



## Hawai'i Primary Care Association

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To: **The House Committee on Health**  
The Hon. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
The Hon. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1373**  
**Relating to Health**  
**Submitted by Beth Giesting, CEO**  
**February 6, 2009, 9:00 a.m. agenda, Room 329**

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association strongly endorses this measure. Hawai'i is fortunate to have a network of 14 independent nonprofit Community Health Centers that serve 110,000 individuals per year at 47 sites on six islands. In 2007, nearly 31,000 of the people who got care at Community Health Centers in Hawai'i were uninsured. Community Health Centers (also known as "Federally Qualified Health Centers") are a significant part of the health care safety net, meeting the needs of people who have the most complex mixes of social, economic, and health problems. These include people who are homeless, impoverished, uninsured, enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare, who have special language, cultural, or mental health needs, and residents of rural areas.

Community Health Centers provide primary medical, behavioral health, and dental services, and use a model of care – referred to as the Patient-Centered Health Care Home – that maximizes resources while addressing the multiple needs of patients and their families. CHCs intensively manage the care of patients chronically ill with diabetes, asthma, and hypertension and bring their conditions under control. They work with families to link them to needed public insurance and other programs. They make sure patients get prescription drugs through free and discounted pharmaceutical programs like the 340B program. By offering accessible alternatives, Community Health Centers ease emergency room overcrowding and reduce hospitalizations for ambulatory-sensitive conditions. Because of the emphasis on comprehensive primary care coupled with care management, Community Health Centers' care for the uninsured alone saved Hawai'i's health care system \$29 million in 2007.<sup>1</sup>

It is our understanding the Department of Health plans to supplant general funds that support care for the uninsured with to-be-collected cigarette tax revenues for FY 2010. While we understand the serious budgetary concerns we as a state face, we strongly urge you to provide separate funds for the uninsured. The new cigarette tax revenues were intended – and desperately needed – for health center expansion of services, improvements in health IT and facilities, quality improvement and compliance needs, and for emergency preparedness. As CHCs always operate on razor-thin margins, these essential costs are always hard to cover and are not otherwise supplemented by state funds. As noted below, this modest investment in community health centers reaps a tremendous savings for the state's health care system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of this measure which is one of the most important actions the Legislature can take to support Hawai'i's safety net health care system.

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<sup>1</sup> According to a study by the Robert Graham Center that used Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Data, the **annual cost for care for an uninsured patient served by CHCs is \$922 less than the average for uninsured patients. This figure multiplied by the 31,557 uninsured patients served by HI CHCs in 2007 equals \$29,095,554.** The cost margin for publicly and privately insured patients is even greater, with CHCs reducing the cost per patient an average of \$1,810 resulting in a **total savings to Hawai'i's health care system of \$194 million.**



**Papa Ola Lokahi**  
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

**Papa Ola Lokahi**

894 Queen Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: 808.597.6550 - Facsimile: 808.597.6551

**Papa Ola Lokahi**

is a non-profit Native Hawaiian organization founded in 1988 for the purpose of improving the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians and other native peoples of the Pacific and continental United States.

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Member Organizations**

*Hoola Lahui, Hawaii*

*Hui No Ke Ola Pono*

*Hui Malama Ola Na Olu*

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*University of Hawaii*

*Hawaii State Department of Health*

*Na Puuwa*

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*Hawaii Primary Care Association*

*Ke Alaui*

**Executive Director**

*Hardy Spoehr*

**TESTIMONY: HB 1373 Relating to Health**

House Committee on Health  
House Committee on Human Services  
Friday, February 6, 2009  
9:00 am  
Conference Room 329  
State Capitol

Hardy Spoehr, Executive Director

Aloha Chairs Yamane and Mizuno and Members of the House Committees on Health and on Human Services.

Non-profit community-based health care providers are the backbone of the health care system for our state. The five Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems provide health care services on all the islands not only to Native Hawaiians but to all who avail themselves to their services. Annually, the Systems see between 12,000-15,000 people for primary care, preventive services, and traditional healing services.

Papa Ola Lokahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board, supports this measure which would ensure that resources are available within the state structure to continue to provide services to our state's uninsured. This safety net is critical. Without this legislation is a very real possibility that there will not be financial resources to cover the health needs of our uninsured population.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

To: House Committee on Health  
The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
The Honorable Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

From: May Akamine, RN, MS, Executive Director

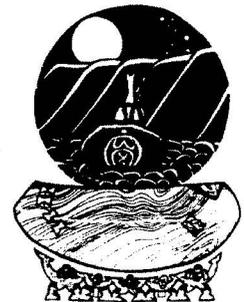
**Testimony in Support**  
**House Bill 1373, Relating to Health**  
Friday, February 6, 2009, 9:00 a.m. agenda, Room 329

I strongly support this bill which will restore money for Community Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to continue to provide excellent health care to people who are uninsured. Waimanalo Health Center (WHC) helps keep people from using expensive emergency room services by providing medical and behavioral health care, and supplying prescription drugs. We also offer health education and help patients get other services they need to be healthy. At WHC, people who are uninsured cannot afford to purchase private insurance and do not qualify for QUEST (Medicaid). They also cannot afford to pay for the full cost of their health care so we rely on this funding from the State.

WHC, which serves a Medically Underserved Population (MUP) in a Health Professions Shortage Area (HPSA), is a vital part of Hawaii's health care system providing quality preventive and primary health and social services to our Ko'olaupoko communities targeting Waimanalo's 10,000 residents. We served nearly 4,000 people in 13,000 visits this past year; 30% of our patients have no health insurance. Another 45% have QUEST Medicaid. Not only do we serve the uninsured and underinsured, but also the poor, elderly, at-risk youth, homeless, and many others with financial, cultural, social and other barriers to care. In addition, we serve a large population of Native Hawaiians who have the worst health indicators (hypertension, diabetes, obesity, etc.) compared to other ethnic groups. About 45% of our patients are Native Hawaiian and we're seeing an increasing number of Pacific Islanders. While we continue to grow and expand, our community still has unmet health care and social service needs.

Because 30% of our patients have no insurance, the State Department of Health's Comprehensive Primary Care funds is one of our major sources of funding. With so many growing demands and very few resources, we need to rely on State policy and funding decisions that support us to serve the indigent and those with no insurance. It makes a lot of economic sense to support this bill. If upfront, primary care is provided to Hawaii's people, we will save on the costly Emergency Room and hospitalizations that will, inevitably, be utilized when primary and preventive health care is not sought. I am proud of the high quality and compassionate care that WHC provides all our patients. In addition, we are committed to make our community a better place to live by providing not only health services, but also jobs, training, and bringing our community together.

We appreciate the long-term, unwavering support that the Legislature has given our FQHCs, our patients, and our communities. We urge your support for **HB1373**, which makes an appropriation for health care for the uninsured. Mahalo and Aloha!



**Waimanalo Health Center**

**Ph. (808) 259-7948 Fax: (808) 259-6449**  
**www.waimanalohc.org**

**41-1347 Kalaniana'ole Hwy**  
**Waimanalo, Hawaii 96796**

Date: February 4th, 2009

To: House Committee on Health,  
The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair

From: Faye Newfield, Consumer of the Kaua`i Community Health Center

Testimony in Support House Bill 709 and 1373, Relating to Health  
Faye Newfield February, 6, 2009, 9:00 a.m. Agenda, Room 329

I am writing as a consumer of the services of the Kaua`i Community Health Center. With the current recession we are experiencing state and nationwide, I want you to know that I strongly support this bill which will restore funding for my community health center to continue to provide excellent health care to people who are without health insurance as well as underinsured patients.

The Kaua`i Community Health Center provides care for residents which helps to keep them away from unnecessary or late use of the ER. The Kaua`i Community Health Center has friendly staff who care about the patient. They provide services which include primary care, dental care, behavioral health, outreach and case management services. The Kaua`i Community Health Center also supplies medication through its pharmacy which is low cost. It also offers health education and helps patients get other services they need to be healthy through referral.

These are difficult times for all of us, as people lose their job, many are not able to purchase COBRA or buy their own insurance. They have large families who also need care. The Kaua`i Community Health Center is in Waimea and Kapa`a. It does not turn anyone away who does not have private insurance, whereas, if you go to a private practice physician or dentist, it is very common on Kaua`i that they do not want to take you as a patient.

I have had that experience when I tried to find a dentist on Kauai who would take me because I had an emergency dental problem. The Kaua`i Community Health Center was able to take me straight way and performed a needed root canal. When I called other dentists that I had been referred to by friends, I was turned away. If the Kaua`i Community Health Center had not been there when I needed them, I probably would have had to fly to Oahu for a root canal! (and I have health insurance). It's a problem, when there are shortages of providers willing to take patients on Kauai. I know I am not the only person on Kaua`i who has gratefully relied upon the Kauai Community Health Center because there was no other place to go for care.

The point is that at the Kauai Community Health Center, people who are uninsured cannot afford to purchase private insurance and don't qualify for Med-QUEST because of their assets can receive necessary healthcare.

The uninsured also cannot afford to pay for the full cost of their health care so we rely on this funding from the State to help them with their healthcare so they can at least have access to healthcare.

As the recession worsens, the health of the people on Kauai and the State may worsen, because they have no health insurance, no job, and no Community Health Center to take care of them if defunded by the State. This is a serious problem that I am calling on the legislators to address and ensure that no one State suffers needless healthcare problems for lack of access to care.

If the economy is to remain strong, we must take care of our people so that they can stay healthy and be able to work.

The Kaua`i Community Health Center helps to make the community a better place to live by providing health care, jobs, training, and a focus for bringing residents together. But there are more people in the community who need health care. We ask you to help us help them by increasing funds to care for the uninsured.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.

Faye Newfield  
3412 Hina Hina Street  
Lihue, Hawaii 96766

**Date:** 2/3/09

**TO:** *House Committee on Health,  
The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair*

**FROM:** *David Peters  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i*

**Testimony in Support**  
**HB 709 & HB 1373 Relating to Health**  
*Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. (Capitol Room 329)*

I strongly support this bill which will restore needed funding to the only community health center on Kaua`i. Given the economic downturn in the past months we are running short of funding to support the current needs. This coupled with the fact that the Governor did not release the additional \$1 million appropriated last year by the legislature. This puts Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i in a financial bind that can only lead to cuts in staffing and services at our center.

Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i helps keep people from needing emergency room services by providing medical, dental, and behavioral health care, and supplying prescription drugs. It also offers health education and helps patients get other services they need to be healthy. At Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i, people who are uninsured cannot afford to purchase private insurance and don't qualify for Med-QUEST. They also cannot afford to pay for the full cost of their health care so we rely on this funding from the State.

Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i serves the entire island of Kauai which has nearly 62,000 residents, and 10% or 6200 have no health insurance. There is also a shortage of physicians here and none are able to take care of very many people who don't have health insurance.

Ho`ola Lahui Hawai`i is also the Native Hawaiian Health Care System for Kaua`i County which serves Native Hawaiians and their families with services culturally tailored to their needs in our clinics and communities.

We have grown steadily since we started the CHC in 2001 and have two sites in two of the neediest areas of the island: Waimea and Kapa`a. However, we still don't come close to meeting all the needs in the communities we serve.

More than a third of our 6500 patients in 2007 were uninsured and 85% were below 200% of poverty.

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

Date: 2/06/09

To: House Committee on Health,  
The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair

From: Kathy Sassi MSN APRN CHCNS-BC FNP

**Testimony in Support**  
**House Bill 709 and 1373, Relating to Health**  
**Kathy Sassi, February, 6, 2009, 9:00 a.m. Agenda, Room 329**

I am a Community Health Clinical Nurse Specialist and a Family Nurse Practitioner who has worked at Waikiki Health Center, currently teach Community Nursing at HPU, and work at Job Corps in Waimanalo. I have the opportunity to see the positive impact Community Health Centers make as well as the need for expanded service. I strongly support this bill which will restore money the community health centers need to continue to provide excellent health care to people who are uninsured. All community health centers keep people from needing emergency room services by providing medical, dental, and behavioral health care, and supplying prescription drugs. They also offer health education to clients and learning opportunities for health professional students including nurses and APRNs and help patients get other services they need to be healthy. I have frequently encountered patients who are uninsured, cannot afford to purchase private insurance and don't qualify for Med-QUEST. They also cannot afford to pay for the full cost of their health care so we rely on this funding from the State.

I am proud of the high quality and compassionate care that Hawaii community health centers provide patients. They contribute to making our community a better place to live by providing health care, jobs, training, and a focus for bringing residents together. When members of the community are employed in their own community in satisfying jobs that contribute to community health there is a positive effect on all. But there are more people in the community we serve who need health care. We ask you to help us help them by increasing funds to care for the uninsured.

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

**nishimoto2-Bryce**

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**From:** Coralee Chin [chico006@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 05, 2009 7:51 AM  
**To:** HLTtestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony in Support of House Bill 709 and 1373, Relating to Health

Date: February 5, 2009

To: House Committee on Health,  
The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair  
[hltestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:hltestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)

From: Coralee Chin, MSW  
Outreach Worker  
Kalihi Palama Health Center

**Testimony in Support**  
**House Bill 709 and 1373, Relating to Health**  
**February, 6, 2009, 9:00 a.m. Agenda, Room 329**

I am an outreach worker at Kalihi Palama Health Center. I strongly support this bill which will restore money my community health center needs to continue to provide excellent health care to people who are uninsured. Kalihi Palama Health Center helps keep people from needing emergency room services by providing medical, dental, and behavioral health care, and supplying prescription drugs. It also offers health education and helps patients get other services they need to be healthy. At Kalihi Palama Health Center, people who are uninsured cannot afford to purchase private insurance and don't qualify for Med-QUEST. They also cannot afford to pay for the full cost of their health care so we rely on this funding from the State.

I am proud of the high quality and compassionate care that Kalihi Palama Health Center provides all its patients. It also contributes to making our community a better place to live by providing health care, jobs, training, and a focus for bringing residents together. But there are more people in the community we serve who need health care. We ask you to help us help them by increasing funds to care for the uninsured.

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

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"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matt 6:19-21 (NIV)

Feb 4, 2009

To: House Committee on Health,  
The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair

From: Robert Cooper, board member of the Bay Clinic, a Federally Qualified Community Health Center in Hilo

**Testimony in Support**

**House Bill 709 and 1373, Relating to Health**

**Robert Cooper, February, 6, 2009, 9:00 a.m. Agenda, Room 329**

I am a Board Member of the Bay Clinic in Hilo. I strongly support this bill which will restore money my community health center needs to continue to provide excellent health care to people who are uninsured. I think you would be amazed at all the things that a community health center, such as Bay Clinic provides. We also offers health education and helps patients get other services they need to be healthy. At the Bay Clinic, people who are uninsured cannot afford to purchase private insurance and don't qualify for Med-QUEST. They also cannot afford to pay for the full cost of their health care so we rely on this funding from the State.

If you were to spend some time at one of our health centers you would be surprised at what we do, and how efficient we do it. We also contribute to making our community a better place to live by providing health care, jobs, training, and a focus for bringing residents together. But there are more people in the community we serve who need health care. We ask you to help us help them by increasing funds to car for the uninsured.

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

nishimoto2-Bryce

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**From:** Richard Gore [docgore@msn.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 04, 2009 10:00 AM  
**To:** HLTtestimony  
**Subject:** HB 709, 1373, 1375

**Dear Sirs:**

**I am a dentist providing care at the CHC on Kauai as part of Ho'ola Lahui Hawai'i. I see on a daily basis patients with no insurance that rely solely on our clinic to provide their care. I strongly recommend that you support HB 709, HB 1373, and HB 1375. Loss of uninsured funding which helps support our clinics would have far reaching effects on the uninsured of Kauai and the state of Hawai'i. Our providers constantly strive to provide state of the art care in a compassionate manner to these patients. Loss of uninsured funding and Medicaid benefits would have a significant impact on the dental health and general health of our patients. Thank you for your consideration in this extremely important matter.**

**Richard L Gore, DDS  
Dental Director, KCHC, Kapa'a Clinic  
Ho'ola Lahui Hawai'i**

Date: February 4, 2009  
To: House Committee on Health,  
The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair  
From: Phil Kinnicutt, Board Chair, Waikiki Health Center

**Testimony in Strong Support of  
House Bill 709 and 1373, Relating to Health**

Phil Kinnicutt, February, 6, 2009, 9:00 a.m. Agenda, Room 329

I am the board chair of the Waikiki Health Center. I strongly support this bill which will restore money my community health center needs to continue to provide excellent health care to people who are uninsured.

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