JOSH GREEN LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JOANN A. VIDINHAR DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS www.labor.hawaii.gov

April 1, 2022

To: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair, The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

> The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, The Honorable Gilbert S. C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

- Date: Friday, April 1, 2022
- Time: 10:00 a.m.
- Place: Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
- From: Anne Perreira-Eustaquio, Director Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: H.B. 1575 HD2 SD1 RELATING TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

This measure seeks to broaden the scope and practice of physician assistants by amending multiple chapters of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) including Chapter 392, HRS, the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) law. The proposal will allow physician assistants to provide care to and certify the disabilities of individuals for TDI purposes.

DLIR supports this measure, specifically Section 9.

II. CURRENT LAW

Sections 392-26(a) and 392-26(c), HRS, specify that an individual must be under the care of and have the individual's disability certified a person duly licensed to practice medicine, surgier, dentistry, chiropractic, osteopathy, or naturopathic medicine, or an advanced practice registered nurse.

III. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL

DLIR supports the intent of the measure to assist with the critical physician shortage by allowing Physician Assistants to certify an employee's disability after receiving treatment.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129

April 1, 2022

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION AND WAYS AND MEANS

House Bill 1575, House Draft 2, Senate Draft 1 – Relating to Physician Assistants

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports with comments House Bill 1575, House Draft 2, Senate Draft 1 Relating to Physician Assistants.

Physician Assistants are already authorized to perform many physician functions and considering the physician shortage in Hawaii it is advisable to analyze what additional functions they might take on. Hawaii Revised Statutes §291-51 currently authorizes Advanced Practice Registered Nurses to sign the certificate of disability for a parking permit. A physician assistant should be authorized to certify an applicant's disability for a disability parking permit as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW Executive Director

Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board

Before the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection and Senate Committee on Ways and Means Friday, April 1, 2022 10:00 p.m. Room 211 and Videoconference

On the following measure: H.B. 1575, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, RELATING TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

Chair Baker, Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Ahlani Quiogue, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawaii Medical Board (Board). The Board supports this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) expand the scope of practice for physician assistants; and (2) require a sampling of medical records, rather than all medical records, to be reviewed when physician assistants prescribe controlled substances.

The Board supports this bill, as it: (1) broadens physician assistants' scope of practice to provide a wide range of services, which would benefit the citizens of Hawaii; and (2) alleviates the overly burdensome administrative requirement of having a supervising physician review all medical records that contain written orders or prescriptions for controlled substances.

The Board recognizes the important role physician assistants have in healthcare and believes this bill is a step in the right direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



TO: Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Ways and Means The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Hearing Date/Time: April 1, 2022,10:00 a.m. Place: CR 211 & Via Videoconference

Re: HB 1575, HD2, SD1, Relating to Physician Assistants

Chair Baker, Chair Dela Cruz, and Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1575, HD2 SD1, which modernizes scope of practice for physician assistants in the state of Hawai`i.

Hawai`i Academy of Physician Assistants (HAPA) STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB 1575 HD2 SD1

HAPA is the Hawai'i state chapter of The American Academy of Physician Assistants. According to the 2021 annual report on findings from the Hawaii physician workforce assessment report, Hawai'i has an unmet need for 732 full time physicians across the state with neighbor island counties facing the most severe shortages.

Paradoxically, since 2016, the number of practicing physician assistants has increased by 105% on the island of Hawai'i, 114% on Kauai, and 35% on Maui. Despite this increase, physician assistants remain underutilized due to Hawai'i's restrictive practice laws, which prevent physician assistants from practicing at the top of their training and education. HAPA supports HB 1575, HD2, SD1 because it removes some of these restrictions and helps brings Hawai'i physician assistant scope of practice into alignment with national practices.

HAPA appreciates the Legislature's passage of Act 181, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2019, which was a monumental bill that modernized physician assistant chart review and successfully lowered administrative burden for physicians, without compromising patient care. HB 1575, HD2, SD1 expands the review structure established in 2019 to include physician assistant prescribed controlled substances. Like 2019, we expect this change will continue to prioritize patient care while significantly decreasing physician administrative burden. In addition, HB 1575, HD2, SD1 will allow physician assistants to sign temporary disability insurance forms, disability parking permits, Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) forms, and other administrative forms that are time sensitive and critical for patients' quality of life and continuity of care but are often delayed by the physician shortage.

Physician assistants are highly skilled medical providers and authorized by the Affordable Care Act, along with physicians and APRNs, to serve as primary care provider (PCP). They receive rigorous medical training modeled on medical school curriculum which includes rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, psychiatry, and



other specialty electives. Physician assistant training programs typically require thousands of hours of previous clinical care experience before matriculation is even considered.

In practice, physician assistants routinely take medical histories, perform physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose illnesses, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and first-assist in surgery.

With their skillset and training, physician assistants play a critical role on care delivery teams and can pivot quickly to supply care when and where it is needed most. This has been invaluable during the pandemic when we rely heavily on physician assistants' unique adaptability to ensure care delivery in an everchanging landscape.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Hawai`i Academy of Physician Assistants



Friday, April 1, 2022 at 10:00 AM Via Video Conference

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

To: Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

- To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz. Chair Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
- From: Michael Robinson Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

Re: HB 1575, HD2, SD1 – Testimony In Support **Relating to Physician Assistants**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers - Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB 1575, HD2, SD1 which expands the scope of practice for physician assistants and streamlines the process of reviewing records.

The 2021 annual report on findings from the Hawaii Physician Workforce Assessment found that Hawaii has an unmet need for seven hundred thirty-two full-time doctors. The islands of Maui and Hawaii face the most severe shortages, each needing forty per cent more healthcare providers. In contrast, the number of licensed physician assistants has grown by one hundred five per cent on the island of Hawaii, one hundred fourteen per cent on the island of Kauai and thirty-five per cent on the island of Maui.

Utilization of physician assistants provides a viable option to managing both the growing physician shortage and the growing medical demands of the State's aging population. Physician assistants are skilled health care providers trained to take medical histories. perform physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and assist in surgery.

Thus, they offer an effective and efficient method of delivering healthcare to our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

March 30, 2022

To: Senator Rosalyn Baker – Chair Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection Senator Donovan Dela Cruz – Chair Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing: Friday, April 1, 2022 – 10:00 a.m. – Conference Room 211

RE: HB 1575, HD2, SD1 – Relating to Physician Assistants – In Support

On behalf of the Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii (OTAH) we support HB 1575, HD 2, SD1 - Relating to Physician Assistants which modernized physician assistant scope of practice. Currently under HRS 453-5.5, Physician assistants are able to sign orders and plans of care for both Physical and Speech therapies, however, not for Occupational Therapy. Occupational Therapy practitioners provide services to both inpatient and outpatients who have sustained a stroke, brain injury, spinal cord injury, hip fractures, amputations, hand & upper extremity conditions. Occupational Therapy practitioners are employed in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, mental health agencies, schools to name a few throughout Hawaii.

The Hawaii Academy of Physician Assistants (HAPA) is also in favor of HB 1575, HD 2, SD 1 to include orders for Occupational Therapy and plans of care in HRS 453-5.5.

We hope that your committee will favorably pass HB 1575, HD 2, SD 1. With passage of this bill, the consumer can receive complete orders from one referral source. At the present time, the consumer needs to see his/her physician to obtain a referral to Occupational Therapy as orders from a physician assistant is not covered under current regulation under HRS 453-5.5. Thus, the consumer, will experience a delay in receiving services. In some of our hospitals and outpatient facilities, Physician Assistants work alongside the primary physicians and have been writing orders for Occupational Therapy services. However, we have needed to ask that the MD's cosign orders or additional orders need to be re-written by the primary physician. By adding Occupational Therapy, this would allow our consumers to access OT services in a timely manner and when prescribed by the Physician Assistant. Furthermore, Medicare allows Physician Assistants to prescribe OT services, but depending on the Medicare fiduciary they reference the individual states statutes.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at (808) 542-1882.

Sincerely,

CHO PATK/L

Brooke Nakamura, OTD, OTR/L Doctorate of Occupational Therapy President, Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii

KAISER PERMANENTE®

Government Relations

Testimony of Jonathan Ching Government Relations Director

Before: Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Ways and Means The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

> April 1, 2022 10:00 a.m. CR 211 & Videoconference

Re: HB 1575, HD2, SD1, Relating to Physician Assistants

Chair Baker, Chair Dela Cruz, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1575, HD2, SD1, which modernizes the practice of physician assistants.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS HB 1575, HD2, SD1

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i is Hawai'i's largest integrated health system that provides care and coverage for approximately 265,000 members. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i believes that physicians assistants should be permitted to practice medicine at the top of their training, education, and experience. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i appreciates the contributions made by licensed physician assistants and has a great deal of confidence in the quality of health care they provide to our members. Our physician-owned Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group (HPMG) – Hawai'i's largest multispecialty medical group – employs over 650 physicians and licensed medical providers, including over 80 physician assistants. Within the Kaiser Permanente system, physician assistants collaborate with physicians and other medical professionals to provide high quality patient care in a variety of specialties and settings, including: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Dermatology, Orthopedics, Cardiology, Endocrinology, Oncology, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Emergency Medicine, Nephrology, Occupational Medicine, Vascular Surgery, General and Cardiothoracic Surgery, Infectious Disease, Radiology, Urology and Otolaryngology (ears, nose and throat).

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports HB 1575, HD2, SD1 because it removes barriers to practice for physician assistants and ensures greater access to health care for Hawai'i residents, especially those who reside on the neighbor islands where need is greatest. Since 2016, the number of physician assistants has increased by 105% on the island of Hawai'i, 114% on Kauai, and 35% on



Maui. Despite this increase, physician assistants remain underutilized because Hawai'i's restrictive practice laws prevent physician assistants from practicing at the top of their training and education. We support HB 1575, HD2, SD1 because it removes some of these restrictions and helps brings Hawai'i physician assistant scope of practice into alignment with national practices.

HB 1575, HD2, SD1 builds on the Legislature's previous successes modernizing physician assistants' practice in Hawai'i. In 2019, the Legislature passed Act 181, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2019, modernizing physician assistant chart review by collaborating physicians, which has successfully lowered administrative burden on physicians, without compromising patient care. HB 1575, HD2 expands the review structure established in 2019 to include physician assistant prescribed controlled substances. Similar to 2019, we expect this change will continue to prioritize patient care while significantly decreasing physicians' administrative burden. In addition, HB 1575, HD2, SD1 will allow physician assistants, like advanced practice nurses (APRNs), to sign temporary disability insurance forms, disability parking permits, Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) forms, and other administrative forms that are time sensitive and critical for patients' quality of life and continuity of care but are often delayed by the physician shortage.

Physician assistants are skilled health care providers and authorized by the Affordable Care Act, along with physicians and APRNs, to serve as primary care provider (PCP). They receive rigorous medical training modeled on medical school curriculum which typically includes rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, psychiatry, and other specialty electives. Physician assistant training programs typically require thousands of hours of previous clinical care experience before matriculation is even considered.

In practice, physician assistants routinely take medical histories, perform physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose illnesses, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and first-assist in surgery. With their skills and training, physician assistants play a critical role on our care delivery teams and are represented in every medical specialty within our medical group. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i continues to focus on recruiting physician assistants because physician assistants possess a skillset and training that allows them to be able to pivot quickly to supply care when and where it is needed most. This has been invaluable during the pandemic when we rely heavily on our physician assistants' unique adaptability to provide care in an ever-changing landscape.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.



To: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair Members, Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Members, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jacce Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: April 1, 2022

Re: Support for HB 1575 HD2 SD1: Relating to Physician Assistants

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 1,500 affiliated physicians and providers statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 1575 HD2 SD1, which would expand the scope of practice for physician assistants (PA) and require a sampling of medical records, rather than all medical records, to be reviewed when physician assistants prescribe controlled substances. PAs continue to play an increasingly important role in addressing the need for quality health care professionals in our State – especially during the COVID19 pandemic and within our neighbor island and rural communities.

We appreciate the Committee's attention to this important issue and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1575 HD2 SD1.

The mission of The Queen's Health Systems is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION 1360 S. Beretania Street, Suite 200, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814 Phone (808) 536-7702 Fax (808) 528-2376 www.hawaiimedicalassociation.org



SENATE COMMITTEES ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & WAYS AND MEANS Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair CPN Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair WAM Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair CPN Senator Gilbert S.C Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair WAM

Date: April 1st, 2022

From: Hawaii Medical Association Elizabeth England, MD, Vice Chair HMA Legislative Committee Elizabeth A. Ignasio, MD, Chair HMA Legislative Committee

Re: HB1575 HD2 SD1: RELATING TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS Position: Support

Over the past decade, physicians have faced increasing administrative responsibilities, spending nearly a quarter of their working hours on administrative tasks. This additional burden has negatively impacted the medical field, contributing to decreased job satisfaction and higher rates of physician burnout^{1,2}. Reducing this workload and allowing physicians to focus their time on direct patient care can help alleviate work-related stress.

The HMA appreciates the important role that physician assistants (PAs) play in our healthcare system. When practicing within the scope of their training as part of a physician-led team, PAs provide a valuable service to our community. This bill allows our physician assistant colleagues to practice within the limits of their education while simultaneously reducing the administrative burden on physicians.

While the HMA is in support of this bill, we believe the most appropriate response to a physician shortage is to work towards increasing the number of physicians in the state. The recruitment and retention of physicians requires collaborative effort from all healthcare professionals.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the HMA to testify in support of this measure.

HMA OFFICERS



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION 1360 S. Beretania Street, Suite 200, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814 Phone (808) 536-7702 Fax (808) 528-2376 www.hawaiimedicalassociation.org

REFERENCES:

- 1. Administrative burden on U.S. physicians PNHP. (n.d.). Retrieved March 31, 2022, from https://pnhp.org/news/administrative-burden-on-u-s-physicians.
- Rao SK, Kimball AB, Lehrhoff SR, Hidrue MK, Colton DG, Ferris TG, Torchiana DF. The Impact of Administrative Burden on Academic Physicians: Results of a Hospital-Wide Physician Survey. Acad Med. 2017 Feb;92(2):237-243. doi: 10.1097/ACM.000000000001461. PMID: 28121687.

HMA OFFICERS

President – Angela Pratt, MD President-Elect – Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD Immediate Past President – Michael Champion, MD Treasurer – Nadine Tenn Salle, MD Secretary – Thomas Kosasa, MD Executive Director – Marc Alexander March 30, 2022

To: Honorable Senator Rosalyn Baker – Chair Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection Honorable Senator Donavan Dela Cruz – Chair Committee on Ways & Means

Hearing: Friday, April 1, 2022 - 10:00 a.m. - Conference Room 211

RE: HB 1575, HD2, SD 1 - Relating to Physician Assistants - In Support

We are occupational therapy practitioners and are employed at one of Oahu's acute care hospital and outpatient clinics. We support HB 1575, HD 2, SD 1 - Relating to Physician Assistants which expands the authorized scope of practice for physician assistants. Currently under HRS 453-5.5, Physician assistants are able to sign orders and plans of care for both Physical and Speech therapies, but not for Occupational Therapy. Occupational Therapy practitioners provide services to both inpatient and outpatients who have sustained a stroke, brain injury, spinal cord injury, hip fractures, amputations, hand & upper extremity conditions. Occupational Therapy practitioners are employed in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, mental health agencies, schools to name a few throughout Hawaii.

At our hospital and outpatient clinics, we work closely with Physician Assistants in orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery and general surgery to name a few. On behalf of the OT practitioners at our facility and our professional state association, Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii, we support HB 1575, HD 2, SD 1 which will include changes to the current CHAPTER 453 MEDICINE AND SURGERY

§453-5.S Physician assistant; authority to sign documents that will include orders for Occupational Therapy and plans of care.

With hope that your committee will pass HB 1575, HD 2, SD 1. Passage of this bill will allow the consumer to receive complete orders from one referral source. At the present time, the consumer needs to see his/her physician to obtain a referral to Occupational Therapy as orders from a physician assistant is not covered under current regulation under HRS 453-5.5. Thus, the consumer, will experience a delay in receiving services. At our facility, Physician Assistants work alongside the primary physicians and have been writing orders for Occupational Therapy services. However, we have needed to ask that the MD's co-sign orders or additional orders need to be re-written by the primary physician. Furthermore, Medicare allows Physician Assistants to prescribe OT services, but depending on the Medicare fiduciary they reference the individual states statutes.

If you have any questions, we can be reached at (808) 522-4602.

Sincerely,

varia paketa, otal 6

Avis Sakata, OTR/ L Occupational Therapy Team Lead Additional OT staff in agreement with testimony: Whitney Reigh Asao, OTD Ashley Cadavona, OTR Brian Coyle, COTA Farrah Dimagiba, OTR Lisa Hall, OTR Casey Imelio, OTR Wendy Kondo, OTR Andrea Muraoka, OTR Bernice Oishi, COTA Vandana Pal, OTR Melissa Pang, OTR Tisha Taba, OTR Katie Watanabe, OTR Dale Yasumoto, OTR

March 30, 2022

To: Honorable Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Chair, Committee on commerce and Consumer Protection Honorable Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair Honorable Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Committee on Ways and Means Honorable Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Hearing: Friday, April 1, 2022, 10 AM

RE: HB 1575, HD2, SD1 - Relating to Physician Assistants - In Support

I support the intent of HB 1575, HD2, SD1 – Relating to Physician Assistants which includes expansion of the authorized scope of practice for physician assistants. HB 1575 HD2, SD1 will allow physician assistants to sign orders and plans of care for occupational therapy services.

Currently under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 453-5.5, Physician assistants can sign orders and plans of care for both Physical and Speech therapies, however, not for Occupational Therapy (OT). Allowing physician assistants to sign occupational therapy orders will allow consumers timely access to occupational therapy services. Consumers will not need to wait for a physician's co-signature or for a physician to re-write the orders for OT services.

The proposed HB1575, HD2, SD1 will amend Hawaii Revised Statutes §453-5.5 Physician assistant; authority to sign documents and will allow Physician Assistants to sign orders and plans of care for Occupational Therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration to approve HB1575, HD2, SD1 which will amend HRS 453-5.5 as described above. I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony.

Sincerely,

Vergenia July Virginia Tully

HB-1575-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2022 12:20:38 AM Testimony for CPN on 4/1/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Reed	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Honorable Senator Rosalyn Baker - Chair, Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Honorable Senator Stanley Chang - Vice Chair

Honorable Senator Donavan Dela Cruz- Chair, Committee on Ways and Means

Honorable Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran - Vice Chair

Hearing: Friday, April 1, 2022, 10:00 AM

RE: HB 1575, HD2, SD1- Relating to Physician Assistants - In Support

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The Hawaii Academy of Physician Assistants (HAPA) is also in favor of HB 1575, HD2, SD1 to include orders for Occupational Therapy and plans of care in HRS 453-5.5.

We hope that your committee will favorably pass HB 1575, HD2, SD1. With passage of this bill, the consumer can receive complete orders from one referral source. At the present time, the consumer needs to see his/her physician to obtain a referral to Occupational Therapy as orders from a physician assistant is not covered under current regulation under HRS 453-5.5. Thus, the consumer, will experience a delay in receiving services. In some of our hospitals and outpatient facilities, Physician Assistants work alongside the primary physicians and have been writing orders for Occupational Therapy services. However, we have needed to ask that the MD's cosign orders or additional orders need to be re-written by the primary physician. By adding Occupational Therapy, this would allow our consumers to access OT services in a timely manner and when prescribed by the Physician Assistant. Furthermore, Medicare allows Physician Assistants to prescribe OT services, but depending on the Medicare fiduciary they reference the individual states statutes.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at contact 704-441-6210.

Sincerely,

Michelle Reed, MS, OTR/L