

JAN 23 2008

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that about ten percent of
2 the population of the State of Hawaii has no public or private
3 health insurance. According to the Kaiser Commission on
4 Medicaid and the Uninsured:

5 (1) Over four out of five uninsured people are in working
6 families;

7 (2) Uninsured people are more likely than those with
8 insurance to be hospitalized for conditions that could
9 have been avoided;

10 (3) Because the uninsured are less likely to seek
11 preventive care, those with various forms of cancer
12 are more likely to be diagnosed in later stages of the
13 disease resulting in higher rates of death and
14 disability; and

15 (4) Nearly 40 per cent of uninsured adults skipped a
16 recommended medical test or treatment, and 20 per cent
17 say they needed but did not get care for a serious
18 problem in the past year.



1 The significant numbers of uninsured residents have a
2 considerable economic impact on the State's hospitals, community
3 health centers, and other health care providers, threatening
4 their ability to effectively serve the whole community.

5 The legislature finds that it is in the best interests of
6 the State to ensure access to primary and preventive health care
7 for its residents. In addition to facilitating a healthier
8 population, improving access to care reduces state expenditures
9 attributable to hospital and emergency room services for
10 preventable injuries or illnesses.

11 The legislature finds that the most effective means to
12 encourage access to primary health care for residents without
13 health insurance is through Hawaii's system of federally
14 qualified health centers. These centers:

- 15 (1) Are nonprofit, community-based organizations whose
16 purpose and expertise lie in serving people who
17 otherwise have limited or no access to health care;
18 (2) Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate
19 health care and a broad range of primary care and
20 preventive services, and are located in medically-
21 underserved areas where people have limited access to



1 other health care providers because of geographic and
2 socio-economic barriers;

3 (3) Contribute greatly to the economies and livability of
4 the communities they serve; and

5 (4) Are cost-effective providers whose care results in
6 healthier patients and decreased use of emergency,
7 specialty, and in-patient services.

8 Unfortunately, while federally qualified health centers
9 represent one of the most effective and responsive systems of
10 community-based primary care for uninsured people, financial
11 support for these providers is inadequate to meet needs for
12 medical, behavioral health, and dental services.

13 The purpose of this Act is to provide cost-effective care
14 for Hawaii residents who are uninsured while at the same time
15 ensuring that the community health center system remains
16 financially viable and stable in the face of a growing
17 population of uninsured persons.

18 SECTION 2. The department of health shall provide
19 resources to nonprofit, community-based health-care providers
20 for the provision of health care for uninsured persons.

21 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general fund
22 of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$2,000,000 or so much thereof



1 as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 to pay for the
2 provision of direct health care to the uninsured, which may
3 include primary medical, dental, and behavioral health care;
4 provided that distribution of funds may be on a "per visit"
5 basis, taking into consideration need on all islands.

6 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
7 health for the purposes of this Act.

8 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

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INTRODUCED BY: Amil Y. Lopez



Report Title:

Uninsured Health Care

Description:

Appropriates funds to provide care for uninsured Hawaii residents.

