

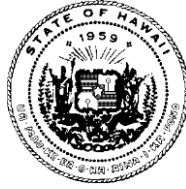
SCR56

Measure Title: REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF USING MEDICAID FUNDS TO PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR THE TREATMENT FOR HOMELESSNESS.

Report Title: Homelessness; Auditor; Study; Medicaid; Treatment

Current Referral: HMS/HOU, WAM

Introducer(s): GREEN, S. CHANG, ESPERO, KIDANI, Keith-Agaran



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 17, 2017

TO: The Honorable Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: SCR 56 – REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO ASSESS THE
IMPACT OF USING MEDICAID FUNDS TO PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR THE
TREATMENT OF HOMELESSNESS.

Hearing: March 17, 2017, 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill and offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of Senate Concurrent Resolution is to require the auditor to conduct a study to assess the impact of using Medicaid funds to provide coverage for the treatment for homelessness, homelessness, including the costs to provide coverage for the chronically homeless population in the State.

DHS recognizes and appreciates that there is an integral link between health and housing, especially for individuals who are chronically homeless. Without housing, individuals struggle to address their health conditions; and without addressing their health challenges, people struggle to obtain and retain housing. We also recognize the need for transformative approaches to providing and paying for services to address Medicaid.

For the past nine months, DHS Med-QUEST (MQD) actively engaged with various key Departments, community social service providers, health plans and community advocates for

mental health and substance use recovery services on the expansion of “tenancy supports” or “permanent supported housing” benefits for chronically homeless individuals. These supportive services include behavioral health and case management services. Having the auditor conduct a study to assess the impact of using Medicaid funds to provide coverage for the “treatment of homelessness” would allow an informed discussion of this concept. DHS will be happy to collaborate and assist the auditor however we are able.

Of note for the committee’s attention is the similarity of this measure to SB 2 SD 2 that also calls on the auditor to study the impact of using Medicaid dollars to address homelessness. It also appropriates an unspecified amount to cover the costs of the study.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on these measures.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

March 15, 2017

TO: The Honorable Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SCR 56 – REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO ASSESS THE
IMPACT OF USING MEDICAID FUNDS TO PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR THE
TREATMENT OF HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: Friday, March 17, 2017, 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of the resolutions and provides comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to request the State Auditor to conduct a study to assess the impact of using Medicaid funds to provide coverage for the treatment of homelessness, including the costs to provide coverage for the chronically homeless population in the State.

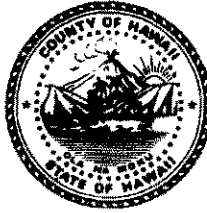
The Coordinator recognizes the strong intersection between healthcare and homelessness, and notes that providing stable housing can result in significant improvement in health outcomes and reductions in healthcare costs. For example, a preliminary analysis by the University of Hawaii Center on the Family of a subset of state Housing First clients found that based upon client report, estimated healthcare costs for clients dropped an average of 43% in the six months following housing placement – from an average of \$10,570 per client per month to \$5,980 per client per month.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Med-QUEST Division is currently pursuing an amendment to its 1115 Medicaid waiver, which would expand eligibility for case management and supportive services for Medicaid-eligible individuals that are identified as chronically homeless. By expanding Medicaid coverage, managed care health plans could potentially pick up some of the cost of state funding homeless outreach and housing placement activities that help people attain – and retain – housing. A study by the auditor will continue discussion on the use of Medicaid to address homelessness, and its findings will better inform future policy and programmatic decisions.

Finally, the Coordinator notes that this resolution is similar to SB2 SD2, Relating to Homelessness, which requires the auditor to conduct a similar study and appropriates an unspecified level of funds to support the study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Harry Kim
Mayor



Wil Okabe
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i
Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy, Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

March 15, 2017

Senator Josh Green, Chair
Committee on Human Services
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Senator Will Espero, Chair
Committee on Housing
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chairs Green, Espero, and Committee members:

**RE: Homelessness: HB 527, HD1; HB 1195, HD 1; HB 1281, HD 1
HB 83, HD1; HB 1240, HD2; HB1098, HD2; SCR 56**

Between your two committees, all the above bills dealing with homelessness will be heard. It is difficult for me to pick and choose among them, and I will defer to your good judgment as to which approaches should move forward and be funded. But I would be remiss if I did not thank you for the attention that you are giving to the issue, and express my hope that you and your fellow legislators will continue to strive to ease this burden and deal humanely with the pain that homelessness afflicts, both on those without shelter and on the community at large.

I should put in a special word for SCR 56. Using Medicaid funds to treat homelessness seems to be such an innovative approach; it deserves extra kudos.

Homelessness is an obvious failure of our society to meet the basic needs of all our people. We cannot hesitate to search for solutions.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Kim
Mayor