

---

---

# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MEDICAL FACILITIES.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that during the  
2 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, Pacific Islander  
3 communities have been affected by COVID-19 at higher numbers  
4 than any other community of color in the State. Compact of Free  
5 Association (COFA) recipients have been particularly adversely  
6 impacted. Unfortunately, many COFA recipients have experienced  
7 prejudice and discrimination in the healthcare system and no  
8 longer use medical facilities as a first option to treat  
9 illnesses, but rather as an option of last resort that often  
10 results in a much more severe prognosis than if the patient had  
11 received treatment at an earlier stage.

12           The legislature further finds that, with the reinstatement  
13 of Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance by the United States  
14 Congress on December 20, 2020, COFA recipients are now able to  
15 participate in Medicaid and will no longer be a part of the  
16 largely uninsured population in Hawaii. In 2018, the United  
17 States Census Bureau estimated the number of COFA recipients in



1 the State at approximately sixteen thousand persons. Therefore,  
 2 investing in programs to bridge the cultural and language gaps  
 3 between healthcare providers and COFA recipients, as well as  
 4 other communities with similar cultural and language barriers,  
 5 will help alleviate the financial burden on the State and  
 6 mitigate revenue loss for medical facilities who provide service  
 7 and care for individuals who are uninsured.

8 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require any  
 9 hospital that serves a community including more than five  
 10 hundred COFA benefit recipients to:

- 11 (1) Establish diversity and inclusion training for all  
 12 staff; and
- 13 (2) Hire interpreters and community healthcare workers as  
 14 necessary to bridge the language and cultural divide  
 15 with the community.

16 SECTION 2. Any hospital that serves a community including  
 17 more than five hundred persons who are recipients of benefits  
 18 pursuant to the Compact of Free Association Act of 1985, Public  
 19 Law 99-239, or the Compact of Free Association between the  
 20 United States and the Government of Palau, Public Law 99-658,  
 21 shall:



- 1           (1) Establish and implement a program of diversity and
- 2           inclusion training for all staff; and
- 3           (2) Hire interpreters and community healthcare workers as
- 4           necessary to effectively communicate with and provide
- 5           culturally sensitive services to the community.
- 6           SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

Hospitals; Medical Facilities; COFA Recipients; Diversity and Inclusion Training; Interpreters; Community Healthcare Workers

**Description:**

Requires any hospital that serves a community including more than five hundred COFA benefit recipients to establish diversity and inclusion training for all staff, and to hire interpreters and community healthcare workers as necessary to bridge the language and cultural divide with the community. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

