
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) benefit recipients have been particularly
6 adversely impacted. Unfortunately, many COFA recipients have
7 experienced prejudice and discrimination in the healthcare
8 system and no longer use medical facilities as a first option to
9 treat illnesses, but rather as an option of last resort that
10 often results in a much more severe prognosis than if the
11 patient had 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 benefit recipients are now
15 able to participate in medicaid and will no longer be a part of
16 the 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 by medical facilities that 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 having more than five hundred
10 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 having
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 on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

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

Description:

Requires any hospital that serves a community having more than 500 Compact of Free Association 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. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

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