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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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WRITTEN
TESTIMONY
ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2597 SD1 HD1
RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.**

REP. SYLVIA LUKE, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: April 1, 2022

Room Number: Video & 308

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** Recommended general fund appropriation of \$500,000.
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the Hawaii State Loan
- 3 Repayment Program given its track record of success. Adequate resources to assure the
- 4 program's continuity is in the best interest of Hawaii's communities.
- 5 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2597, S.D. 1, H.D. 1

April 1, 2022
3:00 p.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference

RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2597, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, appropriates an unspecified amount in general funds in FY 23 to the Department of Health for the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment Program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine. The appropriated funds would be subject to a dollar-for-dollar match from a private or another public source.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Friday, April 1, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.

By

Jerris Hedges, MD, Dean and
Kelley Withy, MD, Professor, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health,
Hawai'i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Director
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2597 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. The John A. Burns school of medicine (JABSOM) **supports SB 2597 SD1 HD1** which seeks funding for the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment Program administered by JABSOM in the amount of \$500,000, provided that its passage does not replace, or impact priorities as indicated in OUR BOR Approved Budget. We request that the measure take effect on July 1, 2022.

Since September 2012, the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment program which is administered by JABSOM has been operating successfully, and has supported 64 recipients in exchange for work commitments in underserved geographic practice areas in Hawai'i. Of the loan repayment participants, over 70% have remained in Hawai'i to practice, and more than half have remained at the site where they performed their service. Currently, there are 25 active providers in the program with another 7 waiting for funding.

The Hawai'i State Loan Repayment program leverages public funds and private donations to access matching federal funds through the State Loan Repayment Program of the National Health Service Corps of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Currently, health care professionals who have benefited from the loan repayment program serve on all islands and in the communities of Waimea, Kihei, Wai'anae, Hilo, and Wailuku; at health clinics in Kalihi-Pālama and Kōkua Kalihi Valley; and in public institutional settings at the federal detention center in Honolulu, the Hālawā correctional facility and the Maui County correctional center. Health care professionals who are eligible to participate in the program include physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists, social workers, and many others.

Many Hawai'i residents are unable to obtain timely and appropriate health care due to shortages of primary and behavioral health care professionals in the State. These shortages not only threaten individual health, but also cumulatively affect the State's health care costs. Areas of Hawai'i that have been designated by the federal government as medically underserved have been most significantly affected by shortages of primary and behavioral health care professionals, such as physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and psychologists. Social workers, marriage and family therapists, and nurses are also urgently needed in these areas.

In many cases, the increasingly high cost of education for health care professionals binds graduates to a career path designed to repay often exorbitant student loans. These career paths most frequently lead to professional practice in highly specialized practice in urban areas rather than in general practice on the neighbor islands or in underserved areas of O'ahu where the need is greatest. Furthermore, those states with robust primary health care systems have lower costs and improved patient outcomes. Recognizing this correlation, many states have made the policy decision to dedicate public funds to loan repayment programs to help develop a strong primary health care workforce for underserved areas.

An investment of State matching funds would enable JABSOM to draw as much federal money as possible and allow the program to provide loan repayment to more health care professionals in our ongoing efforts to alleviate the health care professional shortages in Hawai'i.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



April 1, 2022

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair,
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Date: Friday, April 1, 2022
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 308, State Capitol

From: Anne Perreira-Eustaquio, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: S.B. No. 2597 SD1HD1 RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS**

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

SB2597 SD1HD1 proposes to appropriate funds subject to a matching funds requirement for Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine of the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

DLIR supports this measure provided it does not conflict with the priorities identified in the Governor's Executive Budget request.

II. CURRENT LAW

N/A

III. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL

Reducing the tremendous burden of student debt will encourage more health professionals to continue working in underserved areas and thereby help reduce the pressing need for healthcare workers in those areas.

For this reason, the Department supports this bill as an effective strategy to address shortages in the healthcare workforce in underserved areas, provided sufficient funds are appropriated and its passage does not replace or adversely affect priorities identified in the Governor's Executive Budget request.



**Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Friday, April 1, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.**

**by
Laura Reichhardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT on SB 2597, SD1, HD1

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of SB 2597, SD1, HD1** loan repayment for health care professionals.

In Hawai'i, health care professionals are in high demand yet in low supply, particularly on the neighbor islands and in rural and underserved areas of our state. This includes all of Hawai'i and Kaua'i Counties as well as most of Maui County. Though population dense, O'ahu also has areas that are medically underserved.

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing acknowledges that supporting healthcare professionals including nurses, by reducing their personal expenses through loan repayment, is one way to recruit and retain these valued professionals in and across our state. This program has proven success year over year in supporting healthcare professionals with starting and continuing service in rural areas and underserved areas in our state. The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing **provides testimony in support of this measure both for the intent of the measure and for full funding of this initiative.**

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is that through collaborative partnerships, the Center provides accurate nursing workforce data for planning, disseminates nursing knowledge to support excellence in practice and leadership development; promotes a diverse workforce; and advocates for sound health policy to serve the changing health care needs of the people of Hawai'i.



April 1, 2022 at 3:00 pm
Via Videoconference

House Committee on Finance

To: Chair Sylvia Luke
Vice Chair Kyle T. Yamashita

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

Re: **Testimony in Support**
SB 2597 SD 1 HD 1, Relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals

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 30,000 people statewide.

We would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to **support** this measure, which would provide funding for loan repayment at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) to support various healthcare professionals who practice in underserved areas. Investing in our healthcare workforce is critical because of the shortage of professionals in several categories in Hawaii, including physicians and other critical allied professionals. This funding will help to alleviate that shortage by creating opportunities directly in the state to train our healthcare workforce. By training professionals in-state, we are more likely to keep them and their skills here, serving patients in Hawaii.

We are supportive of the legislature's efforts to direct funding towards effective and important programs that will help to ensure that residents have access to needed care.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony in support of this measure and funding.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Friday, April 1, 2022; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2597, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.

Chair Luke, Chair Yamashita, 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** Senate Bill No. 2597, House Draft 1, RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live 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 appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the Hawaii State Loan Repayment Program so long as no funds be released unless matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by funds from a private or another public source.

This bill would take effect on January 1, 2060.

The State of Hawaii is experiencing a severe shortage of health care professionals in the workforce, especially in rural areas. Recent studies note that the current shortage of physicians is at 20% of the total full-time equivalent positions throughout the State. The shortage is especially severe in the fields of primary care, infectious diseases, colorectal surgery, pathology, general surgery, pulmonology, neurology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, family medicine, cardiothoracic surgery, rheumatology, cardiology, hematology/oncology, and pediatric subspecialties of endocrinology, cardiology, neurology, hematology/oncology, and gastroenterology.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2597, House Draft 1
Friday, April 1, 2022; 3:00 p.m.
Page 2

This bill would provide the resources to continue a financial incentive that enhances the quality and stock of Hawaii's future healthcare workforce. Accordingly we commend this effort and wish to participate in any and all discussions concerning workforce development.

For this reason, the HPCA supports this bill.

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.



HAWAI'I STATE RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Friday April 1, 2022 3:00 P.M.
Via Video Conference

House Committee on Finance

To: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

From: Lisa Rantz
President, Hawaii State Rural Health Association

Re: **Testimony in Support of SB 2597, SD1, HD1
Relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals**

The Hawaii State Rural Health Association (HSRHA) respectfully submits written testimony in strong support of S.B. 2597, SD1, HD1.

As a non-profit rural health association, our mission is to advocate for rural health issues and promote communication, education and research of issues related to rural health. Our vision is that we are the collaborative health leader for rural communities in Hawai'i.

This measure, as introduced, will fund out of the general revenues, \$500,000 for FY 23 to the Hawaii state loan repayment program which is administered by the John A. Burns school of medicine, and that these funds require a 1:1 match in order to be expended.

The rural areas of Hawaii have the gravest physician shortages in our state. We also know that the cost of student loans, coupled with the cost of living in Hawaii, feel insurmountable to rural providers. This program recognizes the exceptional work of eligible health care providers, incentivizes them to stay in rural areas in exchange for loan repayment support, and doubles the contribution of the state by requiring matching funds. We also know, from the years this program has successfully been implemented, that these providers become passionate and committed to the communities for which they serve. This program is exceptional.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of the intent and full funding of this measure.

Established in 1998, the Hawai'i State Rural Health Association (HSRHA) is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization dedicated to addressing rural health needs across our island state.

~ Working Together To Promote
Healthy Rural Communities ~

Executive Board:

Lisa Rantz, Hawai'i
Judy Mikami, Moloka'i
Valerie Janikowski, Lana'i
Cristin Gallagher, Hawai'i

Board At Large:

Kimberly Kobayashi, Hawai'i
Jessie Marques, Ka'u
Kanani Kaye, Kaua'i
Laura Reichhardt, O'ahu
Puanani Hee, Kaua'i
Gregg Kishaba, O'ahu
Kelley Withy, O'ahu

Priorities:

Rural Provider Shortages
Workforce Development
Opioid and Substance Abuse
Primary Prevention
Health Equity

Hawaii State Rural Health Association

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Twitter @HawaiiRural
Twitter @Hawaii_ECHO

Friday, April 1, 2022 at 3:00 PM
Via Video Conference

House Committee on Finance

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

Re: **SB 2597, SD1, HD1 – Testimony In Support
Relating to Loan Repayment For Health Care Professionals**

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 SB 2597, SD1, HD1 which appropriates funds for the Hawaii State Loan Repayment program administered by the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

The continuation of the Hawaii State Loan Repayment program that supports payments of educational debt for primary care and behavioral health physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, psychologists, social workers, licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists and certified nurse midwives who work for non-profit organizations in Health Professions Shortage Areas of Hawaii plays a vital role in addressing the shortage of healthcare professionals in the state. Hawaii has a shortage of almost 750 doctors, and almost all other types of primary care and behavioral healthcare workers. Without these healthcare providers, the people of Hawaii do not have access to the healthcare they need. The shortage is most acute for those on the neighbor islands and those with the least resources. One of the fastest and least expensive methods for recruiting providers is through loan repayment.

JABSOM has successfully administered the program which has helped 64 healthcare providers since the program began in 2012. To date, nearly 2/3 of those providers continue to work in underserved communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Date: April 1, 2022

From: Hawaii Medical Association

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD, Chair, HMA Legislative Committee

**Re: SB 2597 SD1 HD1 Hawaii State Loan Repayment Program; Health Care Professionals; John A. Burns School of Medicine; Appropriation
Position: Support**

Currently Hawaii has 3,293 physicians providing care in our state, and there is a statewide shortage of 732 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs), as reported in the 2022 UH Annual Report on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project ¹. Since 2012, support from the Hawaii State Legislature in partnership with JABSOM, HMSA and Queens Medical Center through the State Loan Repayment Program has helped to recruit physicians to Hawaii practice. HMA is grateful for the continued support of this financial assistance program, particularly for needed recruitment to counties like Hawaii and Maui, where provider shortages are the worst at 40%.

It remains an important priority for Hawaii physicians to sustain quality healthcare in Hawaii and maintain the delivery of vital services to our underserved areas, particularly on the neighbor islands. The Loan Repayment Program must be sustained to support young physician trainees and improve our Hawaii physician workforce that remains critically low.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify in support of this measure.

continued

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



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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www.hawaiimedicalassociation.org

REFERENCES

Withy K et al . UH System Annual Report to the 2022 Legislature on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project.

Associated Press. Shortage of Hawaii Doctors Worsens During COVID-19 Pandemic.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/hawaii/articles/2021-01-06/shortage-of-hawaii-doctorsworsens-during-covid-19-pandemic>

Hiraishi K. "Hawai'i Doctor Shortage Worsens Under Pandemic. " Hawaii Public Radio. Jan 5, 2021. <https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/post/hawai-i-doctor-shortage-worsens-underpandemic>

HMA OFFICERS

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Immediate Past President – Michael Champion, MD Treasurer – Nadine Tenn Salle, MD
Secretary – Thomas Kosasa, MD Executive Director – Marc Alexander



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Date: April 1st, 2022
From: Hawaii Chapter of American College of Emergency Physicians (HACEP)
Elizabeth England MD, Chair, HACEP Legislative Committee

Re: SB2597 SD1 HD1: RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.
Position: Support

HACEP is the Hawaii Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians and represents over 150 emergency physicians, residents and medical students working and training across the state.

Hawaii is currently experiencing a significant shortage of doctors across multiple specialties, with the most recent data estimating an unmet need for 732 full-time physicians¹. This places the population of Hawaii at risk of extended wait times to see a physician, limited access to specialty care and ultimately, underdiagnosed and undertreated medical conditions. It is imperative that we address this shortage by increasing the number of practicing physicians in Hawaii to ensure our citizens are receiving the appropriate, high-quality care they need when they need it.

As noted by the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) in their testimony, “Of the loan repayment participants, 83% have remained in Hawai‘i to practice, and 70% have remained at the site where they performed their service. Currently, there are 25 active providers in the program with another 7 waiting for funding.” The primary solution to the physician shortage is to recruit and retain more physicians. JABSOM has demonstrated its ability to achieve this through its loan repayment program.

Thank you for allowing the HACEP to testify in support of this measure.

REFERENCES

1. Withy K et al . UH System Annual Report to the 2022 Legislature on Findings from the Hawai‘i Physician Workforce Assessment Project.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Finance

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

Date: April 1, 2022

Re: Support for SB 2597, SD1 HD1: Relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals

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 testimony in support of SB 2597, SD1 HD1, which appropriates funds for the Hawaii state loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine; provided that the funds are matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by a private or another public source.

We support efforts to develop our healthcare workforce given the projected shortage in our state. The 2022 Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment estimated the current shortage for physicians to be over 700. Queen's supports our local medical students and graduates who would like to live and work in Hawai'i through internship and residency programs. In FY 2019 Queen's contributed approximately \$16.4 million in education and training to support current and future health care professionals in the community. The burden of student loans and Hawai'i's high cost of living can act as barrier to attracting and retaining healthcare professionals. This loan repayment program has a record of success in keeping quality health care professionals in our state and we wholeheartedly support funding this program moving forward.

Thank you for allowing us to provide this testimony in support of SB 2597, SD1 HD1.

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.

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF HAWAII PSYCHIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

To: Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice Chair Kyle Yamashita, and Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Dr. Denis Mee-Lee, Legislative Committee Chair, Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association

Time: 03:00 p.m., April 1, 2022

Re: SB 2597 SD1 HD1, RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association (HPMA) appreciates this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2597 SD1 HD1 , relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals, which appropriates funds for the Hawaii state loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns school of medicine, subject to a matching funds requirement.

HPMA represents between 100 and 200 Physicians, who, after four years of medical school, receive a minimum of four additional years of specialty training in Psychiatric hospitals, clinics and the community.

HPMA supports the legislature's efforts to address a significant shortage of primary care physicians, psychiatrists and other health care professionals in the State; this shortage affects our patients, their families and, by extension, the health care system of Hawaii.

The ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency has highlighted the imperative for robust investments to address the nation's critical psychiatric workforce shortage.

The imperative for quality primary care physicians and psychiatrists is significant; SB 2597 SD1 HD1 addresses this need.

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