



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
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Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1431 SD1
RELATING TO VIRAL HEPATITIS**

SENATOR DONOVAN DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: February 27, 2025 @ 10:26 am

Room Number: 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health ("Department") requests that this measure be
2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the
3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governors executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department SUPPORTS this measure and offers comments.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Communicable Disease and Public Health Nursing Division
6 (CDPHND) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department. CDPHND supports
7 SB1431 SD1, which would establish a hepatitis prevention program and positions to address the
8 burden of viral hepatitis on Hawai'i.

9 **Preventable Infections and Deaths in Hawai'i**

10 Viral hepatitis infections can lead to preventable liver cancer and premature death. From 2000-
11 2020, hepatitis B mortality rates were consistently higher in Hawai'i compared to the US,
12 reaching three times as many deaths in 2019. Most of these deaths were among Asian and
13 Pacific Islander residents. For the same period, most hepatitis C-related deaths in Hawai'i
14 occurred earlier than that rest of the state: 88% did not reach age 75, and 40% died before
15 retirement age at 65.

16 **Opportunities to Intervene Exist**

Hepatitis B and C can be eliminated in Hawai'i through existing interventions: universal hepatitis screening and immunization; culturally-based care coordination; and safe, effective treatments, including a cure for hepatitis C. Most residents can get these covered by insurance, so this measure will support efforts to leverage insurance-paid services. With only 2 Federally-funded positions and no dedicated program funds, CDPHND has focused on coalition-building (via Hep Free Hawai'i) to coordinate a statewide hepatitis elimination strategy ("Hep Free 2030") since 2011. Successes include hepatitis C treatment in local jails and prisons as well as electronic medical record integration in Neighbor Island health centers. This progress points to the impact that an adequately funded and staffed hepatitis prevention program could have.

Sufficient Infrastructure Needed

CDPHND is seeking positions to scale up the State's response to preventable, treatable, but life-threatening, hepatitis. The requested positions include:

- Section Supervisor (1 F.T.E. Program Specialist V): Provide overall coordination of section activities as well as strategic planning and partnership development;
- Intervention Specialist/Case Investigator (1 F.T.E. Epidemiological Specialist IV): Conduct disease surveillance and investigation activities to effectively allocate resources;
- Office Assistant (1 F.T.E. Office Assistant III): Provide administrative support.

CDPHND estimates that \$827,484 in annual program funds, including \$282,484 for personnel costs and \$545,000 for operations, would be sufficient to support targeted community-based hepatitis testing, immunizations, care coordination, and treatment. This amount is based on a draft budget developed for the program and attached to this testimony.

If unfunded, the State will not be able to effectively curtail high rates of hepatitis mortality and related costs to the workforce, despite the availability of known interventions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure

Draft Budget for Hepatitis Prevention Program

Hepatitis prevention services are currently supported by \$315,000 in federal funds (Viral Hepatitis Cooperative Agreement). The federal funds support 2 positions: a Program Specialist IV and an Epidemiologist. Federal funding for the Epidemiologist position is new, and the position has been filled since January 2024. The federal funds do not support any program activities.

In each of the past several years, DOH has been able to utilize approximately \$120,000 from other related DOH programs to support hepatitis prevention activities. These activities have included modestly funded-short-term projects that offer “proof of concept” for the community-based services outlined below.

The department estimates that State general funds of **\$827,484** are needed to staff and implement a comprehensive Hepatitis Prevention Program.

I. DOH Infrastructure for a Hepatitis Elimination Section: \$322,484

A. Staffing: 3.0 FTE new positions

1. Hepatitis Elimination Section Supervisor (Program Specialist V) – new SR-24 \$71,016
2. Hepatitis Epidemiologist – *existing, federally funded (staff in place since January 2024)*
3. Hepatitis Community Coordinator (Program Specialist IV) – *existing, federally funded (staff in place)*
4. Intervention Specialist/Case Investigator (Epidemiological Specialist IV) – new SR-22 \$63,096
5. Office Assistant III – new SR-08 \$37,872

Salary (7/1/24 salary schedules):	\$171,984
Fringe (64.25%, interim FY24 rate):	\$110,500
Total new personnel:	\$282,484

B. Operations

1. Equipment, supplies, printing, mailing, phone, inter-island travel, training \$20,000
2. Translation of educational materials \$10,000

- Section Supervisor would provide overall coordination of section activities as well as strategic planning and coordination with other parts of DOH.

- Epidemiologist and Intervention Specialist/Case Investigator would implement disease surveillance activities for hepatitis B and C. Case investigation capacity is essential for obtaining information required to establish a case record, deduplicate cases, and obtain complete case information needed for robust epidemiological analysis, including but not limited to gender, race/ethnicity, behavioral risk factors, country of birth, birthing parent's country of birth. These are essential in describing the impact of disease and trends to effectively allocate resources to affected communities in Hawai'i.
- Community Prevention Coordinator builds community partnerships and identifies organizations with capacity for highest impact hepatitis services.
- Office Assistant would provide overall administrative support for the hepatitis elimination section.

II. Community-based Services

\$515,000

A. Contracts with community-based organizations to provide targeted outreach, awareness, testing, vaccination, and care coordination: \$280,000

- Statewide
- 5-6 sites, at least one provider per county
- Fund high impact programs: syringe exchange program, methadone treatment centers, community health centers, HIV service agencies, programs with access to individuals who are incarcerated or recently released from incarceration.

B. Contracts with community-based medical providers to increase their capacity to provide hepatitis care and treatment: \$90,000

- 2 sites per year
- Support novel innovation to improve patient engagement, screening, diagnosis, and treatment. Examples include supporting a pharmacy's capacity to treat and/or coordinate treatment of hepatitis; and supporting a community health center's capacity to leverage Electronic Medical Record data to identify patients who could benefit from screening or treatment.

C. Vaccines: \$50,000

- Hepatitis A and B vaccine, approximately 700 doses for full (multi-dose series) hepatitis A and/or B vaccination of approximately 315 individuals
- Vaccination provided by DOH staff or community partners
- Vaccination to individuals unable to access vaccination through insurance

D. Testing \$95,000

1. Point-of-Care testing; screening, rapid tests, \$75,000

- Hepatitis C testing to approximately 3,400 individuals
 - Point-of-Care tests performed by DOH staff or trained community partners
2. Laboratory testing; confirmatory and follow-up testing, \$20,000
- Hepatitis C screening and confirmatory testing; Hepatitis B screening and laboratory follow-up
 - Hepatitis C testing to approximately 100 individuals
 - Hepatitis B testing to approximately 200 individuals
 - Laboratory tests requisitioned by DOH staff or community partners

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 4:59:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aaron Ruddick	Testifying for Hep Free Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz , Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee

I support SB1431. This bill aligns with [Hep Free 2030](#), the statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis, as developed by the Hep Free Hawai‘i (HFH) coalition and the Hawai‘i Department of Health (HDOH). *Hep Free 2030* aims to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawai‘i by 2030 through key partnerships and culturally appropriate services and policies. We know we can eliminate hepatitis in Hawai‘i because viral hepatitis is both preventable and treatable; models and interventions already exist and are being deployed locally.

The lack of public health resources dedicated to viral hepatitis has contributed to higher death rates in the state, especially for vulnerable communities such as Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents.

- Two of the leading causes of liver cancer in Hawai‘i are hepatitis B and C, which can also lead to premature deaths.
- Per HDOH, annual liver cancer death rates in Hawai‘i were higher than the national average from 2000 to 2020
- Per HDOH, most state residents with hepatitis C (88%) died earlier than the rest of state.

Given this impact on Hawaii, we support this bill to establish and fund a formal hepatitis program in HDOH. This would ensure that necessary and effective services—including surveillance, vaccination, screening, treatment—can be provided to affected communities with sufficient HDOH staffing and infrastructure.



February 25, 2025

To: COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Re: SUPPORT OF SB1431 SD1 RELATING TO VIRAL HEPATITIS

Hrg: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 10:26 am

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy.

The Hawai'i Public Health Association **supports SB1431 SD1**. This bill aligns with [Hep Free 2030](#), the statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis, as developed by the Hep Free Hawai'i (HFH) coalition and the Hawai'i Department of Health (HDOH). *Hep Free 2030* aims to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawai'i by 2030 through key partnerships and culturally appropriate services and policies. We know we can eliminate hepatitis in Hawai'i because viral hepatitis is both preventable and treatable; models and interventions already exist and are being deployed locally.

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- Per HDOH, annual liver cancer death rates in Hawai'i were higher than the national average from 2000 to 2020
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Given this impact on Hawai'i, we support this bill to establish and fund a formal hepatitis program in HDOH. This would ensure that necessary and effective services—including surveillance, vaccination, screening, treatment—can be provided to affected communities with sufficient HDOH staffing and infrastructure.

Undiagnosed and untreated viral hepatitis increases the costs to private and public systems of care each year. This bill provides a modest investment to make significant impact on a preventable, treatable health issue. Please pass this bill to help save local lives!

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important public health issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director



SB1431 SD1 Viral Hepatitis Funding

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Thursday, Feb 27, 2025: 10:26: Room 211 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB1431 SD1:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

1. **We can eliminate hepatitis.** Now that effective medication is available to treat viral hepatitis, we support Hawaii's plan to eliminate hepatitis by 2030. Wow. What an opportunity.
2. **It's expensive to not treat.** Untreated hepatitis is most expensive to our healthcare systems. A modest investment can save many lives and bundles of dollars.
3. **Leverage insurance funding.** Moreover, this funding will allow the patients to access insurance payments to cover most of the costs.
4. **Intervention strategies that work.** Let's provide intervention strategies to prevent and effectively treat a disease that has plagued Hawaii's Asian and Pacific Islander populations for decades.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:07:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Christina MB Wang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz , Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee

I **support SB1431**. This bill aligns with [Hep Free 2030](#), the statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis, as developed by the Hep Free Hawai‘i (HFH) coalition and the Hawai‘i Department of Health (HDOH). *Hep Free 2030* aims to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawai‘i by 2030 through key partnerships and culturally appropriate services and policies. We know we can eliminate hepatitis in Hawai‘i because viral hepatitis is both preventable and treatable; models and interventions already exist and are being deployed locally.

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Given this impact on Hawaii, we support this bill to establish and fund a formal hepatitis program in HDOH. This would ensure that necessary and effective services—including surveillance, vaccination, screening, treatment—can be provided to affected communities with sufficient HDOH staffing and infrastructure.

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impact on a preventable, treatable health issue. Please pass this bill to help save local lives!

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:03:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kunane Dreier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz , Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee

I **support SB1431**. This bill aligns with [Hep Free 2030](#), the statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis, as developed by the Hep Free Hawai‘i (HFH) coalition and the Hawai‘i Department of Health (HDOH). *Hep Free 2030* aims to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawai‘i by 2030 through key partnerships and culturally appropriate services and policies. We know we can eliminate hepatitis in Hawai‘i because viral hepatitis is both preventable and treatable; models and interventions already exist and are being deployed locally.

The lack of public health resources dedicated to viral hepatitis has contributed to higher death rates in the state, especially for vulnerable communities such as Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents.

- Two of the leading causes of liver cancer in Hawai‘i are hepatitis B and C, which can also lead to premature deaths.
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Given this impact on Hawaii, we support this bill to establish and fund a formal hepatitis program in HDOH. This would ensure that necessary and effective services—including surveillance, vaccination, screening, treatment—can be provided to affected communities with sufficient HDOH staffing and infrastructure.

Undiagnosed and untreated viral hepatitis increases the costs to private and public systems of care each year. This bill provides a modest investment to make significant

impact on a preventable, treatable health issue. Please pass this bill to help save local lives!

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:45:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gretchen Alther	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **support SB1431**. This bill aligns with [Hep Free 2030](#), the statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis, as developed by the Hep Free Hawai‘i (HFH) coalition and the Hawai‘i Department of Health (HDOH). *Hep Free 2030* aims to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawai‘i by 2030 through key partnerships and culturally appropriate services and policies. We know we can eliminate hepatitis in Hawai‘i because viral hepatitis is both preventable and treatable; models and interventions already exist and are being deployed locally.

The lack of public health resources dedicated to viral hepatitis has contributed to higher death rates in the state, especially for vulnerable communities such as Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents.

- Two of the leading causes of liver cancer in Hawai‘i are hepatitis B and C, which can also lead to premature deaths.
- Per HDOH, annual liver cancer death rates in Hawai‘i were higher than the national average from 2000 to 2020
- Per HDOH, most state residents with hepatitis C (88%) died earlier than the rest of state.

Given this impact on Hawaii, we support this bill to establish and fund a formal hepatitis program in HDOH. This would ensure that necessary and effective services—including surveillance, vaccination, screening, treatment—can be provided to affected communities with sufficient HDOH staffing and infrastructure.

Undiagnosed and untreated viral hepatitis increases the costs to private and public systems of care each year. This bill provides a modest investment to make significant impact on a preventable, treatable health issue. Please pass this bill to help save local lives!

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:03:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the WAM committee,

As a public health professional in Hawai'i, **I write in unequivocal support of SB1431 SD1.** This bill provides a small investment in local health infrastructure, which will make significant impact on a preventable, treatable, and deadly disease. SB1431 SD1 can save lives!

Personally, I have experienced how lack of sufficient public health education and resources contributed to the death of my uncle from hepatitis B. By the time he was diagnosed, his liver was already failing. He passed quickly and in pain, leaving behind a wife and three daughters. This was completely avoidable.

The lack of public health resources dedicated to viral hepatitis has contributed to higher death rates in the state, especially for vulnerable communities such as Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents.

- Most Hawai'i residents with hepatitis C (88%) died earlier than the rest of state.
- More than half of Hawai'i deaths associated with hepatitis C occurred before the person even reached retirement age.

We know we can eliminate hepatitis in Hawai'i because viral hepatitis is both preventable and treatable. Models and interventions already exist and are being deployed locally by Hep Free Hawai'i coalition and its government and community partners. A more sustainable investment would ensure that this effective work continues. Recently, the US Congressional Budget Office estimated that doubling the number of people treated for hepatitis C could save up to \$7 billion in healthcare costs over the next 10 years.

Please pass this bill to maintain a healthy workforce and save in healthcare costs!

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham

Makiki, HI

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:10:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Griff Jurgens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz , Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee,

I **support SB1431** because it aligns with [Hep Free 2030](#), We know we can eliminate hepatitis in Hawai‘i because viral hepatitis is both preventable and treatable; models and interventions already exist and are being deployed locally.

The lack of public health resources dedicated to viral hepatitis has contributed to higher death rates in the state, especially for vulnerable communities such as Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents.

- Two of the leading causes of liver cancer in Hawai‘i are hepatitis B and C, which can also lead to premature deaths.
- Per HDOH, annual liver cancer death rates in Hawai‘i were higher than the national average from 2000 to 2020
- Per HDOH, most state residents with hepatitis C (88%) died earlier than the rest of state.

In closing, we know that undiagnosed viral hepatitis increases the costs to private and public systems of care each year. This bill provides a modest investment to make significant impact on a preventable, treatable health issue. Please pass this bill to help save local lives!

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:39:26 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Robinson-Onderko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support for SB2431. I humbly ask that you vote to appropriate funding for a hepatitis prevention program within the Department of Health. We need this program to bring critical prevention care to our most vulnerable communities in the state.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Lynn Robinson Onderko

Ewa Beach, HI

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:38:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaua Kama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB 1431

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1431, which establishes and funds a Hepatitis Prevention Program within the Department of Health, repeals outdated provisions related to hepatitis treatment, and strengthens public health protections in Hawai‘i.

Hepatitis remains a significant public health concern, particularly in communities with limited access to preventive care and treatment. By creating a dedicated Hepatitis Prevention Program, this bill ensures that Hawai‘i takes a proactive approach to reducing transmission, increasing education, and expanding access to life-saving vaccines and treatments. Prevention programs have been proven to reduce the long-term health impacts of hepatitis, ultimately lowering the financial burden on our healthcare system.

Additionally, repealing outdated laws regarding hepatitis-related blood transfusions and newborn treatment reflects advancements in medical science and best practices. This bill aligns Hawai‘i’s policies with modern health standards and ensures that our state remains committed to evidence-based public health initiatives.

By funding necessary staff positions and resources, SB 1431 empowers the Department of Health to provide effective, community-based solutions to combat hepatitis. Investing in prevention and treatment today will protect the health of future generations and reinforce Hawai‘i’s leadership in public health policy.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass SB 1431 to strengthen our state's efforts in hepatitis prevention and public health. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha'aha'a (with humility),

E. Kauaililinoe Kama

efkama12@gmail.com

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:20:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Bumgardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 1431. Efforts to eliminate viral hepatitis are not currently funded in our state. This bill will help the Hep Free Hawai'i Coalition, of which I am a member, achieve our statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030. 2025 marks my 30th year serving my community in the profession of pharmacy. Hepatitis C is one of the few chronic medical conditions I have had the privilege of partnering with patients to CURE in my career. It only takes a simple 8 or 12 week treatment. The problem is that, right now, only about one-third of patients currently diagnosed with Hepatitis C in our country currently achieve cure. This is often because patients don't know they have the condition or don't realize that there are new, highly effective treatment options available. Allocating resources to the Hawai'i Department of Health can help fund outreach efforts to raise awareness of this curable condition, fund testing and linkage-to-care services in our community and provide resources to continue to increase the pool of providers offering treatment. Hepatitis B is a vaccine-preventable disease that could also benefit from additional resources for awareness and outreach. Both conditions accounted for 2 out of 3 liver cancer cases in Hawai'i in 2018, a condition for which Hawai'i has higher incidence and rates of deaths compared to other states.

I strongly encourage the committee to pass this bill to help save local lives.

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:43:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Staley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, & Members of the Committee

I **support SB1431**. This bill aligns with [Hep Free 2030](#), the statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis, as developed by the Hep Free Hawai‘i (HFH) coalition and the Hawai‘i Department of Health (HDOH). *Hep Free 2030* aims to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawai‘i by 2030 through key partnerships and culturally appropriate services and policies. We know we can eliminate hepatitis in Hawai‘i because viral hepatitis is both preventable and treatable; models and interventions already exist and are being deployed locally.

The lack of public health resources dedicated to viral hepatitis has contributed to higher death rates in the state, especially for vulnerable communities such as Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents.

- Two of the leading causes of liver cancer in Hawai‘i are hepatitis B and C, which can also lead to premature deaths.
- Per HDOH, annual liver cancer death rates in Hawai‘i were higher than the national average from 2000 to 2020
- Per HDOH, most state residents with hepatitis C (88%) died earlier than the rest of state.

Given this impact on Hawai‘i, we support this bill to establish and fund a formal hepatitis program in HDOH. This would ensure that necessary and effective services—including surveillance, vaccination, screening, treatment—can be provided to affected communities with sufficient HDOH staffing and infrastructure.

Undiagnosed and untreated viral hepatitis increases the costs to private and public systems of care each year. This bill provides a modest investment to make significant impact on a preventable, treatable health issue. Please pass this bill to help save local lives!

Sincerely,
Andrea Staley
Honolulu, Hawai‘i

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 1:18:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB1431 and establishing a Hepatitis Prevention Program within the Department of Health.

Thank you,
Carla Allison

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 3:14:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Hennig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1431

Kristin Hennig
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

February 25, 2025

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

My name is Kristin Hennig, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB1431, which the statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis, as developed by the Hep Free Hawaii coalition and Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH). As HIFUSE Project Manager at Going Home Hawaii, I have firsthand experience working with justice-involved individuals facing homelessness, substance use disorders, and mental health challenges.

Through my work with the HIFUSE program, I have seen how systemic barriers make it difficult for individuals reentering society to access stable housing, healthcare, and critical support services. SB1431 provides a necessary framework to address these challenges by implementing these measures, SB1431 aims to enhance the state's capacity to prevent and manage hepatitis infections, ultimately improving public health outcomes for Hawaii's residents.

Investing in programs like those supported by SB1431 not only improves individual outcomes but also benefits our community by reducing recidivism, alleviating burdens on emergency services, and promoting long-term stability. I urge you to pass this bill to ensure that those most in need receive the support they deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to provide further information if needed.

Sincerely
Kristin Hennig

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:40:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kari	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support the health of our state and community.

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 5:19:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judy Strait-Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair DelaCruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki

I urge the committee to support this bill for a Hepatitis Prevention Program within the Hawai'i State Dept of Health (HDOH). This bill aligns with statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis as developed by the Hep Free Hawai'i Coalition (HFH) and the HDOH.

Lack of public health resources dedicated to viral hepatitis contributes to a higher death rate in the state. This is unacceptable when hepatitis is both preventable and treatable.

I strongly support the establishment and funding of a formal hepatitis program at HDOH. It will save lives with a modest investment.

Thank you for your attention to this important health issue.

SB-1431-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 9:08:23 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:26:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabrielle O'Sullivan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz , Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee

I am a Family Doctor that works in community health on Maui and I **support SB1431**. This bill aligns with [Hep Free 2030](#), the statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis, as developed by the Hep Free Hawai‘i (HFH) coalition and the Hawai‘i Department of Health (HDOH). *Hep Free 2030* aims to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawai‘i by 2030 through key partnerships and culturally appropriate services and policies. We know we can eliminate hepatitis in Hawai‘i because viral hepatitis is both preventable and treatable; models and interventions already exist and are being deployed locally.

The lack of public health resources dedicated to viral hepatitis has contributed to higher death rates in the state, especially for vulnerable communities such as Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents.

- Two of the leading causes of liver cancer in Hawai‘i are hepatitis B and C, which can also lead to premature deaths.
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Sincerely,

Gabrielle O'Sullivan MD