## S.C.R. NO. 4

JAN 1 9 2017

## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

DECLARING HOMELESSNESS TO BE A MEDICAL CONDITION IN THE STATE FOR PURPOSES OF MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY AND RECOGNIZING THAT HOUSING INSTABILITY IS A MAJOR HEALTH FACTOR THAT NEGATIVELY AFFECTS HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS' HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

WHEREAS, homelessness continues to be one of the State's most significant and challenging social problems; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2016 Hawaii Statewide Homeless Point-In-Time conducted in January 2016, there are 7,921 homeless individuals in the State, an overall increase of 4 percent from 2015; and

WHEREAS, homelessness is a complex issue that requires continuous resources and coordinated efforts at all levels; and

WHEREAS, homeless persons face a myriad of issues, including general health care, mental illness, substance abuse, loss of employment and income, and a lack of affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, the issues affecting homeless persons also impact the general population through the costs of social and health care services; and

WHEREAS, in fiscal years 2014 and 2015, The Queen's Medical Center reported treating 3,441 patients who were homeless; and

WHEREAS, treating these homeless individuals is sometimes uncompensated, as is the case with an unsheltered patient who reportedly received treatment 12,271 times over two years, which cost The Queen's Medical Center more than \$5,000,000 per year; and

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WHEREAS, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, "[h]omelessness both causes and results from serious health care issues, including addiction, psychological disorders, HIV/AIDS, and a host of order [sic] ailments that require long-term, consistent care"; and

WHEREAS, because housing instability detracts from regular medical attention, homeless individuals' conditions often get worse, which allows these medical conditions to become more dangerous and costly; and

WHEREAS, by recognizing the importance of housing stability within the practice of health care for homeless individuals, the State may be able to recover the costs that homeless individuals incur over their lifetime; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2017, the House of Representatives concurring, that homelessness be declared a medical condition in the State for purposes of medicaid eligibility and that housing instability be recognized as a major health factor that negatively affects homeless individuals' health and well-being; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State explore creative and innovative solutions to address homeless individuals' health care needs through housing stability from traditional and non-traditional resources, such as the Medicaid 1115 waiver; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Health, and Director of Human Services.

OFFERED BY:

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