



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of SR 69 SD1 / SCR 86 SD1
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE AN
AEROMEDICAL SERVICES WORKING GROUP.
REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: April 11, 2025

Room Number: 329

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A
- 2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (Department) supports the intent of this
- 3 resolution.
- 4 **Department Testimony:** The Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System
- 5 Branch (EMSIPSB) on behalf of the Department, supports the intent of the Senate Concurrent
- 6 Resolution to assess and improve emergency aeromedical services in Hawaii. We recognize the
- 7 importance of the proposed working group in addressing the stability and predictability of air
- 8 ambulance services across the state.
- 9 **Offered Amendments:** None.
- 10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



April 11, 2025
House Committee on Health
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice-Chair

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy and members of the House Committee on Health,

My name Doug Flanders, Vice President of State Government Affairs for Air Methods (AMC).

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 86 Senate Draft 1, which request the Hawaii State Department of Health to convene an aeromedical services working group.

AMC is the leading air medical service, delivering lifesaving care to more than 100,000 people every year. AMC has 40 years of air medical experience; we are the preferred partner for hospitals and one of the largest community-based providers of air medical services. AMC previously operated Hawaii LifeSave which, due to in part to inflation, was forced to leave the state.

It is of critical importance to the State of Hawaii to ensure that residents have access to critical care medical services, including aeromedical services. Currently, the state is served by only one statewide aeromedical provider. This poses a risk to residents; high demand or maintenance issues could deny patients, particularly those in rural areas, access to primary health care.

Accordingly, EMS officials, health departments, hospitals, health insurance providers, and air medical companies must work together to develop plans, procedures, protocols, and funding for air medical transport. These resolutions are a strong step in that direction.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

AIR METHODS

5500 SOUTH QUEBEC STREET, SUITE 300 | GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO 80111

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SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE AN AEROMEDICAL
SERVICES WORKING GROUP.

1 WHEREAS, it is of critical importance to the State to
2 ensure residents have prompt access to primary health care; and
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4 WHEREAS, most rural communities in the State have fewer
5 health care resources compared to communities on Oahu, including
6 access to advanced levels of trauma care, medical specialists,
7 and subspecialists; and
8

9 WHEREAS, patients in these rural areas are at greater risk
10 of poor health outcomes for serious medical conditions, such as
11 heart attack, stroke, and traumatic bodily injuries; and
12

13 WHEREAS, the existing aeromedical services system is
14 overburdened and is currently served by only one statewide
15 aeromedical services provider, for which there are few viable
16 and cost-effective alternatives in the event of a grounding, for
17 example, due to maintenance issues or crew availability; and
18

19 WHEREAS, there are a number of barriers to expanding the
20 aeromedical services system, including insufficient funding,
21 plans, procedures, and protocols; now, therefore,
22

23 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
24 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025, the
25 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
26 Health is requested to convene an Aeromedical Services Working
27 Group; and
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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
30 to consist of the following members:
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32 (1) The Director of Health, or the Director's designee;

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- (2) The Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, or a member appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (3) The Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, or a member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- (4) The Director of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, or the Director's designee;
- (5) The Director of the Department of Emergency Management of the City and County of Honolulu, or the Director's designee;
- (6) The Administrator of the Maui Emergency Management Agency, or the Administrator's designee;
- (7) The Administrator of the Kauai Emergency Management Agency, or the Administrator's designee;
- (8) The Administrator of the Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency, or the Administrator's designee;
- (9) A representative of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii, to be selected and invited to participate by the Director of Health;
- (10) A representative of the Hawaii Association of Health Plans, to be selected and invited to participate by the Director of Health;
- (11) One representative from a health system operating in the State, to be selected and invited to participate by the Director of Health;
- (12) At least two representatives from independent providers operating in the State, ~~at least~~ of which one of whom operates in the County of Maui, Kauai, or Hawaii, to be selected and invited to participate by the Director of Health; and
- (13) Two representatives from providers of emergency aeromedical services who have conducted operations in the State within the last five years and can provide comprehensive air medical services with rotor- and

1 fixed-wing support, to be selected and invited to
2 participate by the Director of Health; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
5 to, at a minimum:
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- 7 (1) Study and assess emergency aeromedical services needs
8 across the State and in each county; and
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- 10 (2) Develop and recommend future plans, procedures,
11 protocols, and funding to increase the predictability
12 and stability of air ambulance medical services for
13 the State; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
16 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
17 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
18 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
19 of 2026; and
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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
22 to dissolve on June 30, 2026; and
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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
25 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health,
26 Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chair
27 of the Senate Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,
28 Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on
29 Health, Director of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency,
30 Director of the Department of Emergency Management of the City
31 and County of Honolulu, Administrator of the Maui Emergency
32 Management Agency, Administrator of the Kauai Emergency
33 Management Agency, and Administrator of the Hawaii County Civil
34 Defense Agency.



Hawaii Medical Association

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Date: April 11, 2025
From: Hawaii Medical Association (HMA)
Jerald Garcia MD - Chair, HMA Public Policy Committee

RE SCR 86 SD 1 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE AN AEROMEDICAL SERVICES WORKING GROUP - Department of Health; Emergency Management Systems; Aeromedical Services Working Group; Report

Position: Support

This resolution requests the Department of Health to convene an Aeromedical Services Working Group.

The ongoing critical physician shortage that is most severe on the neighbor islands as well as the overall aging of Hawaii's population have contributed to the increased use of emergency medical services in our state. When combined with the unique geographic and logistical challenges of air travel, the barriers for our Hawaii patients to receive timely medical care, particularly in our rural and underserved areas, are considerable. Efforts to support and further develop needed aeromedical services for healthcare requires the collective analysis of the present system and thoughtful collaboration of stakeholders.

HMA supports this resolution for a Work Group to study and assess aeromedical services across the State and in each county. The information will inform future solutions for Hawaii emergency aeromedical medical services to facilitate prompt quality medical care that patients urgently need, and reduce the stressful and costly burdens of air travel placed upon them and their loved ones.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify in support of this resolution.

2025 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, President • Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President Elect • Angela Pratt, MD, Immediate Past President
Jerris Hedges, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

2025 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Jerald Garcia, MD, Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

REFERENCES, QUICK LINKS:

Wu N. State selects REACH for Maui County's aeromedical transport services. [Honolulu Star Advertiser July 11 2024. Accessed Feb 1 2025.](#)

Hawaii Department of Health. [DOH issues notice of award for emergency aeromedical ambulance transport service for Maui county.](#) Accessed Feb 1 2025.

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Consillio, K. Charges for Medevac Flights Soar in Hawaii. <https://www.hmpgloballearningnetwork.com/site/emsworld/news/12111684/charges-for-medevac-flights-soar-in-hawaii> Accessed Feb 1 2025.

Hawaii residents complain of high prices for medevac flights. <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/29981390/hawaii-residents-complain-of-high-prices-for-medevac-flights/> Accessed Feb 1 2025.

Withy K et al . UH System Annual Report to the 2025 Legislature on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project. Accessed Feb 1 2025.

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SCR-86-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 6:27:18 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Mallery-Sayre	The Daniel R. Sayre Memorial Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Daniel R. Sayre Memorial Foundation has signed a letter of intent to partner with Life Flight Network, an non-profit aeromedical organization that currently serves, on average, 15,000 critical care transport patients per year in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. Their ability to save lives is recognized as exemplary by national regulatory agencies. They are not governed by profits, rather their mission is to save lives and to enhance patient outcomes. To exclude them, through the wording in this current document, is not in the interest of our community nor our visitors. Hawaii deserves better life-saving measures than is currently offered.

SCR-86-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 8:28:04 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Frank H. Sayre, D.D.S.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

While I am writing in support of SCR86 SD1 it is with the stipulation that it be amended to include Life Flight Network. The Daniel R. Sayre Foundation has funded an Airbus H-145 aeromedical helicopter to be used to transport critical care patients from the Big Island to tertiary care facilities on Oahu or Maui. The Foundation has signed a Letter of Intent with Life Flight Network, a nonprofit corporation, to operate the helicopter. They should be given a seat on this working group. If not, you will be in danger of perpetuating a monopoly by Global Medical Response, the owner of Reach, Hawaii LifeFlight and Air Methods. These are all private equity owned and focused on profit margin and not as much on patient care. Mahalo nui