trusted member of the community and the services I would/can provide is a patient who had uncontrolled diabetes. The physician I work with referred the patient to me to discuss medication options. Although the patient was not willing to start insulin at the first visit we discussed other options which he was willing to try and understood that they would not work as well as insulin. After a few months his sugar levels lowered but not to a healthy level, the patient finally was willing to start insulin and was able to lower his sugar level to a healthy level. If pharmacists are able to get reimbursed for providing this type of visit/care we would be able to help more patients in the State especially in areas where physicians are lacking.

SB1245 would provide financial compensation for licensed pharmacists under the medical benefit of both private and public health plans, enabling pharmacists to continue providing healthcare services in Hawai'i across all patients and health plans. I believe that ensuring providers already practicing within our communities are properly leveraged to utilize the fullest scope of their statutorily granted authority will only serve to increase both quality of and access to medical services throughout the State.

I respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to pass SB1245 and thank you for the opportunity to testify and advance the pharmacy profession to help improve the health of the people of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,



Camlyn Masuda, PharmD, CDCES, BCACP
Associate Specialist, Dept. of Pharmacy Practice, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy, University of Hawai'i at Hilo
677 Ala Moana Blvd. Ste 1025A
Honolulu, HI 96813
Email: camlynm@hawaii.edu

Testimony to support SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)

January 31, 2025

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1245

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Faith Hicks and I am a Relief Pharmacist at KTA Pharmacy. I would appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB1245, a bill to mandate reimbursement for pharmacist provided services that already exist within a pharmacist's scope of practice.

KTA Pharmacy is a family owned Community Pharmacy catering to the East and West sides of Big Island. We provide Medication Therapy Management services to Medicare members, Immunizations to the community including the houseless, medical homes and students and staff within the Department of Education, as well as other businesses and organizations. We have additional clinical services that allow us to screen for various heart conditions to help patients identify diseases early. We provide a plethora of patient services without direct reimbursement. Additional services we would be able to provide with financial leverage created by this bill could be hormonal contraception prescribing, consultation and management of chronic disease states, partnerships with providers, point of care testing, etc.

In a rural area like Big Island, patient access to healthcare professionals and resources are challenging. As a student and preceptor, I have traveled to the town of Miloli'i where there is little or no access to hospitals, pharmacies and other medical institutions. With reimbursement, we could extend our reach to communities like these around the entire island.

SB1245 would provide financial compensation for licensed pharmacists under the medical benefit of both private and public health plans, enabling pharmacists to continue providing healthcare services in Hawai'i across all patients and health plans. I believe that ensuring providers already practicing within our communities are properly leveraged to utilize the fullest scope of their statutorily granted authority will only serve to increase both quality of and access to medical services throughout the State.

I respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to pass SB1245 and thank you for the opportunity to testify and advance the pharmacy profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Faith Hicks', with a stylized, flowing script.

Faith Hicks, Pharm D.

Relief Pharmacist, KTA Pharmacy

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hearing Date/Time: Friday, January 31, 2025. 1:34 PM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225
Re: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT/SUPPORT of SB 1246**



Dear Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair and the Members of Committee,

Members of *Indivisible Hawai'i* thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support/support of SB 1246 which would create a stockpile of the abortion medication Mifepristone to assure that, regardless of action taken at the federal level, Hawai'i's residents still have access to essential reproductive health services. We also recommend that the Department of Health collaborate and share resources with states that have experience with stockpiling mifepristone, such as California and Washington State – if they have not already done so.

Mifepristone is used in over 60% of U.S. abortions. Mifepristone is now available from certified providers via mail and at pharmacies for use up to 10 weeks' gestation. However, women's access to mifepristone still largely depends on state law, with only about half of U.S. states allowing full access. In 2023, several states led by Democratic governors, including Massachusetts, California and Washington State began stockpiling doses of drugs used in medication abortions, amid fears that a court ruling could restrict access to them. Most stockpiled mifepristone, which has a shelf life of 5 years. California also stockpiled misoprostol, with a shelf life of 2 years. California reported in June 2024 their stockpiles had been depleted. As of October 2024, at least two states, Washington State and Massachusetts, maintain a stockpile of mifepristone.

In June 2024, the Supreme Court (SCOTUS) issued a ruling that (temporarily) left current laws and regulations in place. A battle is right now being waged in the lower federal courts re: access to and restrictions on mifepristone specifically, and abortion essentially. **In the same way that recent SCOTUS rulings have required Hawai'i to fundamentally reshape its gun laws, so federal rulings and restrictions could suddenly and significantly impact abortion access in our state.** As early as 2025, restrictions on medication abortion could come from federal courts, SCOTUS, Congress and/or the Executive branch. The Republican majority in Congress may attempt to enforce old **Comstock laws that ban the mailing of contraceptives and abortifacients**, and will use this as a basis for a nationwide ban of abortifacients, including mifepristone and misoprostol. Therefore, we respectfully request that Hawaii's legislature act with all due speed to create a state medication abortion stockpile in order to protect the rights and health of all women and families in Hawai'i nei.

Sincerely,
Doris Segal Matsunaga, MPH
Indivisible Hawai'i Healthcare Team

Indivisible Hawai'i is a grassroots organization with ten groups across four islands, representing over a thousand pro-democracy citizens. Indivisible is a national grassroots movement of thousands of local Indivisible groups with a mission to elect progressive leaders, rebuild our democracy, and defeat the Trump agenda.

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 7:38:20 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerri Okamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1245

To the honorable Senate Members,

In support of SB1245 - My name is Jodi Nishida, PharmD, MHP and I'm the owner/operator of The Keto Prescription Clinic in Kailua, HI. Two years ago, I went through a very unfortunate event that I'd like to share with you. I have a very effective and valuable practice to the people of Hawaii. I teach patients how to do low carb CORRECTLY and am an *accredited* Metabolic Health Practitioner with the Society of Metabolic Health Practitioners (www.smhp.org). Because of the way Hawaii state law is written, I have to operate within the parameters of what's called a collaborative practice agreement with an MD. It's the only way I can legally bill insurance for my services. I see a patient, the MD signs off on my chart note, we send it to the insurance companies for reimbursement, my reimbursement gets deposited into the MD's bank account, he/she then cuts me a check for the amount.

Jodi sees patient → Supervising MD signs off on chart note → Note is submitted to insurance for reimbursement → Jodi's reimbursement is deposited into MD's bank account → MD cuts Jodi a check

The physician who I was with prior, a gastroenterologist, decided not to cut me a check one day. We had agreed to monthly payouts and from November 2020 – June 2021, Dr. Russell Yang withheld my income. At first he claimed it was due to spreadsheet reconciliation issues with the billers. Later, it turned into him avoiding me in the office completely. I hired an attorney and went to the police. I was told that because the dollar amount was just shy of \$100,000, I was unable to file criminal theft charges. My attorney advised against pressing charges after we sent several letters to him only to get a reply from the top law firm in the continental US. It was clear that he had no intention of giving me the money earned for my services. In 2021, I almost lost my house. Additionally, patients continued to receive copay bills from him for services rendered by me, not him. It was devastating on multiple fronts.

The reason I'm sharing this with you is not to rehash the pain of the past, but to show you what can happen when we are at the mercy financially of a crooked MD. I never would've guessed that this particular doctor would end up doing this to me. We had a great professional relationship and were doing great things for patients. Losing the ability to perform colonoscopies during COVID affected his income significantly, which is why I believe he stole from me in late 2020, early 2021.

It's vital that this Bill is passed. Pharmacists possess valuable skill sets that improve patient care especially for conditions like diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular disease, avoiding and managing drug interactions and side effects. We are truly the medication experts in healthcare. I am humbly including data from my clinic and testimonials from some of my patients including one in Hilo. We see patients on all islands.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Jodi Nishida, PharmD, MHP

www.theketoprescription.com

The Keto Prescription Clinic

We are a pharmacist owned and operated practice specializing in low carbohydrate education and de-prescribing medications. Jodi Nishida, PharmD, MHP works in collaboration with Maria Markarian, DO who is an interventional cardiologist. Together they focus on improving and reversing metabolic syndrome, preempting heart attacks and strokes, and improving all disease states related to metabolic health. Here is our data from June-December 2022.

Disease States Impacted Positively

GENERAL	METABOLIC SYNDROME
Autoimmune Conditions: Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriatic Arthritis, Lupus, Fibromyalgia, Sjogren's Syndrome	Hypertension
Neurological Conditions: Migraine Headaches, Alzheimer's Disease, Previous Stroke, TIA, Multiple Sclerosis, Restless Legs Syndrome	Type 2 Diabetes and Gestational Diabetes: Including chronic kidney disease and nephropathy, neuropathy, retinopathy, frequent symptomatic hypoglycemia
GI Conditions: Acid Reflux, Bloating, Gas, Heartburn, Gastritis, IBS, Crohn's Disease, Chronic Constipation, Dumping Syndrome, Chronic Diarrhea, Diverticulitis, Fatty Liver	High Cholesterol
Psychiatric Conditions: ADHD, Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar Disorder	Cardiovascular Disease: Including history of heart attack, stent placement, stroke, TIA, calcification of arteries
Hormonal Imbalances: Thyroid, Low Testosterone, PCOS, Infertility, Perimenopause, Severe PMS	Obesity

Hemoglobin A1c Reductions in Diabetes

WE FOLLOWED 160 DIABETES PATIENTS
23 patients saw a reversal of their diabetes measured by an A1c <5.7% & fasting insulin level <10.
50 patients saw an improvement in their A1c and are still being followed in our program.
87 patients are pending and due for an A1c with their primary care physician in early 2023.

Medications Decreased or Discontinued

Generic Name of Medication + Annual Cost Savings		Disease States
Semaglutide Injection (Ozempic) - \$12636	Glipizide ER - \$182	Diabetes Obesity
Empagliflozin/Metformin - \$8100	Empagliflozin - \$8136	
Insulin Degludec Injection - \$3592	Metformin 500mg - \$240	
Insulin Lispro Injection - \$4212	Insulin Glargine Injection - \$2797	
Liraglutide Injection - \$15384	Semaglutide Tablets - \$13248	
Insulin Isophane Injection - \$1144	Semaglutide (Wegovy) - \$19524	
Amlodipine - \$506	Valsartan - \$847	Hypertension Heart Failure Arrhythmias
Irbesartan/HCTZ - \$528	Hydrochlorothiazide - \$107	
Lisinopril/HCTZ - \$208	Lisinopril - \$95	
Carvedilol - \$258	Losartan - \$618	
Nifedipine - \$344	Irbesartan - \$1878	
Atorvastatin - \$1524	Rosuvastatin - \$4080	High Cholesterol Hypertriglyceridemia
Icosapent Ethyl - \$2616		
Methotrexate - \$607	Trifluoperazine - \$385	Rheumatoid Arthritis Breast Cancer Depression/Anxiety Acid Reflux Asthma Low Testosterone Endometrial Cancer
Megestrol - \$232	Tamoxifen - \$917	
Bupropion - \$1416	Omeprazole - \$768	
Esomeprazole - \$304	Sertraline - \$229	
Albuterol HFA - \$1080	Testosterone Cypionate - \$360	
Hydroxychloroquine - \$583	Pantoprazole - \$1044	

Summary

- ◆ In our clinic, the pharmacist spends 30-45min with each patient during appointments. She is responsible for all nutritional counseling, medication evaluation, diabetes monitoring, and follow up on lab results. Over 90% of our patients experience significant weight loss, lose significant inches off their body, and see improvement in all metrics including lab results. Our data shows improvement in disease states and health as opposed to the traditional model of adding medications at each appointment.
- ◆ From June - December 2022, our estimated cost savings to the healthcare system was \$132,774.28. This represents prescription medication costs only and does not include costs saved on diabetic testing supplies, routine labs, office visits, or urgent care/ED/hospitalizations for side effects or uncontrolled disease state sequelae.

January 27, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

My Name is Ivania "Kanoelani" Paulino, I am a patient of Dr. Jodi Nishida, I will be one (1) year with her come April this 2023. I receive absolute dedication and honesty with her and I truly believe that she is a priceless asset to me, she has and still is teaching me to take care of myself in the most healthiest way possible. I appreciate her honesty and never buttering things up.

Dr. Nishida is currently helping and educating me with how to live life to its fullest with healthy eating, exercise, self-care, and being accountable for all I do. We are working on getting off my diabetes, cholesterol, and high blood pressure medication. Since I've been in her care through the Keto Prescription I am so happy to have gotten my A1c down to a 6.5 vs I believe almost a 10.

The quality of services she provides with one on one telehealth calls, I'm not just an appointment time, she genuinely makes the time and cares about my health and well-being, Dr. Jodi, Dr. Markarian and their staff are there when I have questions and answering or guiding me in a timely manner, providing great information with foods, medication, her videos on FB are really great information. She goes above and beyond sometimes she provides more information than my other doctors (this is not to say they aren't doing their job) it's just the amount of information she provides and the facts to back everything up is just amazing. When I'm feeling distracted due to life, work, or just the everyday rat race, she reassures me and makes sure I'm ok.

As for my medications, it will slowly disappear. I am currently awaiting approval for a major procedure coming up and keeping up on my diabetes medication just for now will be vital I believe. When my next lab work comes up and it's keeping steady, I'm sure that the medications will be going away along with my high blood pressure, and cholesterol. My blood pressure has been low for quite sometime but I am feeling good and not light headed. My cholesterol level has been great as well.

I'm still on my journey with so much more to learn from her, like I mentioned earlier, my A1c is just amazing! I haven't had my A1c this low in over 22 years. My lifestyle both in eating the right types of foods and putting exercise in has been something I never thought I'd accomplished.

I am learning that this journey is about me and the difference I am making for my personal goals, as long as I keep that focus and know what the end result is Dr. Jodi is my gold medal and I would highly recommend her and her staff to anyone in a heartbeat! You have to want it in order to succeed in anything you put your mine to and I am grateful that a friend of mine recommended her, I wish I knew about her earlier.

I thank you for taking time to read my testimonial.

Respectfully,



Ivania Kanoelani Paulino

01/27/2023

Dear Senators and State Representatives,

Shouldn't healthcare be something at the forefront and be pre-approved without any restrictions or problems? With so many health issues and possible underlying health conditions due to family health history, I've always wanted to have my personal healthcare and insurance taken care of and operating with little to no issues so that I could make better health a priority. This took years to happen until I was able to meet and be taken as a patient of Dr. Jodi Nishida. My wife and I wanted to start controlling and taking charge of our health in a sustainable and successful way. As a patient of Dr. Nishida's on a proper Medical Ketogenic Diet, I was received and treated with Aloha. I actually was not treated or judged in any way because of health issues. I was treated as myself that wanted to get better and be able to sustain what I was learning and embrace all the consistent support.

I came to Dr. Nishida with a goal in mind to get healthy and try to reduce my body weight and keep it off. When being under Dr. Nishida's care I knew of health issues like Sleep Apnea and Gout. What I didn't know was that my liver was inflamed and that I had Stage 3 liver disease and prediabetes. Medication and dietary changes should have been prescribed way before seeing Dr. Nishida. Dr. Nishida uses great tactile visuals in her teaching of proper Keto along with great teaching strategies that makes all of the patients under her care confident in implementing what we are taught and able to self-sustain our Keto journey. With Dr. Nishida and her entire staff I was never treated as a number. I was treated as myself and encouraged to disclose and share personal celebrations and small setbacks and taught how can I move forward and be okay with falling off the "Keto Train" now and then.

To give a grade to the quality of care that I receive from Dr. Nishida is an A+. She has always exceeded all standards and expectations for every appointment, she's never rushed or cut any appointment short because of time. My big takeaway during appointments was feeling relieved and confident just with appointments alone that I have found a Doctor who "treats me like a human being who needs help and support." I am not being treated for a health condition, I am being treated Holistically so that further treatment will be operate full steam ahead and with focus. Handouts, tips, digital resources and names of stores and locations to find approved keto items are provided. I was absolutely mind blown hearing from a doctor that medication is not needed to target your health conditions so that it can turn back to normal but my conditions can be treated with food! Treatment from other doctors always felt impersonal and I felt like a number and a price tag. It was like they just wanted to prescribe drugs all the time and that was the only answer for treatment. If this initially didn't work they just continued with more and more medications. This was never the case with Dr. Nishida, she never turned to prescribed medications right away. Dr. Nishida's style of treatment has benefitted me on many levels; Apnea machine not needed, gout pills no longer needed, prediabetes cured with foods, and size of liver normalized with normal enzyme levels. I am self-improving but still need a lot of work. I am confident and look forward to more health goals all because of the treatment style of Dr. Nishida. As an Educator for the DOE, I hope this bill will fix the current process to reimburse pharmacists for their valuable services. Oahu's pharmacists should be reimbursed directly for patient care and not be forced to go through a second or third party where they can be stolen from. The State Of Hawaii needs more Doctors like Jodi Nishida who care more about people's health instead of just a price tag, and treat and serve the people of Oahu so that they can be self-sufficient and sustaining.

Best Regards, Ikaikaokalani D. Bicoy

January 25, 2023

Dear Representatives and Senators,

Of the many doctors I've seen for the various health concerns I live with, Dr Jodi Nishida is recognized by her success in reversing disease and I have always learned more about what I must do to improve my health.

She spent a full hour getting my medical and lifestyle history as well as teaching me what the food I eat does in my body and the history of ketosis and why it works to improve blood sugar and decrease fat storage and cholesterol for those who eat a clean keto diet properly.

Dr Jodi Nishida has educated and empowered me through office visits, very clear handouts to support clean keto specifically for me and online private Facebook interactive posts on clean keto and there I also learn from questions other patients have and answers Dr Jodi Nishida provides.

There is no other doctor I know of who spends so much time and resources supporting patient care. What I've learned from being a patient of Dr Jodi's is that the food I'm eating and how I am exercising is the way I control my health state. I had been diagnosed with Congestive Heart Failure, Fatty Liver Disease, Mitral Valve Prolapse, Metabolic Syndrome, Major Depression, Multiple Sclerosis, Fibromyalgia, Osteopenia, Macular Degeneration, Obesity and Chronic Migraines. After becoming a patient of Dr Jodi Nishida's, I have been healed of Congestive Heart Failure, Fatty Liver Disease and Metabolic Syndrome. She has done more to bring health and healing to me than nearly 60 years of seeing other physicians.

I finally understand how to provide my body with the best nutrition and have learned that food that is good for me actually tastes delicious!

Very Truly Yours,

Turning 60 in May of 2023

January 27, 2023

Dear Senators and Representatives,

I am writing today to urge you to support the proposed bill that reimburses pharmacists directly for their patient care services. It is essential that you pass the bill to fix the current process to prevent further loss for pharmacists.

Obesity, borderline high blood pressure, joint pain and stress have directly affected the quality of my life and I have been in search of someone to help guide me to improve myself. Dr. Jodi Nishida has provided valuable and accurate information to help introduce me to a clean keto lifestyle.

Multiple appointments were conducted to analyze my diet, activity level, stress levels, and just life itself. We spent many hours discussing the things that were working and brainstorming how we can improve things that weren't. In addition, she has provided valuable food lists that she developed, tactile visuals of the conversion of sugar into my body, online support, and online group support to help me get to my goals. There were a lot of tears and laughter at each appointment which is extremely rare compared to my regular primary care physician. The quality of care that I receive from Dr. Jodi Nishida is beyond belief. She is very genuine and compassionate and it shows in her welcoming spirit.

Change is very difficult. I didn't expect to hear that the dietary guidelines that I was taught throughout my life are completely wrong. Also, losing inches is ideal and sought after than losing pounds. With the guidance, dedication, and encouragement from Dr. Jodi Nishida, I have lost more than 40 pounds and 62 inches off of my body. My lab values and blood pressures have been normal, I no longer have insulin resistance, my joints are not as painful when doing physical activity, I have more energy and mental clarity, and I am slowly weaning off of my thyroid medication. Please show your support and I urge you to vote yes for this bill. I would greatly appreciate your response on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Arlene U. P. Bicoy

January 27, 2023

To Our Representatives and Senators:

In December 2020, I was diagnosed with sleep apnea and was prescribed a CPAP machine to use while sleeping. I was overweight with high blood pressure, a fatty liver and high cholesterol. I was on medicine for acid reflux, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. I've tried hypnosis to lose weight, which worked for a month or so but didn't last. I felt like my primary care physician would only prescribe medicine instead of trying to help me understand the causes of my issues or other ways to remedy the issues without taking medicine.

One day, I was scrolling through social media and saw an ad for the Keto Prescription and was surprised that it was a local doctor on Oahu. I was a little skeptical about the ad but just gave it a try. I filled out the paperwork and was scheduled for my first appointment with Dr. Markarian, who cleared me for my first appointment with Dr. Jodi.

Dr. Jodi was dumbfounded at how many issues I had being only 39 years of age. She was surprised that I wasn't prediabetic due to my latest lab tests. She explained to me what my fatty liver meant, and I told her that I didn't realize that it was that bad because my PCP made it seem like it wasn't anything to worry about. Dr. Jodi and I spent time going over my bowel movements, my daily activities, diet, etc. We came up with a plan and scheduled bi-weekly then monthly appointments thereafter. My first appointment scared me, which was the kick in the butt I needed to start living healthier and making better choices for me and my family.

My husband and I embarked on this journey together with Dr. Jodi. After learning about the foods that we normally consumed and how we could change our diets to healthier choices, we have both lost a significant amount of weight. I lost 30 lbs. over the last five months and my husband lost 39 lbs. during the same time frame. Although we may consume not approved keto food occasionally, we are educated enough now to be able to get back on track with our healthy choices.

By following Dr. Jodi's plan, I was able to reverse my fatty liver. My lab tests are all back to normal and I feel happier and have more energy throughout the day. I don't rely on caffeine or energy drinks and just feel healthier overall. I get extremely excited when people notice how much thinner I look after starting my keto prescription.

Dr. Jodi and other pharmacists who put their efforts into educating the people of Hawai'i into living a healthier lifestyle should be able to be reimbursed directly for their patient care services. They should not have to rely on other doctors.

Sincerely,

Alisha K. Medeiros

(808) 217-0011

221 Lahaina Street

Hilo, HI 96720

GREGORY E. HUNGERFORD, D.C.

66-560 Kamehameha, Hwy. Ste. 5, Haleiwa, HI 96712

Office 808-780-2601 Fax 808-748-0275

Aloha,

I have been a patient of Dr. Jodi Nishida since 2021. I was referred by my PCP Dr. Yarawamai from Straub for weight loss, high blood pressure, and an autoimmune disease caused by pneumonia. Dr. Nishida is very knowledgeable and conveys information clearly and concisely. I was presented with charts and handouts detailing healthy foods and which ones to avoid. Through her care, I was able to achieve a healthy weight as well as discontinue my high blood pressure medication. Throughout my life, I have had multiple severe injuries including, football, soccer, wrestling, surfing, and 11 motor vehicle accidents which have improved symptomatically and functionally because of her care. She takes the time to make sure the information is understood and welcomes questions. I have seen many doctors over my lifetime and Dr. Nishida is top-notch. She is passionate and motivated, and it shows in her work ethic. As a chiropractor, I see patients in all manner of health conditions. Some of these patients suffer from obesity, rheumatoid arthritis, high cholesterol, diabetes, and general bad health from poor dietary habits. I have and will continue referring patients to her for her expertise even though my office is on the other side of the island. She is worth the drive.

Mahalo,

Gregory E Hungerford, DC

January 27, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

My Name is Ivania "Kanoelani" Paulino, I am a patient of Dr. Jodi Nishida, I will be one (1) year with her come April this 2023. I receive absolute dedication and honesty with her and I truly believe that she is a priceless asset to me, she has and still is teaching me to take care of myself in the most healthiest way possible. I appreciate her honesty and never buttering things up.

Dr. Nishida is currently helping and educating me with how to live life to its fullest with healthy eating, exercise, self-care, and being accountable for all I do. We are working on getting off my diabetes, cholesterol, and high blood pressure medication. Since I've been in her care through the Keto Prescription I am so happy to have gotten my A1c down to a 6.5 vs I believe almost a 10.

The quality of services she provides with one on one telehealth calls, I'm not just an appointment time, she genuinely makes the time and cares about my health and well-being, Dr. Jodi, Dr. Markarian and their staff are there when I have questions and answering or guiding me in a timely manner, providing great information with foods, medication, her videos on FB are really great information. She goes above and beyond sometimes she provides more information than my other doctors (this is not to say they aren't doing their job) it's just the amount of information she provides and the facts to back everything up is just amazing. When I'm feeling distracted due to life, work, or just the everyday rat race, she reassures me and makes sure I'm ok.

As for my medications, it will slowly disappear. I am currently awaiting approval for a major procedure coming up and keeping up on my diabetes medication just for now will be vital I believe. When my next lab work comes up and it's keeping steady, I'm sure that the medications will be going away along with my high blood pressure, and cholesterol. My blood pressure has been low for quite sometime but I am feeling good and not light headed. My cholesterol level has been great as well.

I'm still on my journey with so much more to learn from her, like I mentioned earlier, my A1c is just amazing! I haven't had my A1c this low in over 22 years. My lifestyle both in eating the right types of foods and putting exercise in has been something I never thought I'd accomplished.

I am learning that this journey is about me and the difference I am making for my personal goals, as long as I keep that focus and know what the end result is Dr. Jodi is my gold medal and I would highly recommend her and her staff to anyone in a heartbeat! You have to want it in order to succeed in anything you put your mine to and I am grateful that a friend of mine recommended her, I wish I knew about her earlier.

I thank you for taking time to read my testimonial.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ivania Kanoelani Paulino', written in a cursive style.

Ivania Kanoelani Paulino

February 5, 2023

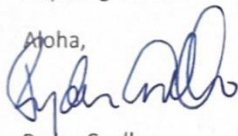
Dearest Dr. Jodi,

I am grateful to you and would like to share my experience in support of your efforts to make us healthier.

1. In July of 2022, I first met with you to discuss my desire to "get off my meds" which I have been on for over 20 years! Pills seemed to be the only way to deal with my chronic illnesses of high blood pressure, gout, type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol. Since I have medical insurance, copays are minimal and its pretty easy to get a prescription for a higher dosage or new meds. After my initial visit with you, I did the cardiogram and began my journey to get healthy and get off all my meds!
2. During my follow-up appointments, your expressed genuine concern and sharing of information has been sincere and useful to keep me on track. Every visit sets a new set of goals to work towards the ultimate goal of a healthy lifestyle. Your Facebook Group and latest meal prep program are awesome support for all of us to turn to when we need it. Besides the informational handouts about the right foods to eat and proportions/ratios, the "approved" shopping list off the FB group is the most useful resource to me. As I and I'm sure everyone carries around their phone everywhere nowadays, a few clicks and I have access to the information as I am grocery shopping.
3. Since starting I have lost 30 pounds and have reduced a few of my meds. I feel better and the my keto-lifestyle, inspired by you, has influenced my immediate family as well as those I work with, as eating and sharing meals is such an integral part of our local culture;

Thank you for all that you do for those that want to truly live healthy and let me know if there is anything more that I can do to support you.

Aloha,



Ryder Coelho

February 9, 2023

Aloha, my name is Raelene Shimokawa, and I am a patient of Dr. Jodi Nishida from December 18, 2020. I sought her help after my primary care physician (PCP) advised me to go on medication to lower my high cholesterol. I am 5'1" & was 130 lbs. Knowing the negative side effects of these drugs I began my health journey with Dr. Jodi.

Dr. Jodi educated, listened, & guided me into better health. Each visit, she spent roughly 30 minutes listening & teaching me what foods to eat, how much, why we should eat, & the consequences of unhealthy choices. I didn't feel overwhelmed or rushed during my visits. I saw Dr. Jodi about once a month until July 2021 & my most recent October 2022.

At each of my once a month visits she would give me handouts that taught me what kinds of foods were the better choice, how to eat these foods the healthy way with healthy fats, & educated me on how to read food ingredients labels. Not knowing what are unhealthy ingredients (fats, carcinogenic, inflammatory, etc.) we can easily be fooled by deceptive marketing strategies. Such as: foods labeled as "healthy", "keto", "low/no fats" ~ the ingredients used are very unhealthy.

This was the first time in my life (almost 50 yrs old), that I'd lost 20 pounds. I felt better, had more energy, & my cholesterol numbers had gone down. No need for medication! This was the main reason why I sought Dr. Jodi - I wanted to do things naturally & control what I can.

Her knowledge & guidance is invaluable. It's very sad what society has been taught about food ~ what is healthy & unhealthy. Medication isn't the answer. We need to educate & guide people into better health. We shouldn't be making money off of sick people & masking the problems.

I am very grateful for Dr. Jodi & for her love & passion that she has in trying to help others. We need more people like her to step up & speak up for truth.

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 1:34:10 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nakamura Brent	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice

Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)

January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is [YOUR NAME] Pharm D., [TITLE] for an independent pharmacy on the Big Island and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 693, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brent Nakamura
Pharmacy Tech
50 E. Puainako Street
Hilo, HI

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 1:31:39 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Taniguchi, Pharm.D., MBA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In full support of SB1245 as written. Mahalo

LATE

Testimony to support SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
January 31, 2025

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1245

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jarred Prudencio, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB1245, a bill to mandate reimbursement for pharmacist provided services that already exist within a pharmacist's scope of practice.

I am a practicing pharmacist who is dual board certified in ambulatory care pharmacy and advanced diabetes management. I am also an Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. In addition to teaching students in the classroom and conducting clinical research, I also maintain a clinical practice site at the East Hawaii Health Clinic 1190 Primary Care setting. In this clinic, I provide direct patient care clinical pharmacy services, without direct reimbursement. Examples of these services include adjustment of prescription medications to improve management of chronic disease states under a collaborative practice agreement, counseling patients on medications and lifestyle modifications, and monitoring of laboratory results. For example, patients will come to the clinic for an appointment with me, where I will review and educate them on their prescription medications for diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure. I will educate them on dietary and lifestyle modifications that can help these conditions. After discussing with them and reviewing their laboratory results, I will prescribe or adjust their prescription medications to optimize their individual and personalized medication regimen to help improve their health conditions and their quality of life.

There is a large shortage of healthcare providers in Hawaii, and with the financial leverage created by this bill we would be able to expand the number of clinical pharmacists providing these types of services alongside physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other providers. SB1245 would provide financial compensation for licensed pharmacists under the medical benefit of both private and public health plans, enabling pharmacists to continue providing healthcare services in Hawai'i across all patients and health plans. I believe that ensuring providers already practicing within our communities are properly leveraged to utilize the fullest scope of their statutorily granted authority will only serve to increase both quality of and access to medical services throughout the State.

I respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to pass SB1245 and thank you for the opportunity to testify and advance the pharmacy profession.

Thank you,



Jarred Prudencio, PharmD, BCACP, BC-ADM

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 12:38:27 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erika Gutierrez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS) January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erika Gutierrez PharmD for an independent pharmacy on the Oahu and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 693, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Erika Gutierrez

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 12:30:44 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judy Watanabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist’s Scope of Practice Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS) January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Judy Watanabe and I work for an independent-chain pharmacy on the island of Oahu and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill SB1245, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists’ Services.

Hawai’i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai’i’s rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Judy Watanabe

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 12:23:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carrie Shibata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carrie Shibata, Pharmacist on the island of Oahu and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill SB1245, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carrie Shibata

Pharmacist

94-1135 Kukula St., Waipahu HI 96797

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 12:06:03 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joann Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

good afternoon, I am writing this testimony to bring to your attention, the great value we have found in Jodi Nishida's assistance as a Dr. of Pharmacy, using her knowledge of nutrition and how to eat proper nutriotn to keep us from having to take medications. I have personally beniefited from her gruidance and not only lost weight, but was able to have meds tapered down. As well as look and feel better. Living with a chronic disease that causes pain and inflammation, and having someone be able to help me and accept my insurance has been a heaven sent, I do hope you would consider this intiative and help us keep seeing Jodi for assistance and guidance in our nurtrion. She really is a wealth of information, even being invited to speak at large formal gatherings across the mainland. She is truly needed for our island to help our communités with nutrition and well-being!

LATE

Testimony to support SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
January 31, 2025

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1245

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

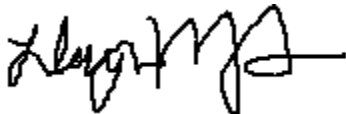
My name is Dayna Wong-Otis and I am a pharmacist on the Big Island of Hawaii. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB1245, a bill to mandate reimbursement for pharmacist provided services that already exist within a pharmacist's scope of practice.

I currently practice in both the community pharmacy and primary care setting. Some examples of services that I currently provide without direct reimbursement include chronic disease state management, naloxone prescribing, and medication reconciliation. Additional services we would be able to provide with financial leverage created by this bill would be hormonal contraception prescribing, tobacco cessation counseling, and point of care testing and treatment.

SB1245 would provide financial compensation for licensed pharmacists under the medical benefit of both private and public health plans, enabling pharmacists to continue providing healthcare services in Hawai'i across all patients and health plans. I believe that ensuring providers already practicing within our communities are properly leveraged to utilize the fullest scope of their statutorily granted authority will only serve to increase both quality of and access to medical services throughout the State.

I respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to pass SB1245 and thank you for the opportunity to testify and advance the pharmacy profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dayna Wong-Otis', written in a cursive style.

Dayna Wong-Otis, PharmD, CDCES

LATE

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lana Wong, staff pharmacist for an independent-chain pharmacy on the island of Oahu and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill SB1245, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lana Wong
Staff Pharmacist
1620 North School St, Honolulu, HI 96817

LATE

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jarrett Chang, staff pharmacist for an independent-chain pharmacy on the island of Oahu and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill SB1245, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jarrett Chang
Staff Pharmacist
1620 North School St, Honolulu, HI 96817

LATE

Testimony to support SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)

January 31, 2025

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1245

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mia Tran-Cao, the Clinical Pharmacy Manager at Times, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB1245, a bill to mandate reimbursement for pharmacist provided services that already exist within a pharmacist's scope of practice.

My team and I currently practice in the community/ retail setting. Some examples of services that I currently provide without direct reimbursement include hormonal contraception counseling/ prescribing, diabetes prevention program, and blood pressure education/ monitor training. Additional services we would be able to provide with financial leverage created by this bill would be consultation and management of chronic disease states, and partnerships with providers.

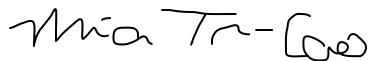
A story that I have about being embedded as a trusted member of the community with the services I provide is lowering patient's A1c from 13.6% to 6.4%. I have seen this patient in person over 2 years for diabetes management and its progress has been extremely well.

Additional experiences I've had related to a lack of reimbursement for pharmacist services include diabetes prevention program and blood pressure education/ monitor training. While our patients appreciate the extra services that we provide, which are within our scope of practice, in order to sustainably offer and expand access to these services, we need to be paid for them.

SB1245 would provide financial compensation for licensed pharmacists under the medical benefit of both private and public health plans, enabling pharmacists to continue providing healthcare services in Hawai'i across all patients and health plans. I believe that ensuring providers already practicing within our communities are properly leveraged to utilize the fullest scope of their statutorily granted authority will only serve to increase both quality of and access to medical services throughout the State.

I respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to pass SB1245 and thank you for the opportunity to testify and advance the pharmacy profession.

Sincerely,



Mia Tran-Cao, Pharm. D.

Clinical Pharmacy Manager

Times Pharmacy

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 11:21:13 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rayanne Pascua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS) January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rayanne Pascua, Pharmacist and Pharmacy manager for an independent-chain pharmacy on the island of Oahu and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill SB1245, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rayanne Pascua, RPh

Pharmacy Manager

1533 Meyers St

Honolulu, HI 96819

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 11:12:08 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kuuleipulama Dyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to you in support for bill number SB1245. If passed it would improve the lives of all constituents to gain quicker access to Pharmacy MD to bill patients. Therefore, I am asking to support this Bill.

Aloha,

Kuuleipulama Dyer

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 11:05:17 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alyssa Pang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice

Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)

January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alyssa Pang, Director of an independent-chain pharmacy on the island of Oahu and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill SB1245, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Pang

Director of Pharmacy

85-332 Farrington Hwy, Waianae, HI, 96792

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 10:46:55 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Wilkin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ryan Wilkin Pharm D., working for a pharmacy on the island of Maui, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 693, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Wilkin

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 10:45:17 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Travis Young	Testifying for KTA Pharmacy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)

January 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Travis Young Pharm D., Clinical Pharmacist for an independent pharmacy on the Big Island and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 1245, A Bill to Mandate Reimbursement for Pharmacists' Services.

Hawai'i is facing a severe shortage of healthcare providers, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. While efforts are being made to attract and retain healthcare professionals, it is crucial that we fully utilize existing resources—especially pharmacists, who are among the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities.

SB 1245 would allow licensed pharmacists to receive reimbursement under the medical benefit of private and public health plans, ensuring that we can continue to provide critical healthcare services. Currently, my team and I offer essential services such as medication reconciliation, immunization screening and education, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, and point-of-care testing—often without direct reimbursement.

If SB 1245 is enacted, we would be able to expand our patient care offerings to include medication therapy management, chronic disease management, oral contraception prescribing and dispensing, naloxone prescribing, smoking cessation programs, behavioral counseling, and point-of-care testing and treatment.

Without a reimbursement mechanism, pharmacists cannot practice to the full extent of their training, limiting patient access to high-quality care. Providing a payment pathway for pharmacist services will help alleviate provider shortages and improve healthcare access, particularly for Hawai'i's rural and ethnic minority populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Travis Young, Pharm D.
50 E. Puainako Street
Hilo, HI 96720

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 10:34:24 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teri Correa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Chairs/members:

I am writing to express my strong support for SB1245. As a patient of Dr. Jodi, I have personally experienced the profound impact of her comprehensive and patient-centered approach to healthcare. Her dedication to my well-being has been unmatched, and I believe that supporting this bill will allow more patients to benefit from the same level of care that I have received without her being dependent on another Provider for billing.

Dr. Jodi has been instrumental in my health journey, offering invaluable support that extends far beyond traditional medical consultations. Unlike many other healthcare providers, she takes the time to truly understand my health concerns, thoroughly interpret my medical history, and provide a level of care that is both compassionate and deeply insightful. Her ability to connect with patients on a personal level and tailor her approach to individual needs is extraordinary.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Dr. Jodi's care is her commitment to improving patient health through education and proactive measures. She prioritizes disease prevention and patient empowerment, emphasizing the crucial link between nutrition and health. Rather than simply prescribing medications, she actively works to help her patients achieve sustainable, long-term wellness. Her approach has not only improved my health but has also given me the tools and knowledge to make informed decisions about my well-being.

I firmly believe that passing SB1245 will support healthcare providers like Dr. Jodi in continuing their essential work. This legislation is vital in ensuring that patients have access to medical professionals who prioritize comprehensive, patient-focused care. It will help foster a healthcare system that moves beyond symptom management and instead promotes true healing and well-being.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB1245 and ensure that more patients can receive the exceptional level of care that Dr. Jodi provides. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony to support SB1245: Payment for Services Within a Pharmacist's Scope of Practice
Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)

January 31, 2025

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1245

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joy Matsuyama, and I am a registered pharmacist in Hawaii and am currently the Clinical Services Manager at Pharmacare Hawaii. I graduated from the University of Washington School of Pharmacy in Seattle, Washington with both my BS in Pharmacy and Doctorate in Pharmacy. I completed a general residency at the University of Washington and Harborview Medical Centers as well as a specialty residency in Geriatrics at the VA Medical Center in Boise, Idaho. I am Board Certified in Pharmacotherapy (BCPS). Throughout my pharmacy career I used my training and education to provide cognitive services first at the VA Medical Center Clinics in Boise tailoring veteran's outpatient medication regimens, then in academia at Idaho State University's College of Pharmacy and St Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, Idaho, teaching pharmacy students internal medicine and participating on the Medical Center's Nutrition Support team caring for the nutritional needs (intravenous nutrition) of the critically ill, surgical and other patients. I returned home to Hawaii to be the Pharmacy Coordinator for Education and Professional Practice at the Queen's Medical Center training hospital pharmacists, then the System Pharmacy Clinical Coordinator at Hawaii Pacific Health and most recently was the Pharmacy Director at Straub Medical Center an affiliate of Hawaii Pacific Health.

I am in full support of SB 1245 which is requesting registered pharmacists in the state of Hawaii receive reimbursement for services (Medication therapy management, comprehensive medication management, etc...) which is in our current scope of practice. Pharmacists are asking to be recognized as healthcare providers by insurance agencies along with other providers we work side-by-side with (physicians, nurses, etc...) so we can get paid for non-dispensing services. In the past, pharmacists were seen more commonly as medication dispensers but, with the move to the universal Doctor of Pharmacy degree from all colleges of pharmacy (this happened in 2000), pharmacists are trained to select and manage appropriate medications, dosages, and regimens based on the patient population being treated. No matter what setting a registered pharmacist is working (Retail, Hospital, Clinics, Nursing homes, etc...) they have the skills to optimize medication regimens while working collaboratively with physicians, patients and others on the healthcare team to improve patient care. These cognitive services, which pharmacists have spent 4 years (similar to Medical and Dental School students) in doctoral training with many completing an additional one-year general residency, and maybe another one year in a specialized residency (geriatrics, cardiology, critical care, etc...) with some even completing an additional two years of fellowship, should be reimbursed.

In my previous role as a Director of Pharmacy at a Health-System, I oversaw approximately 50 staff, which included clinical pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, pharmacy billers, and pharmacy buyers. The Pharmacy Department provided pharmacy services to the hospital, operating rooms, emergency room and over 70 ambulatory care clinics. We were able to provide clinical pharmacy services throughout the health-system. Pharmacists were on teams on each of the hospital floors and in the intensive care unit

(ICU), there was a pre-op pharmacist in the pre-op clinic who saw patients before surgery and educated patients on medications to stop prior to surgery, an emergency room (ER) pharmacist in the ER who helps the ER team with medication-related issues, an oncology pharmacist in the oncology clinic who helps providers with chemotherapy regimens, and several anticoagulation clinic pharmacists in the Anticoagulation Clinic who help patients keep their blood lab values in range so they won't bleed or clot due to their blood thinner. Though my pharmacy team was robust I experienced difficulty getting the needed pharmacy resources to assist the health care team and provide the patient support because pharmacists could not bill for their services. Basically, without reimbursement for services, pharmacist positions, or for that matter, any position is difficult to cost justify. The passing of SB1245 would greatly help expand the reach of pharmacists in the community and allow organizations to justify much needed positions.


With the continual physician shortage in Hawaii and decreasing bandwidth of these providers pharmacists, once reimbursed for their services, will be able to help bridge that gap and provide quality disease and medication management. Pharmacists, by helping patients better manage their medications in chronic disease states (diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, chronic heart failure, etc..) can also potentially improve a patient's quality of life and save healthcare dollars that were previously being spent on unwanted urgent care and emergency room visits and in the most extreme cases hospital admissions.

SB1245 would provide financial compensation for licensed pharmacists under the medical benefit of both private and public health plans, enabling pharmacists to continue providing healthcare services in Hawai'i across all patients and health plans. I believe that ensuring providers already practicing within our communities are properly leveraged to utilize the fullest scope of their statutorily granted authority will only serve to increase both quality of and access to medical services throughout the State.

I respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to pass SB1245 and thank you for the opportunity to testify and advance the pharmacy profession.

Now is the time for pharmacists to be recognized as healthcare providers in Hawaii so we can be reimbursed for our valuable and cost-effective services which are often being sought out, requested, and praised. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joy Matsuyama', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Joy Matsuyama, PharmD, BCPS

LATE

SB-1245

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 10:04:30 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Christine Chan, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB1245, a bill to mandate reimbursement for pharmacist provided services that already exist within a pharmacist's scope of practice.

As a physician, working alongside pharmacists, allows me to work at the top of my license. This is important for patient care, patient access to physicians, and recruitment of physicians to our institution and state. SB1245 would provide financial compensation for licensed pharmacists under the medical benefit of both private and public health plans, enabling pharmacists to continue providing healthcare services in Hawai'i across all patients and health plans. I believe that ensuring providers already practicing within our communities are properly leveraged to utilize the fullest scope of their statutorily granted authority will only serve to increase both quality of and access to medical services throughout the State.

I respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to pass SB1245 and thank you for the opportunity to testify and advance the pharmacy profession.

January 31, 2025

LATE

The Honorable Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee Health and Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 1245

Dear Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the committee:

We thank you for the opportunity to send a letter in **support of SENATE BILL 1245**, a bill that requires public and private plans to reimburse for services provided by licensed pharmacists at the same rate for services rendered by another provider. This legislation expands access to health care services while providing cost-savings to state and local expenditures. SB 1245 ensures that patients have more time with their most accessible health care professional better aligns with the role of pharmacists with their extensive education and training.

The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) represents the interest of America's community pharmacists, including owners of more than 19,400 independent community pharmacies across the United States and 43 independent pharmacies in Hawaii. These Hawaii pharmacies filled 2.8 million prescriptions last year, impacting the lives of thousands of patients in your state.

Current commercial insurance policies within the state do not recognize pharmacists as providers that seek reimbursement for prescribing birth control, test and treat services & HIV drug administration despite covering services from other providers for the same service. Increased utilization of pharmacists' services has improved patient outcomes and reduced overall healthcare costs. Systematic reviews have indicated positive returns on investment when evaluating broader pharmacist services, with up to \$4 in benefits for every \$1 invested in clinical pharmacy services.¹

Within the next 10 years, the U.S. could see a shortage of over 55,000 primary care physicians.² In Hawaii there are 33 areas that are designated as health professional shortage areas.³ There are hundreds of pharmacists in Hawaii who are ready to provide valuable healthcare services to these communities that have limited access to

¹ Avalere. Exploring Pharmacists' Role in a Changing Healthcare Environment. May 21, 2014, available at: <https://avalere.com/insights/exploring-pharmacists-role-in-a-changing-healthcare-environment>.

² Association of American Medical Colleges. 2019 UPDATE The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand Projections From 2017 To 2032. Available at: https://aamcblack.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/31/13/3113ee5c-a038-4c16-89af-294a69826650/2019_update_-_the_complexities_of_physician_supply_and_demand_-_projections_from_2017-2032.pdf

³ Kaiser Family Foundation. Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Timeframe: as of September 30, 2019. Available at: <https://www.kff.org/other/stateindicator/primary-care-health-professional-shortage-areas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>.

care.⁴ By realigning financial incentives and reimbursing pharmacists for their services similar to other health care professionals there will be greater access to the vital health care services pharmacists provide.

To the benefit of this realignment substantial published literature documents the significant improvement to patient outcomes⁵ and reduction in health care expenditures⁶ when pharmacists are more optimally leveraged. Compilation of studies have found themes in these cost savings, including “decreased total health expenditures, decreased unnecessary care (e.g., fewer hospitalizations, emergency department [ED] visits, and physician visits), and decreased societal costs (e.g., missed or nonproductive workdays).”⁶ The adoption of **SENATE BILL 1245** would result in Hawaii joining other states, such as Ohio, Colorado, California, and Wisconsin as national leaders in empowering the pharmacist to better provide valuable services to their communities. In states where such legislation has already been implemented, we are observing health plans, notably Medicaid Managed Care Organizations recognizing the value of the pharmacist and investing in the services they provide.

NCPA submitted a letter of support for this same bill in 2024, SB 693, which did not pass out of conference committee and triggered an audit (SCR17) to conduct a financial and social assessment if pharmacy services would be under the medical benefit. The completed audit did not find any additional costs to the state’s health plans.

SENATE BILL 1245 will ensure that more patients have greater access to health care services provided by pharmacists while supporting the sustainability of local pharmacies in our communities. The adoption of this important legislation will ensure that citizens across the state of Hawaii are able to receive vital health care services provided by their pharmacist.

We appreciate the bill’s sponsor, Senator Buenaventura, and the Hawaii Pharmacists Association for championing this critical issue and urge this bill to be approved by this committee and brought to the floor for a full vote.

If you have any questions about the information contained in this letter or wish to discuss the issue in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact me at belawoe.akwakoku@ncpa.org or (703) 600-1179.

Sincerely,



Belawoe Akwakoku
Associate Director, State Government Affairs
National Community Pharmacists Association

⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Employment Statistics Query System. Available at: <https://data.bls.gov/oes/#/home>.

⁵ Giberson S, Yoder S, Lee MP. Improving Patient and Health System Outcomes through Advanced Pharmacy Practice. A Report to the U.S. Surgeon General. Office of the Chief Pharmacist. U.S. Public Health Service. Dec 2011. Available at: https://www.accp.com/docs/positions/misc/improving_patient_and_health_system_outcomes.pdf

⁶ Murphy EM, Rodis, JR, Mann HJ. Three ways to advocate for the economic value of the pharmacist in health care. Journal of the American Pharmacists Association. August 2020. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1544319120303927>