

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

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

April 10, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair  
House Committee on Health

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SCR 16 SD1 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP MINIMUM PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER TRAINING PROGRAMS.**

Hearing: Friday, April 11, 2025, Time 10:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

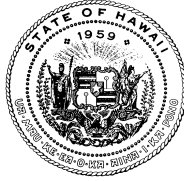
**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this resolution, defers to the Department of Health, and provides comments.

**PURPOSE:** The Department of Health is requested to convene a task force to identify and develop minimum professional standards for community health worker training programs; and the Director of Health is requested to invite representatives of the following stakeholders to serve on the task force: (1) A representative from the Department of Health, who shall serve as the chair of the task force; (2) One community health worker from each county; (3) A representative from the Hawaii Public Health Institute; (4) A representative from the Hawaii Public Housing Authority; (5) A representative from the Med-QUEST Division of the Department of Human Services; (6) A representative from the University of Hawaii - West Oahu; (7) A representative from Kapiolani Community College; (8) A representative from the Healthcare Association of Hawaii; (9) A representative from the Hawaii Association of Health Plans; (10) A representative from Papa Ola Lokahi; (11) A representative from the Native Hawaiian and

Pacific Islander Community Health Worker Alliance; (12) A representative from the Hawaii Primary Care Association; (13) A representative from a community-based grassroots organization, such as Ka'u Rural Health Community Association, Inc.; and (14) Any additional members with appropriate specialized expertise recommended by task force members and approved by the chair; and that no member be made subject to chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, solely because of the member's participation in the task force; and that the DOH is requested to provide administrative support to the task force; and that the task force is requested to submit a report to the Legislature, including any recommendations and proposed legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026; and that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health, who is in turn requested to transmit a copy to each stakeholder invited to the task force.

The Department of Human Services recognizes that Community Health Workers are an essential part of the healthcare landscape in Hawaii, and the DHS Med-QUEST Division looks forward to participating in this workgroup that is tasked with identifying and developing minimum professional standards for community health worker training programs.

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



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'ŌIHANA OLAKINO  
P.O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.C.R. 16, S.D. 1 / S.R. 12, S.D. 1  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO IDENTIFY AND  
DEVELOP MINIMUM PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER  
TRAINING PROGRAMS**

REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: April 11, 2025

Room Number: Conference Room 329  
and Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) will rely on existing resources to meet the  
2 requests.

3 **Department Position:** The DOH supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 16, Senate Draft 1  
4 (S.C.R. 16, S.D. 1), which requests the DOH to convene a task force to identify and develop  
5 minimum professional standards for Community Health Worker (CHW) training programs.

6 **Department Testimony:** The DOH appreciates the intent of this measure, to establish a task  
7 force composed of CHWs, and allied organizations that provide training, employment, and  
8 technical assistance, to advance agreement on the minimum professional standards for CHWs,  
9 such as identifying and defining applicable professions that qualify as a CHW and the trainings,  
10 credentials, education, and work experiences to be required.

11 This concurrent resolution aligns with ongoing efforts within the DOH and with  
12 community stakeholders to ensure quality assurance for CHWs and to advance their  
13 educational and professional infrastructure. The DOH is committed to working alongside the

- 1 CHWs because of their important connections within communities to uplift healthy behaviors
- 2 and serve as the trusted link to health resources and social services.

3 **Offered Amendments:** None

4 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Community Association

Mission: "To Do What It Takes To Keep Ka'u Healthy"

P.O.Box 878 Pahala, HI 96777

Phone (808) 928-0101

Website: [krhcai.com](http://krhcai.com)

April 8, 2025

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura Chair, Health & Human Services

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair and Senate Committee Members

RE; Testimony in Support of OfCommittee Amendment and Adooption  
of SCR16, SD1

My name is Jessanie Marques (aka Auntie Jessie) Executive director of Ka'u Rural Health Community Association Inc.(KRHCAI).

I want to extend my sincerest Mahalo! for considering our request to be included in the Dept. of Health Task Force, and amending SCR12/SCR16 to include KRHCAI.

Please note KRHCAI 's Health and Wellness Program focus on health, education, resource opportunities and economic development aligns with "developing professional standards for community health worker training programs to ensure that all community health workers receive standardized, high-quality training that equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills".

The impact of adoption SCR16 SD1 provide opportunities to share ideas, improve communication between public / private sectors. and workforce development in Ka'u's rural underserved, vulnerable communities.

Should you have any questions feel free to email [krhcai@yahoo.com](mailto:krhcai@yahoo.com) or call (808) 928-0101.



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

My name is Chauncey Hatico, and I serve as the Hawai'i Ambassador for the National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW). NACHW is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership-driven organization with a mission to unify CHWs across geography, ethnicity, sector, and experience to support communities to achieve health, equity, and social justice. **I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SCR16 with the two recommended amendments below.**

To ensure a more comprehensive, inclusive, and community-driven approach, I respectfully recommend amending the resolution to **include the Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association (HICHWA)**.

As the statewide association for CHWs incorporated in 2022, HICHWA plays a vital role in advancing professional development, advocacy, and peer support for CHWs across the Hawai'i islands. Through biennial conferences, regional meetings, and a Leadership Council representing every major island, HICHWA ensures community-rooted leadership and strong connections to frontline CHWs. As a testament to their amazing work, HICHWA has been awarded as the 2024 APHA CHW group of the year. Including HICHWA ensures CHWs' voices, lived experiences, and insights are centered in policy decisions that directly impact their work and the communities they serve.

In addition, I strongly urge that **at least 50% of the task force's members be Community Health Workers (CHWs)**. This is essential to ensure that CHWs are not only represented but are leading the efforts to establish professional standards for their own workforce. The American Public Health Association (APHA) recommends that CHWs play leadership roles in workforce development, and NACHW highlights CHW-led policy participation as a best practice.

**I urge this committee to pass SCR16 with these proposed amendments** to both recognize and strengthen the invaluable contributions of CHWs. By centering CHWs in this process, we can ensure that efforts to advance our workforce are grounded in cultural humility, lived experience, and community trust.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your continued support of Hawai'i's CHWs.

Respectfully submitted,

Chauncey Hatico, CHW  
Hawai'i Ambassador  
National Association of Community Health Workers



Date: April 9, 2025

**HICHLA Association  
Leadership Council**

**Claudia Hartz, CHW**  
*Outgoing Chair*

**Gracie Flores, CHW**  
*Chair*

**Cyd Hoffeld, CHW**  
*Vice Chair*

**Kelli Murakami, CHW**  
*Secretary*

**HICHLA Association  
Island Representatives**

**Cynthia Crabtree, CHW**  
*Hawai'i Island*

**Jovena Moses, CHW**  
*Hawai'i Island*

**Ashley Tone, CHW**  
*Maui*

**Maile Holokai, CHW**  
*Maui*

**Denise 'Ola' Ropa, CHW**  
*Lāna'i*

**David Mamae, CHW**  
*O'ahu*

**Crystal Caday-Bargayo,**  
**CCHW**  
*Kaua'i*

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair  
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Health

RE: Support for SCR 16 Requesting The Department of Health to  
Convene a Task Force to Identify and Develop Minimum Professional  
Standards for Community Health Worker Training Programs

Mtg: April 11, 2025, 10:00 am, Conference Room 329

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The Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association (HICHLA) **supports SCR 16**, and it respectfully requests that the resolution be amended to include the **Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association** and ensure that Community Health Workers (CHWs) themselves are at the center of the task force.

My name is Gracie Flores, and I serve as the HICHLA Chair. I submit this testimony on behalf of the HICHLA in support of SCR16 and offer recommendations to strengthen the resolution's impact. Incorporated in 2022, HICHLA empowers and equips CHWs to reduce health disparities by increasing access to training, education, and multi-sector collaboration.

SCR 16 is an important step toward addressing the healthcare needs of our communities by recognizing and supporting the critical work of CHWs. Community Health Workers are essential to reaching underserved populations and reducing long-term healthcare costs by addressing the root causes of illness. Ensuring proper training standards will strengthen workforce quality and improve health equity across the islands.

**Professional Standards Benefits**

Establishing minimum professional standards for CHW training programs ensures that all CHWs receive standardized, high-quality training that equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills. Preparing CHWs to address a variety of health



challenges, especially those related to social determinants of health, with greater confidence and effectiveness.

Establishing these standards ensures that all CHWs receive standardized, high-quality training that equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills. Preparing CHWs to address a variety of health challenges, especially those related to social determinants of health, with greater confidence and effectiveness.

Establishing statewide standards gives CHWs more legitimacy within the healthcare system, potentially leading to increased respect and integration into multidisciplinary teams. Standardized training paves the way for certification and career progression, allowing CHWs to take on expanded roles and responsibilities.

With standardized training, CHWs can more effectively support patients, leading to improved chronic disease management, reduced hospital readmissions, and healthier communities. Well-trained CHWs act as trusted liaisons between healthcare providers and marginalized communities, improving communication and access to care.

Establishing professional standards positions CHWs to qualify for Medicaid reimbursement and other funding opportunities, ensuring sustainability and growth for the profession. Standardization can encourage investment in CHW training programs and workforce development initiatives.

CHWs play a vital role in addressing health inequities in Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and other underserved communities. Standardized training enhances their ability to address these disparities effectively. Equipping CHWs with the right tools empowers them to advocate for and support their communities in achieving better health outcomes.

### **Suggested Amendments**

However, to ensure a more comprehensive and community-driven approach, **I respectfully recommend that the resolution be amended to include the Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association (HICHWA)** as key stakeholders.

**Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association (HICHWA):** As the statewide association for CHWs, HICHWA plays an essential and dynamic role in advancing the professional development, advocacy, and peer support of CHWs who serve Hawai'i's diverse populations. HICHWA demonstrates its commitment through biennial CHW conferences, regional meetings, and a statewide Leadership Council with representatives from every major island. These leaders bring deep expertise about the unique needs of their respective communities and maintain strong ties to frontline CHWs, ensuring that HICHWA remains a well-equipped, community-rooted partner in any collaborative effort. By including HICHWA, CHWs' voices, lived experiences, and invaluable insights are amplified and placed at the forefront of policy discussions that directly impact their work and the communities they serve.

By incorporating the Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association in SCR 16, we can leverage their expertise, strengthen partnerships, and ensure a community-driven approach to addressing health disparities in Hawai'i.

*The Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association is convened under  
Hawai'i Public Health Institute, a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit organization.*

hichw.org • Gracie Flores: [gracie\\_flores@uhc.com](mailto:gracie_flores@uhc.com) • Chauncey Hatico, Hawai'i Community Health Worker  
Association Coordinator: [chauncey@hiphi.org](mailto:chauncey@hiphi.org)

In addition to adding key stakeholders to the task force, we recommend that at **least 50% of the task force's members be CHWs** to ensure that CHWs are leading efforts to establish minimal professional standards for their workforce. [The American Public Health Association](#) (APHA) recommends that CHWs hold leadership roles in workforce development, and the [National Association of Community Health Workers](#) (NACHW) emphasizes CHW-led policy participation as a best practice.

As previously mentioned, HICHWA supports the intent of this resolution. However, our testimony includes recommendations to the task force members that we believe will represent the diversity of CHW work throughout Hawai'i.

I urge the committee to amend and pass SCR 16 so Hawai'i can take a meaningful, inclusive step toward professionalizing the CHW workforce while honoring the lived expertise already serving our communities. This approach aligns with national best practices and guidance from esteemed organizations such as the APHA and NACHW.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,



Gracie Flores, CHW  
Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association Chair



## HIPHI Board

May Okihiro, MD, MS  
Chair

John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Department of Pediatrics

Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD

Secretary

State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public Defender

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Misty Pacheco, DrPH

University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP

Kaiser Permanente

Dina Shek, JD

Medical-Legal Partnership

For Children in Hawai'i

Garret Sugai

HMSA

JoAnn Tsark, MPH

John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native

Hawaiian Research Office

## HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &  
Evaluation

Community Health  
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &  
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: April 8, 2025

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair  
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Health

RE: Support for SCR 16 Requesting The Department of Health to  
Convene a Task Force to Identify and Develop Minimum Professional  
Standards for Community Health Worker Training Programs

Mtg: April 11, 2025, 10:00am, Conference Room 329

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Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)<sup>1</sup> supports **SCR 16**, which is requesting the Department of Health to convene a task force to identify and develop minimum professional standards for Community Health Worker training programs in the state of Hawai'i.

Since 2017, HIPHI has supported and convened a network of community health workers (CHW) from across the state and a network of CHW allies dedicated to supporting CHWs. We continue working with Hawai'i CHWs and allies to determine the best path to sustain the CHW workforce and provide thriving wages.

We believe that convening a task force to develop professional standards for CHW training programs can contribute to the sustainability and long-term impact of CHW programs throughout Hawai'i. Establishing minimum professional standards can also ensure a consistent level of knowledge and skill among CHWs. We also believe that clear standards can help elevate the CHW profession and ensure that CHWs are efficiently trained to address the specific needs of their communities and tackle health disparities seen throughout Hawai'i.

HIPHI supports this resolution but does have some recommendations on the resolution in its current form.

- 1) To ensure that CHWs are properly represented, we request adding the **Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association (HICHWA)** as important stakeholders to include in this task force. The HICHWA has been a grassroots effort for many years that officially launched as an association

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<sup>1</sup>Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.



- 2) in 2022. Their mission is to empower and equip CHWs throughout the state of Hawai'i, and their Leadership Council is led by 100% CHWs located on each of the islands in Hawai'i.
- 3) To ensure that CHWs are leading these efforts to establish minimum professional standards for their workforce, we also request adding language that aligns with the National Association of Community Health of Community Health Workers and the American Public Health Association<sup>2</sup> standards that recommend at least 50% of leadership dealing with CHW components are CHWs themselves. To ensure this task force is CHW-led, we advocate that at least 50% of the task force members are CHWs.

As previously mentioned, HIPHI is in support, however, our testimony includes requested recommendations to the task force members that we believe will lead to the best representation of the uniqueness of CHW work throughout Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and provide recommendations on SCR16.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Rosilyn Filemoni". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rosilyn Filemoni, MPH  
Program Manager: Community Health Worker Initiatives



**Papa Ola Lokahi**  
677 Ala Moana Blvd  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: 808.597.6550 ~ [www.papaolalokahi.org](http://www.papaolalokahi.org)

**House Committee on Health**

Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair

Representative Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

April 11, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

**Re: SCR16** – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP MINIMUM PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER TRAINING PROGRAMS

**Position:** Support

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

Papa Ola Lōkahi (POL) appreciates the opportunity to testify on **SCR16**, which requests the Department of Health to convene a task force to identify and develop minimum professional standards for community health worker training. We **support** this resolution.

Papa Ola Lōkahi was established in 1988 through the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (Public Law 100-579). Our organization was charged in this federal and other state-level legislation to carry out [myriad kuleana](#) to improve the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians.

Community health workers are vital links between their home communities and medical information and public health resources. This is why Papa Ola Lōkahi developed the Hookele i ke Ola curriculum and trained community health workers on all islands in health centers and medical institutions to be patient navigators. This is also why more recently we helped to establish a Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Community Health Worker Network, called Peau o Le Vasa. We appreciate that this resolution recognizes the vital role that these and other community health workers play for the health care system and our many communities.

We support efforts to set standards for community health workers so that they can be adequately compensated for the critical function they serve. We believe that these standards must reflect the diverse communities in which community health workers live and serve. For these reasons, we

*Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board, authorized by the federal Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, is charged with raising the health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, which we achieve through strategic partnerships, programs, and public policy.*

sincerely appreciate the addition of members in the previous Senate committee. We believe that the resolution now provides a more well-rounded set of partners that have been involved in the active work and evolution of community health workers. **As this committee considers this resolution, we respectfully ask that the task force membership continue to name those added from the previous committee, including Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Community Health Worker Alliance and a community-based grassroots organization, such as Ka‘ū Rural Health Community Association, Inc.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony to **support SCR16**. If you have any further questions, please contact our Director of Policy & Strategy, Ke‘ōpū Reelitz at [kreelitz@papaolalokahi.org](mailto:kreelitz@papaolalokahi.org).



To: The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair  
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Health

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President  
Mike Nguyen, Director of Public Policy  
Sarielyn Curtis, External Affairs Specialist

Hearing: Friday, April 11, 2025, 10:00 AM, Conference Room 329

RE: **SCR16 Requesting the Department of Health to Convene a Task Force to Identify and Develop Minimum Professional Standards for Community Health Worker Training Programs.**

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AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support with comments on SCR16**. These measures request the Department of Health to convene a task force to identify and develop minimum professional standards for community health worker (CHW) training programs.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai‘i’s community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 70,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 37 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai‘i’s only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

Our commitment to whole-person care goes beyond doctor visits and medication. AlohaCare recognizes the significant impact of social determinants of health (SDOH), like housing, healthy food, and income on health and wellness, especially for low-income Medicaid populations. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, SDOH can influence up to 80 percent of health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Often, CHWs are trusted members in their community who help address the multifaceted needs of underserved populations, making it easier for them to access care and ensuring services are delivered in a way that respects their culture and needs.

We appreciate the importance of CHWs, and we support the intent of this measure. AlohaCare is proud to employ CHWs and make them available to our members. CHWs are an important part of the care team because of their ability to quickly establish trusting relationships with people which is vital when working with

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<sup>1</sup> [Medicaid's Role in Addressing Social Determinants of Health](#)



members who face multiple challenges daily, leaving their health care deprioritized. Standardized CHW professional standards for training programs will create more consistent service delivery, recognition, and potential advancement in this career field. AlohaCare would respectfully request to be considered for inclusion in this task force.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support with comments on SCR16.**





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April 9, 2025

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura Chair, Health & Human Services

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair and Senate Committee Members

RE; Testimony in Support of Committee Amendment and Adoption of  
SCR16, SD1

My name is Krystalyn Gascon, and board member of Ka'u Rural Health Community Association Inc. (KRHCAI).

I want to extend my sincerest Mahalo! for considering our request to be included in the Dept. of Health Task Force, and considering SCR12/SCR16 to include KRHCAI.

Please note KRHCAI's Health and Wellness Program focus on health, education, resource opportunities and economic development aligns with Task Force "developing professional standards for community health worker training programs to ensure that all community health workers receive standardized, high-quality training that equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills".

The impact of adoption SCR16 SD1 provide opportunities to share ideas, improve communication between public / private sectors. and workforce development in Ka'u's rural underserved and vulnerable communities.

Should you have any questions feel free to email [krhcai@yahoo.com](mailto:krhcai@yahoo.com) or call (808) 928-0101.



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April 9, 2025

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura Chair, Health & Human Services

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair and Senate Committee Members

RE; Testimony in Support of Committee Amendment and Adoption of  
SCR16, SD1

My name is Richard Estabilio and board member of Ka'u Rural Health  
Community Association Inc.(KRHCAI).

I want to extend my sincerest Mahalo! for considering our request to be  
included in the Dept. of Health Task Force, and considering SCR12/SCR16 to  
include KRHCAI.

Please note KRHCAI's Health and Wellness Program focus on health,  
education, resource opportunities and economic development aligns with  
Task Force "developing professional standards for community health worker  
training programs to ensure that all community health workers receive  
standardized, high-quality training that equips them with the necessary  
knowledge and skills".

The impact of adoption SCR16 SD1 provide opportunities to share ideas,  
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Date: April 9, 2025

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair  
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Health

RE: Support for SCR 16 Requesting The Department of Health to  
Convene a Task Force to Identify and Develop Minimum Professional  
Standards for Community Health Worker Training Programs

Mtg: April 11, 2025, 10:00 am, Conference Room 329

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

My name is Crystal Caday-Bargayo, and I am a CHW from the island of Kauai, where I serve as Kauai Island representative for the Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association (HICHTWA). We have CHW representatives on each of the major islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 16**, which requests the Department of Health to convene a task force to identify and develop minimum professional standards for Community Health Worker (CHW) training programs.

Community Health Workers are an essential part of Hawai'i's healthcare and social service ecosystem. They serve as trusted liaisons between communities and the systems that serve them, providing client-centered, culturally competent care, health education, housing focus, and crucial support services that improve outcomes and reduce disparities.

CHW plays a vital role in our communities. A task force is needed to identify and develop a standardized framework in Hawai'i to ensure consistency, quality, and equity in training programs across the state. The absence of minimum professional standards can lead to variability in skills, preparation, and ultimately, effectiveness in serving our diverse communities. This not only affects CHWs but also impacts the communities they serve, many of which already face systemic barriers to accessing care.

By convening a task force, the Department of Health can bring together CHWs, educators, healthcare providers, housing service providers, community-based organizations, and other key stakeholders to collaboratively develop professional training standards that reflect the realities and needs of Hawai'i's people. These standards will help elevate the CHW profession, ensure accountability, and strengthen the workforce by fostering greater recognition and integration into health and social care systems.

SCR 16 is a crucial step toward building a more equitable, effective, and sustainable CHW infrastructure in Hawai'i. I respectfully urge you to pass this resolution and support the formalization of a strong and unified approach to CHW training and development.

In addition, I would like to recommend that **50% of the task force's members consist of CHWs** to ensure that **CHWs** are leading efforts to establish minimal professional standards for their workforce. [The American Public Health Association](#) (APHA) recommends that CHWs hold leadership roles in workforce development, and the [National Association of Community Health Workers](#) (NACHW) emphasizes CHW-led policy participation as a best practice.

I urge the committee to amend and pass SCR 16 so Hawai'i can take a meaningful step forward toward professionalizing the CHW workforce as stated as best practices and guidance from organizations such as the APHA and NACHW.

Mahalo for your consideration and your continued support for community-centered health initiatives.

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Crystal Caday-Bargayo*

Crystal Caday-Bargayo

CHW, Resident Service Director

crystalcaday@gmail.com

(808) 855-8675

**SCR-16-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/9/2025 9:25:21 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/11/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cyd L. Hoffeld	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: April 9, 2025

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair

Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee-Loy, Vice Chair

Members of the Committee on Health

RE: Support for SCR 16 SD1 Requesting the Department of Health to

Convene a Task Force to Identify and Develop Minimum Professional

Standards for Community Health Worker Training Programs

Aloha Chair Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee-Loy, and Members of the Committee on Health:

My name is Cyd Hoffeld, a resident of Kalapana on Hawai'i Island and a Community Health Worker. I am submitting my testimony in **strong support of SCR 16 SD1**, and humbly ask that the resolution be amended to include the **Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association (HICHWA)** and to ensure that **at least 50% of the Task Force** being convened by the Hawai'i State Department of Health be comprised of **Community Health Workers (CHW)**.

The **Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association** is a statewide organization with a Leadership Council of representatives from each county who support and represent a growing membership of CHWs. **HICHWA** provides a hub for Community Health Workers to access training, education, biennial conferences, monthly online CHW ONLY meetings, regional meetings, and networking opportunities with other CHWs from across the state. **HICHWA** is an active member of the National Association of Community Health Workers which allows them to also share national updates, information, and resources with our local members who are CHWs

from organizations like Hui Malama Ola Na Oiwī, Hawai'i Island Community Health Center, AlohaCare, Pear Suite, Going Home Hawai'i, and more.

By including **HICHTWA** on the Task Force, CHW voices, lived experiences and invaluable insights are amplified and placed at the forefront of policy discussions that directly impact their work and the communities they serve.

Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony in **strong support of SCR 16 SD1** with **Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association** being included and that **at least 50% of the Task Force be CHWs**.

Mahalo nui!



**SCR-16-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 10:40:23 AM

Testimony for HLT on 4/11/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
April Arroyo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR16 SD1  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO  
IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP MINIMUM PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR  
COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER TRAINING PROGRAMS**

**Submitted to the Senate Committee on Health and Homelessness**

**Hearing Date: April 11, 2025**

**Submitted by: April Arroyo**

**808-757-8176 or aearroyo@hawaii.edu**

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of **SCR16 SD1**, which requests the Department of Health to convene a task force to identify and develop minimum professional standards for community health worker (CHW) training programs in the State of Hawai‘i.

Community health workers play a vital and unique role in advancing health equity across Hawai‘i. As trusted members of their communities, CHWs serve as essential bridges between clinical care systems and the people who face barriers to accessing care. They support individuals in navigating complex health and social services, and their shared lived experience fosters deep trust and connection that traditional health professionals often cannot replicate.

Research and local practice have shown that CHWs improve health outcomes, particularly for those living with chronic illnesses and those impacted by the social determinants of health—including income, housing, education, and cultural and geographic barriers. As Hawai‘i continues to confront public health challenges, including disparities in access and outcomes for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities and other underserved groups, CHWs are a key part of the solution.

Despite their importance, there remains a need for clear, consistent, and culturally responsive training standards that ensure quality and effectiveness while respecting the diverse contexts in which CHWs work. **SCR16 SD1** wisely recognizes that developing minimum professional standards will not only strengthen the profession but also promote consistency, sustainability, and accountability across programs.

The proposed task force includes an impressive and well-rounded group of stakeholders, from academic institutions and public agencies to grassroots organizations and CHWs themselves. This collaborative and inclusive approach ensures that the standards developed will be practical, respectful of community knowledge, and aligned with statewide health priorities.

Establishing a thoughtful and community-driven foundation for CHW training is essential to ensuring that the workforce continues to grow with integrity, professionalism, and cultural competence.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of **SCR16 SD1**, and for your continued commitment to improving the health of all Hawai'i residents.

Respectfully submitted,  
**April Arroyo**  
(808) 757-8176  
aearroyo@hawaii.edu



Community Association

Mission: "To Do What It Takes To Keep Ka'u Healthy"

P.O.Box 878 Pahala, HI 96777

Phone (808) 928-0101

Website: [krhcai.com](http://krhcai.com)

April 10, 2025

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura Chair, Health & Human Services

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair and Senate Committee Members

RE; Testimony in Support of Of Committee Amendment and Adoption  
of SCR16, SD1

My name is Resa Salmo, I'm a member and volunteer CHW of Ka'u Rural Health Community Association Inc.(KRHCAI) and support SCR16 SD1.

Mahalo! for considering our request to be included in the Dept. of Health Task Force, and considering SCR12/SCR16 to include KRHCAI.

Please note KRHCAI 's Health and Wellness Program focus on health, education, resource opportunities and economic development aligns with Task Force "developing professional standards for community health worker training programs to ensure that all community health workers receive standardized, high-quality training that equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills".

The impact of adoption SCR16 SD1 provide opportunities to share ideas, improve communication between public / private sectors. and workforce development in Ka'u's rural underserved and vulnerable communities.

Should you have any questions feel free to email [krhcai@yahoo.com](mailto:krhcai@yahoo.com) or call (808) 928-0101.



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**SCR-16-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/11/2025 9:48:16 AM

Testimony for HLT on 4/11/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Atalina Pasi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,**

My name is 'Atalina Pasi, and I am a proud Community Health Worker and a member of the community I serve. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SCR16 SD1.

Community Health Workers are the heart of our communities—we are the aunties, uncles, cousins, and neighbors who walk alongside our people every day. We help them navigate complex systems, address social determinants of health, and build trust where there has been fear or disconnection. We do this not just as a job, but as a calling rooted in service and aloha.

I respectfully urge you to ensure that **at least 51% of the task force members be Community Health Workers themselves**. If we are to develop meaningful and effective minimum professional standards, then the people with the most direct experience—those doing the work in our homes, churches, shelters, and clinics—must have the majority voice at the table. Anything less would risk creating policies that do not reflect the real-life experiences of our communities.

This task force is an important step forward in professionalizing our field, while still honoring the community-rooted foundation of who we are as CHWs. It is also an opportunity to affirm our lived expertise, especially for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander CHWs who have long filled these roles without recognition or pay.

I believe that with the leadership of CHWs on this task force, Hawai'i will create a model that uplifts equity, cultural integrity, and community voice. Mahalo for hearing our mana'o.

**Me ka ha'aha'a a me ke aloha,**

**'Atalina Pasi, MPH**

Ko'olauloa Community Health Worker