



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 3:01 p.m.

By

Della Teraoka, Interim Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

SR 32/SCR 50 – URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF REGENTS TO ESTABLISH A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII MAUI CAMPUS

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of SR 32/SCR 50 which urges the University of Hawai'i to establish a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program at the University of Hawai'i - Maui College (UHMC).

The UH recognizes the existing workforce shortages in healthcare and the high demand for nurses in the state. Additionally, the [UH Regents Policy 4.207](#) Community College System acknowledges the need for the neighbor island community colleges to continue to provide a comprehensive set of courses and programs to make the university accessible to every Hawai'i resident who wants and can benefit from the opportunities and experiences provided by the community colleges. The UH is also cognizant of the importance of using our budget resources wisely and being careful not to duplicate existing programs.

The UH concurs with the legislature that there is a pressing need for highly qualified nursing professionals to meet the healthcare needs of the County of Maui due to a growing and aging population. The UHMC has created a pathway for students to earn a Certified Nurse Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse Certificate of Achievement, and an Associate in Science in Nursing degree. Adding the last year for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing would provide the County of Maui with more highly qualified nurses and allow students to complete the degree in Maui.

The UHMC has received approval to submit an Authorization to Plan for the BSN at UHMC to the Council of Chief Academic Officers as a part of the academic program actions process.

In addition to our support for the intent of SR 32/SCR 50, we also acknowledge and appreciate the parallel effort reflected in SB119, SD1, which also aims to establish a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and appropriate funds at UHMC. The legislative measure further underscores the shared commitment to address the critical nursing shortage on Maui.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SR 32/SCR 50.



March 20, 2025 at 3:01 pm
Conference Room 229

Senate Committee on Higher Education

To: Chair Donna Mercado Kim
Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy
AVP, Government Affairs
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: Support
SR 32/SCR 50, Urging the University of Hawaii President and Board of Regents to establish a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the University of Hawaii Maui campus

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the health care continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 30,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of this resolution, which urges the establishment of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at the University of Hawaii Maui College. Hawaii faces a critical nursing shortage that is exacerbated in neighbor island and rural communities. The recent Healthcare Workforce Demand Survey underscores the urgent need for additional nursing professionals on Maui, where healthcare facilities continue to experience difficult-to-fill vacancies and an aging workforce. The report highlights significant challenges in recruitment and retention, particularly for registered nurses with advanced education and training.

The existing pathways to a BSN require Maui-based nurses to either relocate to Oahu or pursue online degrees from out-of-state institutions, both of which present financial and logistical barriers that discourage further education. The establishment of a BSN program at the University of Hawaii Maui College would provide opportunities for individuals to enter or advance in their nursing careers within the Maui community. This program would also help alleviate workforce shortages by increasing the number of highly qualified nurses prepared for leadership roles, specialized care, and clinical instruction.

By investing in a BSN program at the University of Hawaii Maui College, the state can strengthen its healthcare workforce, improve patient outcomes, and create new opportunities for Maui residents seeking career advancement in nursing. We appreciate the legislature's continued support for

developing the healthcare workforce in the state, and for the opportunity to support this resolution.