



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 1799  
RELATING TO ASTHMA**

REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN H. WOODSON, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Hearing Date: February 1, 2022

Room Number: Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) offers comments on House Bill  
3 1799 (H.B. 1799), requiring the Department of Education (DOE) to offer optional asthma  
4 education courses to students and provide mandatory asthma training to teachers and other  
5 department employees who interact with students. The DOH supports the intent of this bill, as it  
6 acknowledges the critical role of school-based asthma self-management education (AS-ME) for  
7 students, parents, and school staff.

8 Asthma is one of the leading causes of chronic disease-related school absenteeism.  
9 Absenteeism due to poorly controlled asthma may negatively affect educational outcomes and  
10 limit students with asthma the ability to fully participate in school activities. Addressing asthma  
11 effectively requires a coordinated effort among school staff, home/family members, and the  
12 primary care physician in order to improve self-management and health outcomes.

13 H.B. 1799 aligns with the prioritized objectives in the Hawaii Asthma Plan 2030  
14 developed with stakeholders to increase AS-ME program implementation in school and  
15 community sites.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

17 **Offered Amendments:** None



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 02/01/2022  
**Time:** 02:00 PM  
**Location:** 309 Via Videoconference  
**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Interim Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB 1799 RELATING TO ASTHMA.

**Purpose of Bill:** Requires the Department of Education to offer optional asthma education courses to students and provide mandatory asthma training to teachers and other department employees who interact with students.

#### **Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on HB 1799. This bill requires the Department to offer optional asthma education courses to students on asthma facts, physiology, and early warning signs; symptoms and triggers; and self-management skills. These courses may be provided through coordination with a public or private entity and using educational and training resources available in the public and private sectors.

Additionally, this bill requires the Department to develop and provide asthma training to teachers and other Department employees who interact with students. The training would include recognizing asthma and asthma management. Parents and guardians of students and any other Department employees would be eligible to attend the training at no cost. The Department would set the standards and frequency for the training and may coordinate as necessary with any public or private entity to provide the training required under this section. The Department may use existing educational and training resources available in the public and private sectors when developing the training required under this section.

Section 1 of this bill highlights the benefits of school-based asthma education for students with asthma (i.e., significantly fewer days with activity limitations and significantly fewer nights of sleep disturbance after participation in the intervention).

Should the measure move forward, the Department respectfully requests the following revisions

to better align with the intent of offering an intervention to students with asthma:

- Page 2, Line 19: “shall offer optional asthma self-management education courses instruction to students with asthma.”
- Page 2, Line 20: “~~courses~~ instruction shall be age-appropriate and the topics shall include:”
- Page 3, Line 4: “private entity to provide the ~~courses~~ instruction required under this”
- Page 3, Line 8: “when developing the ~~courses~~ instruction required under this section.”

This school year, the Department has been collaborating with the American Lung Association in Hawaii to offer instruction on asthma basics for any interested employees and will work with the American Lung Association to continue this training for employees.

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



**Testimony to the House Committee on Education  
Tuesday, February 1, 2022; 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 309  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1799, RELATING TO ASTHMA.**

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1799, RELATING TO ASTHMA.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's FQHCs. FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would require the Department of Education (DOE) to:

- (1) Offer optional asthma education courses to students; and
- (2) Develop and provide asthma training to teachers and other DOE employees who interact with students.

According to recent data, it is estimated that 11.6% of children (<18 years) and 7.8% of adults in Hawaii currently have asthma. This corresponds to 36,000 children and 76,000 adults, or 112,000 people with asthma in our State.

As a partner of the Department of Health's Hawaii Asthma Control Program (**See**, <https://health.hawaii.gov/asthma/>), the HPCA supports any and all efforts to promote a broader understanding of this disease among our citizens. It is our hope that everyone will one day know how to best manage this malady, and understand what they can do when someone experiences an acute asthma attack.

**House Bill No. 1799**

**Tuesday, February 1, 2022; 2:00 p.m.**

**Page 2**

Try to imagine how scary it would be for a child to experience an asthma attack in a classroom. Imagine how scary it would be for the other students in the classroom who watch while this occurs. . . And also try to imagine how helpless the teacher will feel if he or she sees a student under his or her care in distress and not knowing what to do when this happens?

If you were that teacher, would you be able to sleep that night and would you be hesitant to go back to school the next day?

We recognize that much in this bill pertains to the "conditions of employment" that should more appropriately be addressed through collective bargaining. But if this bill can start the conversation between the DOE, the Hawaii State Teachers Association, and the Hawaii Government Employees Association, this bill would have accomplished much to improve the situation.

The HPCA stands ready to assist in this discussion and offer our expertise and reach across all islands to coordinate and collaborate on future activities.

**For these reasons, we urge your favorable consideration of this measure.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or [eabe@hawaiiipca.net](mailto:eabe@hawaiiipca.net).

**HB-1799**

Submitted on: 1/30/2022 9:40:30 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/1/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Michael Ching, MD, MPH	American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter	Support	No

Comments:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter supports House Bill 1799, relating to asthma. This bill provides the needed support that children with asthma need by having all Department of Education teachers trained on asthma education, one of the most chronic childhood diseases in Hawaii.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on average, in a classroom of 30 children, about 3 are likely to have asthma. Low-income populations, Native Hawaiians, and children living near traffic intersections experience more emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths due to asthma than the general population. The CDC also recommends that schools provide asthma education for students with asthma and education programs for students, school staff, parents, and families. This bill would allow our state to be in-line with CDC recommendations.

We ask you to please support House Bill 1799 to ensure that our children with asthma have the best fighting chance to thrive in all environments.



## HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rep. Justin H Woodhouse, Chair

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

Date: February 1, 2022

From: Hawaii Medical Association

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD, Chair, HMA Legislative Committee

**Re: HB 1799 Asthma; DOE; Training; Teachers; Courses**

**Position: Support**

Hawaii physicians recognize well the significant public health challenges of asthma in our pediatric population. Each year, 4 million children nationwide have an asthma exacerbation event, often requiring immediate medical care. Here in Hawaii, racial and ethnic disparities exist in these potentially preventable pediatric emergency department (PPPED) visits. According to analyses by the UH Office of Public Health Studies of the acute care hospitals in our state for 2016 (3230 visits), the largest proportion of total potentially preventable pediatric ED visits for asthma came from Native Hawaiians (36.5%), followed by Filipino (19.4%), White (13.3%), other Pacific Islander (13.0%), other race (11.1%), Japanese (5.30%), and Chinese (1.5%)<sup>1</sup>.

It is clear that health inequities exist for the keiki of our minority citizens, and coordinated community based asthma education programs for Hawaii teachers, students and parents will reduce the negative outcomes<sup>2</sup>. Hawaii will need additional research on the details of asthma hospitalization and outpatient data to quantify direct and indirect burdens of cost. This legislation is a move in the right direction. Our Hawaii legislature must attend to these critical healthcare disparities that impact our most vulnerable communities.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify on this measure.

#### REFERENCES

1. Uchima, O et al. Disparities in Potentially Preventable Emergency Department Visits for Children with Asthma among Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Whites in Hawai'i. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2021, 18, 7096. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18137096>.
2. Herman, E.J., Garbe, P.L. & McGeehin, M.A. Assessing Community-Based Approaches to Asthma Control: The Controlling Asthma in American Cities Project. *J Urban Health* 88, 1–6 2011.

#### 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

**HB-1799**

Submitted on: 1/31/2022 8:31:00 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/1/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Alec Marentic	Hawaii Association of School Psychologists (HASP)	Support	No

Comments:

HASP Supports the intent of this bill.



COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair  
Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 2:00PM

### Testimony in Support of HB 1799 Relating to Asthma

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education, and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association in Hawaii and across the nation is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases.

**The American Lung Association strongly supports House Bill 1799, relating to asthma. The bill would provide training to all Hawai'i teachers within the Department of Education on asthma and optional trainings for students with asthma and their parents.**

Asthma is a serious public health concern in Hawai'i. In 2018, 10.2% of Hawai'i children were estimated to have asthma compared to 7.5% of children in the U.S. as a whole.<sup>1</sup> In Hawai'i, disparities in asthma prevalence are seen in race/ethnicity and region, with Native Hawaiians being disproportionately affected by asthma and experiencing the greatest burden. Native Hawaiians have the highest asthma prevalence at 28.3% compared to Caucasians (17.1%), Chinese (16.4%), Filipino (20.5%), Japanese (17.7%), or other races/ethnicities (19.8%).<sup>2</sup> Areas with high asthma prevalence include Hawai'i and Maui counties and the Nānākuli/Wai'anae sub-county areas on O'ahu. Asthma disparities can be further exacerbated by geographic isolation, lack of transportation to and from doctor's appointments, lower socioeconomic status, and limited access to healthcare specialists and subspecialists.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that schools provide asthma education for students, parents, and school staff as part of creating [Asthma Friendly Schools](#). It further states that "asthma is a leading chronic illness among children and adolescents in the United States. It is also one of the leading causes of school absenteeism. On average, in a classroom of 30 children, about 3 are likely to have asthma. Low-income populations, minorities, and children living in inner cities experience more emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths due to asthma than the general population."

Absenteeism due to poorly controlled asthma may negatively affect educational outcomes and limit students with asthma's ability to fully participate in school activities, and when children miss school, a parent or guardian often misses work to care for them. Addressing asthma effectively requires a coordinated effort among school staff, home/family members, and the primary care physician in order to improve health outcomes for children with asthma.

Several studies have been published that school-based interventions for teachers, students, and parents help reduce the negative outcomes of asthma. A 2008 study funded by the CDC and published in the *Journal of School Health* revealed that school-based asthma curriculum helped to reduce symptoms, activity limitations, and health care utilization for intervention participants.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CDC, Risk Youth Behavioral Survey, Hawaii, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Uchima O, Taira DA, Ahn HJ, Choi SY, Okihiro M, Sentell T. Disparities in Potentially Preventable Emergency Department Visits for Children with Asthma among Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Whites in Hawai'i. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2021

<sup>3</sup> Herman, E.J., Garbe, P.L. & McGeehin, M.A. Assessing Community-Based Approaches to Asthma Control: The Controlling Asthma in American Cities Project. *J Urban Health* 88, 1–6 (2011).



We have the opportunity to help children with asthma, their families, and the teachers that are responsible for their wellbeing. Because of the lack of healthcare personnel in schools, it's imperative that DOE teachers receive adequate training on one of the most common childhood diseases.

We ask you to please support HB 1799 and help create a net of safety for our most vulnerable keiki.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pedro Haro".

Pedro Haro  
Executive Director  
American Lung Association in Hawaii  
pedro.haro@lung.org



Hawaii  
**Children's Action Network Speaks!**  
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

*Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.*

To: House Committee on Education

Re: **HB 1799 – Relating to Asthma**  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Via Videoconference Conference, Room 309  
February 1, 2022, 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and committee members,

**On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in SUPPORT of HB 1799, relating to asthma.** This bill would require the Department of Education to offer optional asthma education courses to students and provide mandatory asthma training to teachers and other department employees who interact with students.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on average, in a classroom of 30 children, about 3 are likely to have asthma. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on average, in a classroom of 30 children, about 3 are likely to have asthma.<sup>1</sup>

In Hawai'i, disparities in asthma prevalence are seen in race/ethnicity and region with Native Hawaiians being disproportionately affected by asthma and experiencing the greatest burden. Native Hawaiians have the highest asthma prevalence at 28.3% compared to Caucasians (17.1%), Chinese (16.4%), Filipino (20.5%), Japanese (17.7%), or other races/ethnicities (19.8%).<sup>2</sup> Areas with high asthma prevalence include Hawai'i and Maui counties and the Nānākuli/Wai'anae sub-county areas on O'ahu.

HB 1799 would to ensure that our children with asthma have the best fighting chance to thrive in all environments. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,  
Nicole Woo, Director of Research and Economic Policy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/asthma/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Uchima O, Taira DA, Ahn HJ, Choi SY, Okihiro M, Sentell T. Disparities in Potentially Preventable Emergency Department Visits for Children with Asthma among Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Whites in Hawai'i. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2021



# ALOHACARE

To: The Honorable Representative Woodson, Chair  
The Honorable Representative Kapela, Vice-Chair  
Committee on Education

From: Peggy Mierzwa, Government Affairs, AlohaCare

Hearing: Tuesday, February 1, 2022

RE: **HB1799 Relating to Asthma -Support**

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AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **HB1799**. This measure will require the Department of Education to provide optional asthma education courses to students. It will also require teachers and others who work with students to be trained in recognizing asthma and learning about asthma management.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving 80,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. We are the only health plan in Hawaii that exclusively serves Medicaid beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person care.

Asthma affects Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islander children at higher proportions than other groups. Furthermore, Hawaii Island and Maui, where there is less access to the care of specialists, have the highest rates of childhood asthma. The west side of Oahu also sees disproportionate rates of childhood asthma as well.

Schools can serve as a community support site by helping parents and guardians learn more about asthma, helping kids to understand asthma, and giving teachers and other direct support staff the tools they need to adequately address the physical and emotional needs of students. In other places, such programs have been successful with increasing education and knowledge, increasing the health of the students and decreasing the number of absences.<sup>1</sup>

Healthy communities are achieved when we take preventative action in addition to administering the appropriate treatment to individuals. Implementation of this bill will help the state to uplift public health. Being proactive instead of reactive is the key to overall health.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB1799**

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<sup>1</sup> [Cost-effectiveness of the School-Based Asthma Therapy \(SBAT\) program - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

**HB-1799**

Submitted on: 1/30/2022 12:47:30 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/1/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Erica Yamauchi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing today in strong support of this bill as a mother of two children attending our public schools. Asthma has become such a common diagnosis for many children, and teachers and families both benefit from the passage of this bill and knowing what to do when an asthma attack emergency strikes.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimuki/Wilhelmina Rise

TO: House Committee on Education  
Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair  
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, February 1, 2022  
TIME: 2:00 PM  
PLACE: Via Videoconference

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1799, RELATING TO ASTHMA**

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cynthia J. Goto, and I am writing to express my support for House Bill 1799, relating to asthma. This bill provides the support that children with asthma need by having all Department of Education teachers trained on asthma education, one of the most common chronic childhood diseases in Hawaii.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on average, in a classroom of 30 children, about 3 are likely to have asthma. Low-income populations, Native Hawaiians, and children living near traffic intersections experience more emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths due to asthma than the general population.

It is possible to live well with this chronic disease. The National Institutes of Health Expert Panel Report 3 Guidelines include evidence that comprehensive school-based educational interventions can be effective in improving the health and quality of life for students with asthma.<sup>1</sup> The CDC Coordinated School Health model emphasizes a school-wide approach that includes asthma-friendly policies such as the provision of asthma education and awareness programs for students and staff.<sup>2</sup> This bill would allow our state to be in-line with CDC recommendations.

Please support House Bill 1799 to ensure that our children with asthma have the best chance to thrive in all environments.

Thank you,

Cynthia J. Goto

<sup>1</sup> National Institutes of Health Expert Panel Report 3 (EPR 3). Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma. Publication No. 08-5846, July 2007.

<sup>2</sup>Strategies for Addressing Asthma in Schools. National Center for Environmental Health, Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects. January 2017.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/pdfs/strategies\\_for\\_addressing\\_asthma\\_in\\_schools\\_508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/pdfs/strategies_for_addressing_asthma_in_schools_508.pdf)

**Chair Justin H. Woodson  
Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela  
Committee on Education**

**Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 2:00 PM, Conference Room 309. Hawaii State Capitol**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1799, RELATING TO ASTHMA**

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Troy Siruno, and I am writing to express my support for House Bill 1799, relating to asthma. This bill provides the needed support that children with asthma need by having all Department of Education teachers trained on asthma education, one of the most chronic childhood diseases in Hawaii.

While we understand that the Department of Education is taxed with a variety of roles, because of the nature of asthma, it's important that all people that work with children understand what asthma is, how to react during an asthma emergency, and what may trigger asthma attacks. This is particularly important for young children who make up the majority of asthma-related emergency room visits. While many older children may carry inhalers and need little help when they have an asthma attack because they can identify triggers and use their inhalers themselves, younger children may need the help of a teacher to get through an asthma attack.

I had mild asthma as a young child, and many of my nieces and nephews also had asthma growing up. It would provide incredible peace of mind to know that teachers in the DOE were trained to recognize and react appropriately if a child has an asthma attack at school.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on average, in a classroom of 30 children, about 3 are likely to have asthma. Low-income populations, Native Hawaiians, and children living near traffic intersections experience more emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths due to asthma than the general population. CDC also recommends that schools provide asthma education for students with asthma and education programs for students, school staff, parents, and families. This bill would allow our state to be in-line with CDC recommendations.

It takes a village to raise a child, and schools are part of the village that helps foster the learning and healthy environment that our keiki need to thrive. We ask you to please support House Bill 1799 to ensure that our children with asthma have the best fighting chance to thrive in all environments.

Mahalo,

Troy Siruno  
Honolulu, HI  
(808) 216-7807  
tsiruno@gmail.com

Chair Woodson  
Vice Chair Kapela  
Members of the Committee on Education

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1799, RELATING TO ASTHMA

My name is Julian Lipsher, a member of the American Lung Association of Hawaii's Local Leadership Board testifying in Support of HB 1799, Relating to Asthma.

This bill provides needed support that children with asthma need through the provision of training for Department of Education teachers along with optional education for children with asthma on management of the disease.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 10.2 % of Hawaii's children were estimated to have asthma compared to 7.5% of children in the US. Asthma can be managed through early identification with primary care health professionals, support to parents and families and proper accessible medications.

In school situations, critical training for school personnel would support early intervention which can prevent needless and expensive calls to 911 resulting in hospital transports or to working parents needing to come and pick up the child. It is estimated that in an average classroom of 30 students, there are about 3 children with either diagnosed or undiagnosed asthma

In Hawaii, cases of asthma are more often found in low income populations, particularly those without primary care involvement and disproportionately among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. Further, environment plays a role with susceptibility occurring among children living in or near high traffic areas.

CDC recommends that schools provide asthma education for students with asthma and for school staff, parents and families. This bill would align Hawaii with CDC recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.