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**PRESENTATION OF THE  
PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL LICENSING DIVISION**

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

AND

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTRASTATE COMMERCE

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE  
Regular Session of 2017

Friday, February 3, 2017  
9:00 a.m.

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 431, RELATING TO GERONTOLOGIST  
LICENSING.**

TO THE HONORABLE DEE MORIKAWA, CHAIR,  
TO THE HONORABLE TAKASHI OHNO, CHAIR,  
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES:

My name is Celia Suzuki, Licensing Administrator of the Professional and Vocational Licensing Division, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (“Department”). The Department appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill No. 431, Relating to Gerontologist Licensing.

The purpose of House Bill No. 431 is to regulate the practice of gerontology by establishing licensure requirements for gerontologists.

House Bill No. 431 creates a new chapter in the Hawaii Revised Statutes to regulate gerontologists. Section 26H-6, HRS, requires that new regulatory measures being considered for enactment be referred to the Auditor for a sunrise analysis. The statute requires the referral to be made by a concurrent resolution that identifies a specific legislative bill to be analyzed. The statute further requires that the analysis set forth the probable effects of regulation and assess whether its enactment is consistent with the legislative policies of the Hawaii Regulatory Licensing Reform Act, and assess alternative forms of regulation.

Therefore, this bill should be deferred until a sunrise analysis on this measure is conducted by the Auditor.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill No. 431.

Testimony of  
Jonathan Ching  
Government Relations Specialist

Before:

House Committee on Human Services  
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Chair  
The Honorable Chris Todd, Vice Chair

House Committee on Intrastate Commerce  
The Honorable Takashi Ohno, Chair  
The Honorable Isaac W. Choy, Voice Chair

February 3, 2017  
9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329

**Re: HB431 Relating to Gerontologist Licensing**

Chairs, Vice Chairs, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB431, which establishes requirements for gerontologists licensure beginning on July 1, 2018.

**Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports the intent of the measure and offers the following COMMENTS.**

A 2013 report by The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) found that Americans 65 years and older are expected to account for almost 20% of the U.S. population by 2030.<sup>1</sup> This will require 30,000 geriatricians by 2030, which equates to the need for approximately an additional 1,200 geriatricians per year, over the next 20 years.<sup>2</sup> This is compounded by the AGS' finding that less than 1% of Registered Nurses, Pharmacists, and Physician Assistants; and about 2.6% of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) are certified in geriatrics.

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii does not believe that HB431 will fully meet the fourth purpose in the preamble to “assure the availability of the high quality care for older aging adults” given that HB431, as currently drafted, may *further burden* providers. We note that there are already state licensing requirements for certain healthcare professionals who specialize in the care of our elderly residents, including geriatricians, gerontological nurse practitioners, geriatric psychologists and geriatric pharmacists. All of these professions are currently subject to strict licensing requirements by their respective professional boards, including the Hawai‘i Medical

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.americangeriatrics.org/files/documents/Adv\\_Resources/demand\\_for\\_geriatric\\_care.pdf](http://www.americangeriatrics.org/files/documents/Adv_Resources/demand_for_geriatric_care.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

Board, Board of Nursing, Board of Psychology and Board of Pharmacy. To force these providers to submit to an additional Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Professional & Vocational Licensing through the “board of gerontology,” in addition to their own professional society requirements, is *unnecessary* at the least and *obtrusive* at the worse.

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii finds that a section of HB431 is unclear as to whether the licensing requirements for the board of gerontology would apply to physicians, APRNs, pharmacists, and psychologists. In particular, HB431 provides an exemption for licensure by the board of gerontology, for “[a]ny licensed person doing work within the scope of practice or duties of the person’s profession that overlaps with the practice of gerontology; provided that the person does not purport to be a gerontologist[.]” While geriatricians, gerontological nurse practitioners, geriatric psychologists and geriatric pharmacists are “licensed” by their respective state boards and the scope of their practice “overlaps” with the “practice of gerontology”, which is defined as “the study of aging and older adults”, we are uncertain that the language in HB431 would definitively exempt these professions from additional licensing requirements from a purely semantic standpoint of “gerontology” and “geriatrics”, which is conceptually the “care of elderly people.”

If it is the intent of HB431 to exclude certain licensed healthcare professionals, such as geriatricians, gerontological nurse practitioners, geriatric psychologists and geriatric pharmacists, from additional licensure by the board of gerontology, Kaiser Permanente Hawaii requests that the committee consider language to explicitly exempt such professions to ensure there is no ambiguity over the application of which professions are subject to licensure by the board of gerontology. We would be certainly appreciate the opportunity to work with the Committee in developing language to address this concern.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.