

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING**
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
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CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR
Executive Office on Aging

Telephone

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1252 SD1
RELATING TO DEMENTIA**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR

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

Hearing: Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 10:01 A.M. in Conference Room 211

EOA Position: The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of Health (DOH) **strongly supports SB1252 SD1.**

Fiscal Implications: Appropriates general funds to the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum for fiscal year 2026-2027 to establish a specialized training program for healthcare providers.

Purpose and Justification: The purpose of this measure is to establish a training program at the University of Hawai'i to educate healthcare providers on caring for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. EOA recognizes the importance and need for more 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 requests to amend the bill to include two full-time (FTE) positions at the University of Hawai'i to develop and deliver this specialized, dementia training program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, February 18, 2025; 10:01 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Via Videoconference**

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

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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, 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 establish a training program at the University of Hawaii to educate healthcare providers on caring for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. The bill would also appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2025-2026, and the same amount for fiscal year 2026-2027 for this purpose.

This bill would take effect on July 31, 2050.

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 6th leading of death among US adults; and
- The 5th leading cause of death among adults aged 65 years or older.

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.

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Executive Director
Alzheimer's Association

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means Tuesday, February 18, 10:01 AM Room 211 and Videoconference

RE: SB1252 SD1 – RELATING TO DEMENTIA

Chair Dela Cruz 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 SD1, which aims to establish a specialized training program at 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 propose amendments to outline the content to be included in the dementia training, the types of training formats (degree course offerings and continuing education), and the professions that the programs should be tailored for. We have attached the detailed suggested amendments for the committee's consideration.

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



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

RELATING TO DEMENTIA BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
STATE OF HAWAII: SECTION 1. The legislature finds that a specialized training

program to educate healthcare providers on methods to best care for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia is a matter of statewide concern. The purpose of this Act is to establish a training program at the university of Hawaii to educate healthcare providers on caring for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended

by adding a new section to part IV, subpart M, to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§304A- Patients having Alzheimer's disease; care training program. The board shall establish a specialized training program to educate healthcare providers on caring for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. The training program shall consist of university and college course offerings and continuing education credit offerings and shall include but not be limited to curricula for physicians, nurses, clinical psychologists, physical therapists, physician assistants, clinical social workers, occupational therapists, professional counselors, dieticians and certified nurse aides. The training program shall cover relevant topics specific to each profession, including but not limited to:

- Assessment and diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias
- Administration of cognitive assessment tests
- Next Steps: Guidance on the options available if a healthcare provider suspects dementia, including referrals to specialists, further diagnostic testing, and patient and family education
- Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia: Understanding the types, stages, and progression of dementia, with a specific focus on Alzheimer's disease
- Disease-modifying treatments for Alzheimer's disease
- Management of treatment plans and medication administration
- Person-Centered Care: Approaches that focus on the individual's unique preferences, abilities, and needs
- Assessment and Care Planning: Strategies for assessing individuals with dementia and creating personalized care plans

- Activities of Daily Living (ADLs): Best practices for assisting individuals with dementia in performing daily activities such as eating, bathing, dressing, and mobility
- Dementia-Related Behaviors and Communication: Techniques for managing challenging behaviors, such as aggression or wandering, and improving communication with individuals with dementia.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the university of Hawaii board of regents to establish a specialized training program to educate healthcare providers on methods to best care for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the University of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 31, 2050

SB-1252-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 6:53:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Love	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please make this education an online module that health care staff/providers may complete either at work or at home.

Also, make this valuable information available to home caregivers online as well. They don't have time to go take a class. I know, my husband passed from early onset alzheimers in 2016.

Thank you

Mrs Ruth Love