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February 25, 2025

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

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SCR 11/SR 7 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES MED-QUEST DIVISION TO COVER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL-BASED SETTINGS.**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 26, 2025, Time 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

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

PURPOSE: The Legislature requests that the Department of Human Services Med-QUEST Division cover behavioral health services for children and adolescents in school-based settings.

DHS appreciates the importance of behavioral health for children in all settings, and that it be an integral part of healthcare. Currently about ½ of all children in the State are covered by QUEST Integration, and behavioral health services are a covered benefit.

Currently, the Department of Education (DOE) could bill for various behavioral health services for children covered by Medicaid who have an individualized accommodation plan through their Individualized Education Program (IEP) provided that the appropriate documentation for the provider and the services is available. Additionally, mental health telehealth providers contracted with DOE can bill the QUEST Integration plan when providing

tele-mental health to QUEST Integration members. Behavioral health services are also currently reimbursable for QUEST Integration enrolled children when received in a school-based health clinic.

One expansion option would allow any Medicaid-enrolled child, regardless of whether they had an IEP or not, have their health care be billed to the Medicaid program. However, there are a number of administrative and logistical changes that both the DOE and DHS would need to take and both departments are willing to continue to work on this expansion.

Finally, if all children were to have their behavioral health services covered by QUEST Integration, even if the child was not covered by Medicaid, a general fund appropriation would be necessary since it is unlikely that any federal Medicaid matching funds would be available for children not covered by Medicaid.

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



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Wednesday, February 26, 2025; 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225
Via Videoconference**

**RE: SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 011/SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 007,
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES MED-QUEST DIVISION TO COVER
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL-BASED SETTINGS.**

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 offers **COMMENTS** on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 011 and Senate Resolution No. 007, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES MED-QUEST DIVISION TO COVER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL-BASED SETTINGS.

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.

These measures, as received by your Committee, would urge the Department of Human Services' Med-QUEST Division to cover behavioral health services for children and adolescents in school-based settings.

While we welcome the intent of this measure, the HPCA is concerned that this measure may unintentionally and inadvertently conflict with efforts to establish school-based health clinics at certain public schools situated near existing community health center facilities. These school-based clinics already receive Medicaid reimbursement and provide broader and more intensive health care services, including mental health services, than what would be provided solely by health care professional employed by the Department of Education and assigned to a complex of schools. Furthermore, the students and faculty have access at school-based health clinics to many other departments and programs within the FQHC organizations.

Testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 011 and Senate Resolution No. 007
Wednesday, February 26, 2025; 1:00 p.m.
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In your efforts to provide baseline primary mental health care services to all school-aged youth, we respectfully urge you not to take any steps that may duplicate existing services, diminish the level of services that are currently provided, or preclude the establishment of more intensive and comprehensive services at public schools.

Presently, Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, Hawaii Island Community Health Center, Wahiawa Health, Waimanalo Community Health Center, Malama Ike Ola, and Hana Health have established school-based clinics at public schools situated near their facilities. Other community health centers have examined these models and are currently considering entering into similar agreements with the Department of Education (DOE) to provide comparable services at nearby schools. We are concerned that the expansion of the Keiki Program within the DOE may conflict with these efforts with community health centers and unfortunately reduce the level of services that are provided at certain schools.

In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH), in conjunction with the DOE, partnered with the HPCA and FQHCs throughout the State to provide COVID-19 mitigation and other primary health care services at public schools and charter schools. The HPCA is currently working with both departments to continue these services and possibly expand them moving forward.

As mentioned earlier, HPCA is merely commenting on this measure and will continue to monitor this measure as it goes through the legislative process. We are partners with the entire community and want to work with all parties for what is best for our citizens.

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.

LATE

SCR-11

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 10:37:01 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/26/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)	Testifying for Pride at Work – Hawai‘i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice.

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i fully supports SCR 11.

We ask that you support this needed resolution.

Mahalo,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

President

[Pride at Work – Hawai‘i](#)

SCR-11

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 6:41:40 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/26/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in support of SCR11/SR7. Children could seek assistance for behavioral health issues by DOE staff, but their parents could change everything if they are approached not wanting for the truth of what is happening at home to be revealed. Please support and protect our future and the youth from the trauma of a school setting and probably the lack of support at home or possibility of abuse/neglect. Mahalo for this bill!

SCR11 2/26/25 1:00P CR 225 & Videoconference

Dear, SAN BUENAVENTURA, AQUINO, HASHIMOTO, MCKELVEY

Aloha, my name is Holly Zimmerman, and I am addressing bill SCR11, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES MED-QUEST DIVISION TO COVER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL-BASED SETTINGS. I strongly support this bill. As a mom, this is very important to me. My daughter is six years old. When she was five, her dad got arrested related to mental health and spent 3 months in jail. As a direct result, my daughter started acting out in school and at home. I went to seek professional help for her. Hilo is the closest city to us. I could not find any help for my daughter. Finally, we discovered some available help in Kona which is a 2 hour drive from my home. I had to physically go there with my daughter to get mental health care help for her. The lady in Kona did not do much for her during the appointment and the next appointment was scheduled in the distant future. There were no changes in my daughter's behavior based upon the little and distant available help. If there were ways that we could have had in school or close by help for her regarding dealing with something like this, then maybe she wouldn't have had so many issues about her father's mental condition and incarceration. She could have learned what her feelings were stemming from and how to handle those feelings. Having professional help for our children in school should be a priority as they are our future. More the half of our children in Hilo are on Med-Quest, including myself and my daughter. Please allow this bill to move forward. Thank you for your time and consideration,

Holly Zimmerman

vonschlappenbitsch@gmail.com

Parent

LATE

SCR-11

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:09:32 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/26/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Heidenreich	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am here to express my support for the resolution requesting the Department of Human Services Med-QUEST Division to cover behavioral health services for children and teens in school-based settings. This is an important step in addressing the growing mental health crisis among our youth. And making sure all kids (no matter their family's financial situation) have access to the care they need.

The mental health challenges faced by children and teens are worsening, especially after the pandemic. We are seeing higher rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioral issues. It's more important than ever to act quickly and provide effective support. School-based behavioral health services offer a great way to identify and treat these issues early in an environment that kids are already familiar with. These services have been shown to not only improve mental health but also lead to better academic performance and social skills.

Additionally, offering services within schools removes common barriers to accessing care, such as transportation issues and the need for parents to take time off work. This is particularly beneficial for working families and those with limited resources.

I strongly urge the Department of Human Services to prioritize behavioral health services for children in school settings. This initiative would be a huge win for our children, families, and communities, helping to create a healthier future for Hawaii's next generation. Thank you for your time, and I ask for your support in passing this resolution.

Emma Heidenreich