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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS  
The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
The Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

**H.C.R. NO. 139 REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT AN ANALYSIS  
REGARDING THE SCOPES OF PRACTICE FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE  
REGISTERED NURSES AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS**

**H.R. NO. 139 REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT AN ANALYSIS  
REGARDING THE SCOPES OF PRACTICE FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE  
REGISTERED NURSES AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS**

Hearing: Tuesday, March 29, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

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The Office of the Auditor appreciates the opportunity to testify on H.C.R. No. 139 and H.R. No. 139, requesting the Office of the Auditor to conduct an analysis regarding the scopes of practice for advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants, and offers the following comments.

We believe some of the work called for by the resolutions – specifically, analyzing whether the scopes of practice for advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants should be expanded in certain areas of medical care and services – is beyond our expertise. Other agencies, such as the Professional and Vocational Licensing Division of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, the boards that regulate physicians and nurses, and the Legislative Reference Bureau may be better equipped to do the study.

We are additionally concerned about our capacity to perform, internally, the audits and other types of assessments that we currently are statutorily mandated to do, the audits and other studies that the Legislature requests each legislative session, and the analysis required by the resolutions.

Thank you for considering our testimony related to H.C.R. No. 139 and H.R. No. 139.

## **Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board**

**Before the  
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness  
Tuesday, March 29, 2022  
10:00 a.m.  
Via Videoconference**

### **H.R. 139, REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT AN ANALYSIS REGARDING THE SCOPES OF PRACTICE FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS**

Chair Yamane and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ahlani Quiogue, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawaii Medical Board (Board). The Board appreciates the intent of and offers comments on this resolution as it pertains to physician assistants only.

The purposes of this resolution are to request that the Office of the Auditor (Auditor) conduct an analysis of: (1) the scopes of practice for advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants; (2) whether the scopes of practice for advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants should be expanded in certain areas of medical care and services, including: school-based health services, medical care for minors related to human immunodeficiency virus, abortion care, the records review process for prescriptions of controlled substances, Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments waived tests, medical aid in dying, and other medical care and services; and (3) a comparison to other jurisdictions and whether those jurisdictions allow for similar expanded scopes of practice.

The Board appreciates the intent of this measure because it proposes to have the Auditor analyze very important matters that could ultimately result in the Board updating its statutes, rules, and policies to bring it to parity with the current practice of physician assistants based on their education and training.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.

## **Testimony of the Board of Nursing**

**Before the  
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness  
Tuesday, March 29, 2022  
10:00 a.m.  
Via Videoconference**

### **H.R. 139, REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT AN ANALYSIS REGARDING THE SCOPES OF PRACTICE FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS**

Chair Yamane and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chelsea Fukunaga, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Nursing (Board). The Board appreciates the intent of and offers comments on this resolution only as it pertains to advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs).

The purposes of this resolution are to request that the Office of the Auditor (Auditor) conduct an analysis of: (1) the scopes of practice for APRNs and physician assistants; (2) whether the scopes of practice for advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants should be expanded in certain areas of medical care and services, including: school-based health services, medical care for minors related to human immunodeficiency virus, abortion care, the records review process for prescriptions of controlled substances, Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments waived tests, medical aid in dying, and other medical care and services; and (3) a comparison to other jurisdictions and whether those jurisdictions allow for similar expanded scopes of practice.

The Board requests amending this resolution to include that the Auditor also perform an analysis of state and local laws and regulations to identify “gaps and limitations” that exist in providing access to health care by APRNs due to the physician shortfall, especially on the neighbor islands and in rural communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.



**March 29, 2022 at 10:00 am**  
**Via Videoconference**

**House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness**

To: Chair Ryan I. Yamane  
Vice Chair Adrian K. Tam

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy  
Associate Vice President, Government Affairs  
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: **Submitting Comments**  
**HCR 139 and HR 139, Requesting the auditor to conduct an analysis regarding the scopes of practice for Advance Practice Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants**

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the health care continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 20,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **comments** on this resolution. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and Physician Assistants (PAs) play a critical role in our healthcare system in expanding access to primary care and, sometimes, specialty services. Nationally, there is a growing movement to allow qualified APRNs and PAs who meet certain educational, training, and experiential standards to expand their scope of practice to meet patient and employer demands. There are many studies that have shown the effectiveness of using APRNs and PAs as primary care providers (and, in some cases, as more specialized providers) and these clinicians have become integral parts of a medical teams at various hospital facilities in the state.

The Association, has taken on workforce development as a major priority. We are actively working on programs with education and other community partners in the state to strengthen the healthcare workforce pipeline. We have focused our efforts on encouraging high school and community college students to enter into educational programs, apprenticeships, and jobs in the sector to encourage interest in and knowledge of the opportunities that healthcare allows. Once in, we want to make sure that there is a simple glidepath to help these individuals gain more experience and education and work their way into positions that provide a solid career and a living wage. We also hope to provide more wrap-around financial supports and scholarships to help disadvantaged students enter the healthcare workforce, and to address issues of equity in access and care.

As an Association, we have not engaged directly with member organizations—which includes hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and hospice agencies—on questions related to scope of practice and whether the scope of certain clinicians should be expanded or changed. With the particularly acute need for entry-level workers, we have not delved into that particular topic at length. This has clearly become a topic of greater interest as policies are being considered to increase access to care, and it is one that we are starting to grapple with within our own organization.

It is important to note that changes to the scope of practice for APRNs and PAs have generally fallen into three major categories. In the first category, there have been updates to the licensure chapters in Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to align with widely accepted national standards for scope of practice—an example of this can be found in HB 1575, which modifies review of PA records to better align with national practice.

In the second category are groups and advocates who would like to expand the practitioners available for very specific services or procedures—this could include changes to services such as abortion of medical aid in dying. On those measures, clinicians may comment on whether the service or procedure is within the national standards but often these are not changes being recommended by clinicians themselves.

Third, and lastly, there are cases where clinicians or others may be asking to update existing HRS to create provider neutral language. This has been a more common occurrence over the past decade or so since the Hawaii State Legislature expanded the scope of practice for APRNs to act as independent providers, including prescribing drugs. These measures often change language in HRS that was passed prior to the expansion of a nurse's scope of practice that plainly states that only a physician can carry out some action. One example of a change that was made recently was to allow qualified APRNs to be engaged in assisted community treatment determinations so that the program was not limited to only relying on psychiatrists.

Healthcare workforce shortages have always been an issue in Hawaii, and the pandemic only worsened the situation. Over the years, policies to expand access for patients in the state have allowed APRNs, PAs, and other clinicians to provide quality, appropriate care to many patients who might otherwise not have had access. Further, we believe that APRNs, PAs, and other clinicians have a role on medical teams within facilities such as hospitals.

We have started conversations amongst our membership to discuss scope of practice issues and how to resolve any questions or issues that may come up regarding various provider types. Ultimately, for employers, they will choose how to best use and integrate various types of clinicians into their own practice workflow. We believe that continuing to allow national standards to guide scope of practice decisions in the state is a reasonable step forward, and would suggest that a review and analysis of other states' scope of practice might not provide the best picture of what's best for our state since so many communities limit access in a way that is not always beneficial for residents. A working group that is designed to discuss what is best for the state moving forward may be helpful in reaching a greater understanding on this matter.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.



## **DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD**

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March 29, 2022

### **TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, AND HOMELESSNESS**

**House Concurrent Resolution 139 / House Resolution 139 –  
Requesting the Auditor to Conduct an Analysis Regarding the Scopes of Practice  
for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants.**

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Concurrent Resolution 139 and House Resolution 139.

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