

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony COMMENTING on HB 1063
Relating to Health

REPRESENTATIVE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 10, 2015 8:30 AM Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates \$2,374,237.98 of general funds in fiscal years 2015-2016 and
2 2016-2017. The measure requests the state Department of Health to assist the city and county of
3 Honolulu to operate an additional ambulance unit.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Department recognizes the significant challenges to providing
5 health care and emergency services to the Moanalua, Aliamanu, Red Hill, Salt Lake, and Foster
6 Village Communities. The Department is projecting a shortfall in general funds to fund the
7 existing ambulance contracts across the state for FY16 and FY17. The Department respectfully
8 defers to the Governor's Executive Budget request for the Department of Health's appropriations
9 and personnel priorities. Funding an additional unit would have a negative impact on existing
10 services.

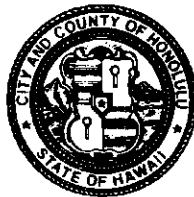
11 This measure seeks to augment the City and County emergency medical services system
12 for the residents and visitors of the Moanalua, Aliamanu, Red Hill, Salt Lake, and Foster Village
13 areas. The Honolulu City and County Emergency Medical Services currently operates 20 ground
14 ambulances on the island of Oahu. The last unit added was Ewa Beach in fiscal year 2013.
15 Honolulu City and County has budgeted funds to secure and administer a backup 911 contract
16 with American Medical Response to aid with increased 911 calls.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

18 **Offered Amendments:** none

HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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KIRK CALOWELL
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MARK K. RIGG
DIRECTOR

IAN T.T. SANTEE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

February 9, 2015

The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Richard P. Creagan, Vice-Chair
Committee on Health
House of Representatives
Twenty-Eighth Legislature
Regular Session of 2015

Re: HB 1063, Relating to Emergency Medical Care

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Creagan and Members:

The Honolulu Emergency Services Department, Emergency Medical Service Division, is in strong support of the HB 1063.

The Emergency Medical Service Division responds to 911 calls for emergencies throughout the island of Oahu. We respond to calls and treat life-threatening conditions daily. Our paramedics and EMTs have to take care of people who are hurt and sick in the worst kinds of conditions. When responding to incidents and to the hospitals with lights and sirens, our personnel put themselves at risk every time. Yet everyday, ever paramedic and EMTs go out there and make a difference.

As of today, the Honolulu Emergency Services Department, Emergency Medical Service Division, has 240 uniformed personnel. There are 78 females (32.5%) and 162 males (67.5%) that make up the uniformed personnel.

We have 18 EMS units that are 24-hours, 2 EMS units that are 16-hour units, and 2 non-transport response vehicles that are 16 hours.

The Honolulu District consists of 5 EMS units covering the area from the ocean to the mountain, and west of 6th Avenue to east of Ala Lilikoi. The average response time is 8 minutes in urban Honolulu.

Over the last 4 years, our total call volume over all has increased 18%. Last year, we responded to 87,557 calls. We transported 52,977. The 5 metropolitan units

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alone responded to 34,798 calls. That is 40% of the call volume. If you include adjacent units Wailupe and Aiea into that figure, since they are constantly covering the town area, it increases to 52%. Over half of our total call volume is run by 7 units. There is a definite need for another ambulance in the Salt Lake/Moanalua area to help out the town units.

The last time an EMS unit was added to the Metropolitan area was in 2005. The Salt Lake/Moanalua area responded to 4,418 calls in the past year. An additional ambulance would allow for more even distribution of the calls, and decrease overall response times.

We, the Honolulu Emergency Services Department, highly support the passage of HB 1063.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark K. Rigg".

Mark K. Rigg
Director

February 8, 2015

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Representatives of the Committee on Health

From: Jacquelyne Howard

Subject: Support of House Bill 1063, Emergency Medical Care

Aloha! My name is Jacquelyne Howard, and I am currently a senior at Kalaheo High School in Kailua. I strongly believe in HB 1063, and would like to ask for your support. As it stands at the current time, Moanalua, Aliamanu, Red Hill, Salt Lake, and Foster Village areas are in need of more Emergency Medical Services. The average time of response according to the National EMS Information System, it takes EMS responders anywhere from 8 to 12 minutes to respond. Without units in the Moanalua, Aliamanu, Red Hill, Salt Lake, and Foster Village areas the response time may be longer in which further endangers the patient. The "Move Over" law requiring motorists to "slow down" and "move over" when approaching emergency vehicles and tow trucks stopped for an emergency or rendering assistance on the side of the road will help to decrease the response time. But, without the sufficient amount of EMS units in the area it will not help as much as it intended.

In April 2014, the Honolulu Emergency Medical Services Division temporarily shut down four units after too many employees called in sick. Kohn2.com reported that the staff shortage resulted in the Waianae and Pawaa units being closed overnight from 11 p.m. Saturday to 7 a.m. Sunday. The Makiki and Waipio units were also closed from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday. With the response time already long and units being shut down, people are not getting the proper attention that is required in life or death situations. The more units being shut down due to lack of staff results other units have to travel farther to reach the Moanalua, Aliamanu, Red Hill, Salt Lake, and Foster Village areas.

"Access to health care in Hawaii is in a state of crisis." says Linda Rasmussen, MD, HMA immediate past president and vice president of the Western Orthopedic Association. The nursing and doctoral staff is already in continuous decline looking at 61% of the current staff population to be retiring in 2020. The expansion of medical services needs to be done now while it is still possible that way future generations will be interested and follow in their footsteps.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I truly hope that you will support House Bill 1063.