



**Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 3:00 PM**

**By**

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

**Comments on S.B. 2634**

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to present comments on this measure, which appropriates funds for the expansion of the certified nurse aide to practical nurse bridge program at the University of Hawai'i Maui College, including funding for instructional costs and student aid.

The UH Maui College certified nurse aide to practical nurse program is novel in that it retrofitted the pre-requisites, curriculum, and delivery to target excellent certified nurse aides who both are seeking career advancement and are dedicated to their workplace. By creating cohorts within health settings, this program delivers education where the workforce is.

This program is remarkable because our state's licensed practical nursing (LPN) programs are dwindling, and are in dire condition. In the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing AY 2020-2021 Educational Capacity report<sup>1</sup>, we note:

*“LPN programs suffered substantial losses in seats for new students... the state lost 35% of its seats for new LPN students in AY 20-21 as compared to the previous academic year. This loss is especially worrisome because of the heavy reliance that many non-acute facilities place on LPNs and the fact that the LPN workforce in the state has been shrinking for several years despite consistent capacity in LPN programs prior to the pandemic” (page 18).*

In the AY 2021-2022 report<sup>2</sup>, we noted that enrollment again remained at the low rates reported in the AY 2020-2021 report, and hoped to see an increase in LPN admission and enrollment due to the innovative program housed at UH Maui College.

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<sup>1</sup> Hawai'i State Center for Nursing. (2022). *Hawai'i State Nurse Education Capacity Report, Academic Year 2020-2021*. [https://www.hawaiiicenterfornursing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2020-2021-Hawaii-Nurse-Education-Capacity-Statewide-Report-v.Final\\_.pdf](https://www.hawaiiicenterfornursing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2020-2021-Hawaii-Nurse-Education-Capacity-Statewide-Report-v.Final_.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Hawai'i State Center for Nursing. (2023). *Hawai'i State Nurse Education Capacity Report, Academic Year 2021-2022*. <https://www.hawaiiicenterfornursing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2021-2022-Education-Capacity-Statewide-Report-v.Final-1.pdf>

*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.*

In addition, the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing 2021 Nursing Workforce Supply Report<sup>3</sup> stated that *“it is certain that the number of LPNs in Hawai'i continues to decline which will exacerbate a critical shortage, especially in postacute/long-term care”* (page 13).

Without innovative models for LPN education, our state's healthcare system will have to shift rapidly and dramatically. Measures like S.B. 2634 and the UH Health Initiative, are paramount to aligning the educational pathways to the current and growing healthcare needs.

Thank you for your attention to this pathway and measure. Innovative solutions like UH Maui College's program are the key to a successful healthcare future in our state.

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<sup>3</sup> Hawai'i State Center for Nursing. (2021). *2021 Hawai'i Nursing Workforce Supply Report*.  
[http://www.hawaii-center-for-nursing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Statewide-Report-v.Final\\_.pdf](http://www.hawaii-center-for-nursing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Statewide-Report-v.Final_.pdf)

*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.*

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 6, 2024

To: The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education

Date: Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
Time: 3:00 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 229, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: S.B. 2634 RELATING TO HEALTH CARE EDUCATION**

**I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

The DLIR **supports the intent** of this measure as a means of addressing Hawaii's healthcare workforce shortages and defers to the University of Hawaii. SB2634 makes an appropriation for the expansion of the certified nurse aide to practical nurse bridge program at the University of Maui College.

Prior to and during the pandemic, the importance of nurses to Hawaii's healthcare framework became very evident. An inadequate workforce can lead to challenges and gaps in healthcare provision and ultimately a disruption in care. Recognizing the critical need for nurses, DLIR has in the past provided funding to UH Maui College through mini grants allocated by the legislature to support the nursing community's management of the huge demand for nurses at all nursing levels. DLIR supports the efforts of UH Maui College and its partners to manage Hawaii's skilled nursing workforce needs.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

#### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
February 6, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

By

Erika Lacro

Vice President for Community Colleges  
University of Hawai'i System

### SB 2634 – RELATING TO HEALTH CARE EDUCATION

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Community Colleges is in support of SB 2634, "Relating to Health Care Education."

The purpose of SB 2634 is to provide funds for the expansion of the Certified Nurse Aide to Practical Nurse Bridge Program at UH Maui College. This innovative program was developed in partnership with industry employers to streamline entry of currently working certified nurse aides (CNAs) into the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) training program.

SB 2634 will enable UH Maui College to further expand the program state-wide and meet the state-wide LPN workforce shortage by supporting instructional costs and student aid. The instructional funding will encourage Registered Nurses in the field to become clinical and lab lecturers for expanded cohorts across the state. The student aid funding will increase access to the LPN program by supporting tuition, fees, supplies, and related costs. According to the Healthcare Association of Hawai'i, the current LPN statewide vacancy rate is at 30%, with 211 LPN job openings statewide.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 2634, on the condition that any funds appropriated in support of this program does not supplant any portion of the University's budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2634.

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore  
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers  
Tom Cook  
Gabe Johnson  
Tamara Paltin  
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez  
Shane M. Sinenci  
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

February 5, 2024

TO: The Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education

FROM: Alice L. Lee  
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2024; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2634, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE EDUCATION**

I support this measure to make appropriations for the expansion of the CNA+ to PN Bridge Program at University of Hawai'i Maui College, which is designed for certified nurse aides and other healthcare professionals who want to become licensed practical nurses

I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I **support** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Increasing access to educational and training opportunities for healthcare workers is important to the residents of Maui County.
2. There is a higher likelihood that healthcare workers will choose to remain in Maui County if they are trained here.
3. Students who complete the program are able to work in a variety of healthcare settings, which will provide them many job opportunities and allow them to grow their careers.
4. The program's website shows that it is successful and worthy of expansion: <https://maui.hawaii.edu/cna-to-pn-bridge-program/>.

Thank you for your consideration.



The Committee on Higher Education  
February 6, 2024  
3:00 PM  
Room 229

RE: **SB 2634, Relating to Health Care Education**

Attention: Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani and Members of the  
Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) **supports the intent and purpose of SB 2634**. The appropriation of funds for instructional costs and student aid for Maui College to expand nursing care education at this time is vital.

This bill not only appropriates funding for instructional costs as outlined in section 3, it also appropriates funding for student tuition, fees, supplies and related costs. This bill provides for the student to fully engage with the faculty at Maui College for a full educational experience.

UHPA supports and encourages the committee to **pass SB 2634**.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern  
Executive Director  
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly



## THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEM

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To: The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Higher Education

From: Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health System

Date: February 6, 2024

Re: Support for SB2634 – Relating to Health Care Education

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The Queen's Health System (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 10,000 affiliated physicians, caregivers, and dedicated medical staff 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 SB2634, which appropriates funding for the expansion of the certified nurse aide to practical nurse bridge program at the University of Hawai'i Maui College.

We applaud the legislature for passage of Act 074 in 2023 and your commitment to provide the resources needed to continue growing our local healthcare workforce. The 2022 Healthcare Workforce report produced by HAH noted a statewide demand for 211 additional LPNs. Unfortunately, there are not enough opportunities to educate and train for this particular type of clinician, which is why HAH, in partnership with stakeholders and UH Maui College, are creating the first of its kind CNA to LPN Glidepath program. This program coupled with increasing entry-level certification programs and expanding nurse residency programs reflects a concerted effort by the healthcare community to invest in our local workforce.

Investing in our overall healthcare workforce is essential to meeting the need for professionals at all levels in our state - especially on our neighbor islands. Thank you for allowing Queen's to provide testimony in support of this measure.

*The mission of The Queen's Health System 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.*

Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 3:00 pm  
Conference Room 229

**Senate Committee on Higher Education**

To: Chair Donna Mercado Kim  
Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani

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

Re: **Testimony in Support**  
**SB 2634, Relating to Health Care Education**

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 healthcare 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our **support** for the intent of this measure. This measure seeks to continue the legislature's support of the certified nurse aide (CNA) to licensed practical nurse (LPN) program, particularly by allowing the program to expand to more communities on the neighbor islands. We would note that this bill requests supplemental funds for this expansion, with some funding already provided in Act 74, SLH 2023.

The innovative earn-and-learn model highlighted in this measure successfully graduated 31 individuals in the 2023 pilot year, which doubled the local LPN supply. Prior to the availability of this program, individuals would have to leave the workforce—giving up pay and benefits—to advance their education and careers. Through this program, we were able to offer both the education and hands-on clinical training needed to successfully advance the nursing careers of participants while keeping critical workers in their positions.

We would like to note that we have been working on two other bills—HB 1827 and SB 3225—that would fund additional (and separate) costs of this successful program, including the wrap services and program advising support that have proved critical to the success of this program. We are requesting \$700,000 in those measures to support an additional 50 students. These funds would be matched with around \$230,000 in other funding. Thank you for considering this important program, and for your continued commitment to strengthening our healthcare workforce.





February 3, 2024  
Conference Room 229

**House Committee on Higher Education & Technology**

To: Chair Donna Mercado Kim  
Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani

From: Wesley Lo  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ohana Pacific Management Company/Hale Makua Health Services

Re: **Support**  
**SB2634, Relating to Health Care Education**

Ohana Pacific Health (OPH) / Hale Makua Health Services (HMHS) is the largest provider of post-acute care services in the State of Hawai'i and also, the largest provider of Medicaid nursing facility services. Our organization employs almost 1,500 healthcare workers and manages approximately 950 nursing home beds that provide short-term rehab and long-term care, adult day health services and home health care, and Care Management/Navigation Services on all four major islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **STRONG SUPPORT for SB2634** for this measure and the funding included in it to support this critical "glidepath" to develop more health care professionals; **and if the opportunity exists, we would encourage additional funding to expand this program.**

The current landscape of healthcare in Hawaii is significantly affected by a lack of workers, particularly in the Long-Term Care industry, particularly for CNA's and Licensed Nurses. The affect of this shortage is that many of our facilities are unable to admit patients from the acute care hospitals due to the lack of workforce, which has exacerbated our financial situation. This situation is causing record high census in the hospitals to a "crisis point". Additionally, the lack of workforce and the resulting drop in census has severely affected our industry, as evidenced by the recent closure of Wahiawa Hospital's long term care facility, and several mainland operators are choosing to leave the market.

This pilot program has been a tremendous success, by providing the ability to recruit new entry level healthcare workers and offer them a pathway to become a licensed practical nurse in an "earn and learn" environment.



KALELE



LUANA LIVING



THE VILLAS



Ann Pearl



Garden Isle



Hale Kupuna



Hale Makua



Hale O Meleana



Legacy Hilo



Pu'uwai O Makaha



This has not only provided a pathway to a living wage for participants, but also is assisting in solving the severe shortage of healthcare workers.

In 2023, the inaugural program started. Due to the collaboration from with the legislature the University of Hawaii, Ohana Pacific, Kaiser, Healthcare Association of Hawaii and Good Jobs Hawaii, we created an innovative and robust CNA to LPN Bridge Program. Not only will our communities across the state now have 31 more LPNs coming into the workforce, but this pipeline will continue to help us fill our gaps for years to come. This will also serve as a model for other pathways in healthcare that will help provide opportunities for community members, which will in turn help meet the needs of our communities. For 2024, this program has expanded, to allow for additional co-horts on Kauai, Oahu and Maui, but also to allow the expansion to Hawaii Island

It should be noted that there are two other bills—HB 1827 and SB 3225—that would fund additional (and separate) costs of this successful program, including the wrap services and program advising support that have proved critical to the success of this program. We are requesting \$700,000 in those measures to support an additional 50 students. These funds would be matched with around \$230,000 in other funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this program.

Wesley Lo  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
Ohana Pacific Health / Hale Makua Health Services



KĀLELE



LUANA LIVING



THE VILLAS



Ann Pearl



Garden Isle



Hale Kupuna



Hale Makua



Hale O Meleana



Legacy Hilo



Pu'uwai O Makaha

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 1:07:43 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2634, that would provide a bridge for Maui residents to become licensed nurse practitioners while working on Maui. Hands on experience is one of the best ways to become certified and we have a definite need for this career here in Maui.

Mahalo for your commitment to enhancing healthcare in our county,

Tamara Paltin

Alma Cremer  
1481 Ainaola Dr.  
Hilo, HI 96720  
808-365-2371

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

I am a nurse and also a nursing instructor at Hawai'i Community College. I am soon to graduate at UH-Hilo with a Doctor of Nursing Practice.

I am writing regarding SB 2634: Relating to Health Care Education. I support the Bill because we significantly need LPNs, especially in long-term care and clinics. I teach the nursing program at Hawai'i Community College, and we will be admitting practical nursing students in the Fall semester of 2024. It was paused for at least two years because of a nursing faculty shortage.

Respectfully,

Alma Cremer, MSN-ed, BSN, RN

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 11:07:39 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cardenas Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas Pintor

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:19:46 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chelseamay Pupuhi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of SB2634. I am a registered nurse on Molokai. I feel that support of this bill will ensure that our island will have capacity regarding our healthcare field. I am hoping this bill will also help to build capacity for our island in regards to a registered nurse program. It is very difficult for residents of Molokai who wish to ensue a career in healthcare without leaving the island. This presents as a major challenge for Molokai to keep residents on island as apart of the workforce. Many people from Molokai who move off island to pursue a nursing/medical degree find it difficult to return home to practice in our community as they have already buillt a life in the place that they have attended college. Having these types of programs available on Molokai and Lanai will aid in building capacity for our rural islands and help build and maintain health equity. This will help keep our residents on island with an opportunity to obtain a higher degree without having to move off island and contribute to the workforce.

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 11:06:57 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Courtney-Paige DiMaggio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and committee.

I am support of SB2634 relating to Health Care Education. I am a registered nurse who lives and works on the island of Moloka'i. Although this bill is not specifically geared towards Moloka'i, we do have Moloka'i residents that continue their education on the outer islands. We also have Moloka'i residents who have become residents of Hale Makua as we do not have a long term care facility on Moloka'i. We need to continue to grow the workforce capacity as the "silver tsunami" has hit our shorelines. The demand for services to care for kupuna exceed the supply of workers needed. An increase in licensed practical nurses in our state will help with meeting the demand.

Thank you for time and consideration.

Courtney-Paige DiMaggio

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 11:36:11 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katherine F Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this critical bill to strengthen nursing education in Hawaii.



**LATE**

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 7:42:00 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rosie F Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I support SB2634

Mahalo nui

**LATE**

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 7:44:55 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gene Ross K. Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I support SB2634

Mahalo nui

**LATE**

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 8:33:54 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sherry Sasada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill because we need more accessibility to these programs due to the fact that we have so many kupuna here, especially within our own ohana that need care. But, most families cannot take care of their kupuna because they need to work. So, if they could get certified and then work to take care of their own ohana then programs like this would have tremendously!!! We need to keep our ohana home with viable jobs and without the educational programs, we cannot do that. Mahalo!

**LATE**

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 8:45:50 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sheron Sasada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because our ohana are getting older and we need to be able to take care of our own and with having access to this education we will be able to take care of our own ohana and getting paid doing it.

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:01:42 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Faith Tuipulotu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB 2634.

Thank you,

Faith Tuipulotu

**LATE**

**SB-2634**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:37:29 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Iolani Kuoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I support SB2634 Relating to the Health Care Education allowing appropriations for the expansion of the certified nurse aide to practical nurse bridge program at the University of Hawai'i Maui College, including funding for instructional costs and student aid.

Mahalo,

Iolani Kuoha