



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

#### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

T. Samuel Shomaker, MD, Dean,  
Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, MD, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs,  
Kamal Masaki, MD, Chair, Department of Geriatric Medicine  
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### SB 1252 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO DEMENTIA

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of SB 1252 SD2 HD1, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i John A Burns School of Medicine's (JABSOM) Department of Geriatric Medicine to provide coordination between the University of Hawai'i's programs that provide training on Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Hawai'i's aging population is increasing rapidly and approximately 31,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. Recognizing these facts, JABSOM, the University of Hawai'i's Center for Aging, and the University of Hawai'i's Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health provide courses, and actively engage in educating and training students in Alzheimer's disease and dementia. For example, JABSOM's Department of Geriatric Medicine and Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) work with medical students, residents and fellows along with other allied health fields (i.e. social work, public health, and nursing) to build a geriatrics-capable medical workforce in the state and the Pacific Region which includes training in Alzheimer's disease and dementia. The GWEP collaborates with community partners to provide educational lectures and resources to local caregivers.

A number of programs currently exist within the University of Hawai'i System that provide training in Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Greater coordination between the various programs may be valuable in addressing specific training in caring for patients with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Implementation of this coordinated effort would require two (2) FTEs at JABSOM's Department of Geriatric Medicine, and an appropriation of approximately \$525,000.

JABSOM supports SB 1252 SD2 HD1, provided its adoption does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAI'I

KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I

**KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH**



**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING**  
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**CAROLINE CADIRAO**  
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Executive Office on Aging

Telephone

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1252 SD2, HD1  
RELATING TO DEMENTIA**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
REP. KYLE T. YAMASHITA, CHAIR  
REP. JENNA TAKENOUCI, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao  
Director, Executive Office on Aging  
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing: Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 2:00 P.M. in Conference Room 308

**EOA Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of Health (DOH) **strongly supports SB1252 SD2, HD1.**

**Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i at Manoa John A. Burns School of Medicine's Department of Geriatric Medicine for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum for fiscal year 2026-2027 to establish staff positions.

**Purpose and Justification:** This measure appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to establish positions at the UH John A. Burns School of Medicine's Department of Geriatric Medicine to provide coordination among UH programs that provide training on Alzheimer's disease and dementia. EOA recognizes the importance of increasing dementia training for

healthcare providers. Many healthcare providers seldom receive specialized training on dementia including the different stages of the disease, the behavioral changes that can occur, and the complexities of care coordination. Standard training on dementia for healthcare providers is often minimal and consists only of basic information. With specialized training, healthcare professionals will gain knowledge about the new treatments and best practices that can improve quality of life and slow cognitive decline. Consequently, more patients will have access to the latest developments in dementia care.

The Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program at the John A. Burns School of Medicine and the Center of Aging at the University of Hawai'i are leading the efforts toward a dementia capable workforce in Hawai'i by educating students and professionals. However, they currently don't have the capacity to meet the growing demand for statewide training on dementia.

Additional staff are needed to develop and deliver this specialized dementia training program for healthcare providers.

**Recommendation:** EOA strongly supports this bill and defers to the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine Geriatric Program on its implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance  
Tuesday, April 1, 2025; 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: SENATE BILL NO. 1252, SENATE DRAFT 2, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO DEMENTIA.**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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. 1252, Senate Draft 2, House Draft 1, RELATING TO DEMENTIA.

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 appropriate funds to the University of Hawaii to establish positions for the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine's Department of Geriatric Medicine to provide coordination between the University of Hawaii's programs that provide training on Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

This bill would take effect on July 1, 3000.

According to the Center for Disease Control:

- Alzheimer's disease is one of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States;
- The 6<sup>th</sup> leading of death among US adults; and
- The 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death among adults aged 65 years or older.

**Testimony on Senate Bill No. 1252, Senate Draft 2, House Draft 1**  
**Tuesday, April 1, 2025; 2:00 p.m.**  
**Page 2**

In 2023, an estimated 6.7 million Americans aged 65 year or older had Alzheimer's disease. **This number is projected to nearly triple to 14 million people by 2060.**

Further, death rates for Alzheimer's disease are increasing, unlike heart disease and cancer death rates that are on the decline. Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, has shown to be under-reported in death certificates and therefore the proportion of older people who die from Alzheimer's may be considerably higher.

In Hawaii, Alzheimer's disease is a growing public health crisis:

- 29,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's in Hawaii;
- 6.7% of people aged 45 and older have subjective cognitive decline;
- 60,000 family caregivers bear the burden of the disease in Hawaii;
- 91 million hours of unpaid care are provided by Alzheimer's caregivers;
- \$1.9 billion is the value of the unpaid care; and
- \$240 million is the cost of Alzheimer's to the State Medicaid Program.

For these reasons, HPCA has worked closely with the Hawaii Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association to improve the health, welfare, and safety of persons and families afflicted with this disease. Accordingly, we are honored to be a partner with the Alzheimer's Association and urge your favorable consideration.

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](mailto:eabe@hawaiiipca.net).

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*Alzheimer's Association*

## Testimony to the House Committee on Finance Tuesday, April 1, 2:00 PM Room 308 and Videoconference

**RE: SB1252 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO DEMENTIA**

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Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Coby Chock, and I am the Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the Alzheimer's Association. On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association, I am writing to express our **strong support** for SB1252 SD2 HD1, which aims to enhance dementia training across the University of Hawaii to educate healthcare providers on caring for patients with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

The Alzheimer's Association recognizes the critical need for specialized training programs to equip healthcare providers with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver high-quality care to individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. This bill addresses a significant gap in our healthcare system and will greatly benefit patients, families, and caregivers across the state.

Statistics highlight the urgent need for specialized dementia training, especially among professions involved in the diagnosis of cognitive impairment and dementia such as physicians, APRNs, RNs, medical assistants, and social workers. Although 85% of Alzheimer's diagnoses are initially made by primary care providers (PCPs), 40% of PCPs say they are never or only sometimes comfortable making a diagnosis. Even when a diagnosis is made, appropriate care may not be available, as two-thirds of PCPs say they learned little to nothing on dementia care in medical school.

To enhance the effectiveness of this important legislation, we respectfully request further amendments to further define the coordinators' roles (e.g. to establish dementia training standards, identify or develop trainings, verify completion, evaluate competency, etc.) and will work with subject matter committee chairs to ensure this initiative is effective.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions, please contact Coby Chock at 808-451-3410 or [ckchock@alz.org](mailto:ckchock@alz.org).



Coby Chock  
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy  
Alzheimer's Association - Hawaii