



HPCA

HAWAII PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

House Committee on Human Services

The Hon. Dee Morikawa, Chair

The Hon. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Testimony on HCR 105/HR 58

Submitted by Nani Medeiros, Public Affairs and Policy Director

March 19, 2015, 8:45 am, Room 329

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association, which represents community health centers in Hawai'i, strongly supports HCR 105/HR58, requesting the convening of a task force to investigate the provision of medical, educational, housing, and social services to migrants from freely associated states.

Under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA), individuals from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau are granted legal migrant status in Hawaii. However, due to recent changes they are no longer eligible to receive Medicaid benefits and must instead enroll in the state health insurance exchange.

This bill is of special import to the HPCA because a large majority of COFA migrants receive primary care from community health centers. Many of these patients tend to have co-occurring chronic and communicable diseases as well as linguistic and cultural barriers to care. Any additional burdens imposed upon this population, such as further financial expense, will only serve to jeopardize their ability to access care when needed.

As a firm believer in the social determinants of health, those social and economic factors that affect a person's well-being, the HPCA strongly supports the comprehensive analysis proposed in this measure.

For these reasons, we strongly support HCR 105/HR 58 and thank you for the opportunity to testify.