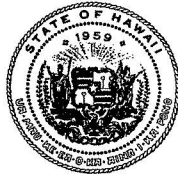


WRITTEN ONLY

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

House Committee on Health

H.B. 2081, Relating to Premature Infant Health Care

**Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D.
Director of Health**

January 26, 2010

- 1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health must oppose this bill. It is not the function of
- 2 government, this would be more appropriate within the private sector.
- 3 **Fiscal Implications:** If government were responsible for this function we would not be able to address
- 4 this due to fiscal implications.
- 5 **Purpose and Justification:** Require that the Department of Health develop a plan to improve hospital
- 6 discharge and follow-up care procedures for premature infants born earlier than 37 weeks gestational
- 7 age to ensure standardized and coordinated processes are followed as premature infants leave the
- 8 hospital. The Department is more than willing to share data and expert consultation regarding premature
- 9 infant care with our private sector partners.
- 10 Thank you for the opportunity testify.



MedImmune

Testimony in Strong Support of
HB 2081 Relating to Premature Infant Health Care
House Committee on Health
Tuesday, January 26, 2010, 9 a.m., Room 329

By Alicia Maluafiti on behalf of MedImmune

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and members of the committee,

MedImmune - a leader in prevention of pediatric infectious disease - supports HB 2081 which would lead to collaborative efforts with the state, hospitals, physicians, parents, advocacy organizations and other stakeholders to develop and distribute information in Hawaii to help parents and families understand the unique needs of their premature babies.

HB 2081 would require the Department of Health to develop a plan to improve hospital discharge and follow-up care procedures for premature infants born earlier than 37 weeks gestational age. Further, this bill would ensure that standardized and coordinated processes for premature infants discharged from hospitals are established in Hawaii. In 2005, 12.7% of all births in the United States, or more than 525,000 infants, were premature at less than 37 weeks gestational age.

Although prematurity is a major factor contributing to infant mortality, many premature infants are more likely to survive than ever due to advances in medical technology and treatment. Nevertheless, premature infants are still at risk for a host of health and developmental issues that can last into and sometimes beyond childhood. Because of the significant rates of premature births and the wide range of health issues that premature infants face, it is essential that parents of these babies have access to clear information to assist them in caring for and supporting their newborns from infancy through childhood.

Recently, the state of Hawaii received a "D" score from the March of Dimes 2009 Premature Birth Report Card. Additionally, the Report Card stated that Hawaii's preterm birth rate is 12.4% (.2% increase from the prior year); 1 in 10 births in Hawaii are premature; and the state's late preterm birth rate rose to 9.1% (.5% increase from the prior year).

HB 2081 is an important first step to ensure that Hawaii can reduce re-hospitalizations and improve healthcare quality and outcomes for infants born preterm through enhanced hospital discharge, follow-up care and management processes. Most importantly, it will help keep the state's most vulnerable population – who cannot advocate for themselves - healthy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.