

# LATE

February 4, 2010

To: Committee on Health – Rep. Ryan Yamane, Chair and Rep Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

**RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2801:**

**MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION FOR  
HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS CORPORATION FOR OPERATIONAL COSTS**

Aloha,

There is a physician shortage and it will only get worse. Today, half of the physicians in Hawaii are over 50 years old. Today, one out of three physicians are in primary care, BUT only one out of FIVE medical students want to go into primary care. The prediction is that in fifteen years there will be a shortage of 46,000 doctors.

Who will feel the physician shortage the most? The rich and comfortable? No, it is the poor and vulnerable. The underserved are the canaries in the coal mine. They get the brunt of the suffering whether it be Hurricane Katrina, the Iraq War or the Haiti Earthquake.

In some ways the physician shortage has already impacted Hawaii. The lack of specialists and primary care doctors on the neighbor islands and the difficulty recruiting staff at the Community Health Centers are signs. We need to start training doctors that will stay in Hawaii and take care of our own local people.

Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center's answer is to **"Grow Our Own."** We started a **medical school** in partnership with ten other community health centers. Over the last three years we have been building the infrastructure of the Waianae Hub of A. T. Stills University School of Osteopathic Medicine. This school is **community based**. The first year is spent in Arizona, year two is spent embedded in Waianae and the third and fourth years are on clinical rotations.

One of the difficulties of starting a new medical school is getting enough clinical rotations. Inpatient hospital rotations are needed in OB/GYN, Internal Medicine, Surgery and Pediatrics.

*"The ability to bring new caregivers to practice in the community health center ensures that our hospitals will be able to provide necessary health care services to residents and visitors in this health professional shortage area." HB2801*

**Please consider amending HB2801 to include accepting Hawaii-based medical students for clinical rotations at ALL Hawaii Health Systems Hospitals, as a criteria for receiving the emergency appropriation.**

Mahalo,

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