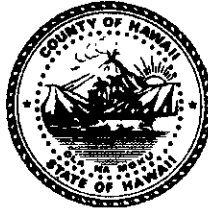


SB1410

Measure Title:	RELATING TO EMERGENCY SERVICES.
Report Title:	Ka'u Hospital; Emergency Services; Bed Count; Hawaii Health Systems Corporation; Appropriation (\$)
Description:	Appropriates funds to increase the bed count at the Ka'u hospital emergency room by four beds.
Companion:	
Package:	None
Current Referral:	CPH, WAM
Introducer(s):	KANUHA, S. CHANG, K. KAHELE, Baker, Kim, Moriwaki, Nishihara, Shimabukuro

Harry Kim
Mayor



Wil Okabe
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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February 4, 2019

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH
Hawai'i State Legislature

Dear Chair Baker and Committee members:

RE: SB 1410 RELATING TO EMERGENCY SERVICES (Ka'u Hospital)

Ka'u Hospital is a small rural facility serving a very large geographic area. Although the traditional population centers of Pahala and Naalehu are fairly stable, the number of residents in Ocean View has grown enormously, and so has traffic (and the potential for traffic-related injuries). While Ocean View can be serviced by either Ka'u Hospital or Kona Community Hospital, the need for emergency care in Ka'u is clear. I know you have limited resources and unlimited priorities. I must defer to you as to whether SB 1410 can "make the cut," but hopefully it will be seen as a small investment of funds with life-saving rewards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Kim", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Harry Kim
Mayor

HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS CORPORATION

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, February 5, 2019
TIME: 9:30AM
PLACE: Conference Room 229
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

LATE

**Testimony in Support of SB 1410
EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Appropriates funds to increase the bed count at the Ka'u Hospital Emergency Room by four beds.

Merilyn Harris, Administrator at Ka'u Hospital and Rural Health Clinic

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB 1410** that appropriates funds to increase the bed count at the Ka'u Hospital Emergency Room by four beds. We humbly request that SB 1410 be modified to provide support for the expansion of the Rural Health Clinic of Ka'u Hospital to improve access to urgent care and outpatient behavioral health services.

The four-bed Emergency Department (ED) at Ka'u Hospital serves 3,000 patients a year and has an average census of eight patients in a 24-hour period. Approximately one-third of our ED patients come to the hospital with medical issues that are non-emergent or are considered "urgent care." Among the main reasons patients use the ED instead of going to a clinic is that they could not get an appointment with their primary care provider soon enough or the clinic is not open when they need to be seen. Funding to expand our Rural Health Clinic's space and hours of operation would best serve the population.

The Ka'u Rural Health Clinic (RHC) is located within the hospital and provides approximately 5,000 clinic visits a year for primary care. Hours of operation are 8:00-4:45 am, Monday through Friday. It is one of three clinics in the Ka'u District, none of which have the capacity to provide urgent care. The Ka'u RHC is uniquely positioned to provide urgent care with on-site x-ray and lab services as well as its proximity to the Emergency Department should a true emergency arise.

Funding for the Ka'u RHC can help expand the clinic's hours of operation and services to include urgent care and behavioral health services. The Ka'u District is designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area for Mental Health. Many of our patients need these services, but do not have access to it. When patients in Ka'u require mental health services, they are usually referred to mental health professionals in Hilo or Kona due to the lack of providers in Ka'u. The travel time and expense deter many from accessing these needed services.

Finally, funding dedicated to the Ka'u RHC could be used for clinic expansion and renovations, and salaries for additional providers and support staff. Thank you for the opportunity to express my **support for SB 1410** to improve primary care in Ka'u.