

**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 2022  
RELATING TO HEARING AND VISION PROGRAM**

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOOLE, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 1/26/2022

Room Number: Via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** There are no fiscal implications to the Department of Health (DOH).

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department **strongly supports** this measure to amend Hawaii  
3 Revised Statutes (HRS) §321-101 to establish recommended standards for hearing and vision  
4 screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection and reporting.

5 The DOH recognizes that the early identification of hearing and vision loss, with appropriate  
6 follow-up services, is essential for the development of children's language and communication  
7 skills needed for learning in school.

8 HRS §321-101 mandates a hearing and vision program for school children to be conducted by  
9 the DOH. This program was discontinued in 1995 due to budget reductions and with the  
10 assumption that primary care providers will do the hearing and vision screening. The DOH does  
11 not have the funding or staff resources to reinstate this program. Currently, an audiologist in the  
12 DOH provides training and consultation to community organizations on hearing and vision  
13 screening protocols and tools.

14 Improvement in hearing and vision screening for children is needed. Providers and community  
15 programs vary in their protocols and training for screenings and follow-up. Screeners vary in  
16 their training and skills for conducting screenings. Hawaii data from the National Survey of  
17 Children's Health show that, compared with other states, Hawaii ranks low in rate of vision  
18 screening of 61.6% (35<sup>th</sup> of 50 states for all ages of children). Although newborns receive

1 hearing screening, there is a need to identify children who develop hearing loss after the newborn  
2 period due to late onset or progressive hearing loss.

3 The proposed amendment to HRS §321-101 will allow the Department to set recommended  
4 standards based on national guidelines and best practices for hearing and vision screening and  
5 follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement. A statewide screening  
6 protocol will ensure that all organizations performing screening are using tools, screening  
7 procedures, and referral criteria based on evidence and best practice.

8 The DOH will use existing staff to support the proposed Hearing and Vision Program. The DOH  
9 will convene an advisory committee with professional, state, and community members to assist  
10 the DOH in developing recommended protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up,  
11 screener training, and data collection and reporting. Training will be provided at no cost to the  
12 community organizations.

13 **Offered Amendments:** None

14 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Testimony of  
John M. Kirimitsu  
Legal and Government Relations Consultant

Before:  
Senate Committee on Health  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

January 26, 2022  
1:00 pm  
Via Videoconference

### **SB 2022, Relating to Hearing and Vision Program**

Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this measure amending the hearing and vision program statute to increase the early identification of children with hearing or vision loss.

#### **Kaiser Permanente Hawaii supports this measure.**

Early childhood development can be negatively affected by poor eyesight or poor hearing. The single most important reason for early detection of hearing and vision loss is that it allows parents to determine if their child has a learning disability. Early detection of a potential problem is crucial and that is why a thorough screening is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services reports that two to three out of every 1,000 children in the U.S. are born with a hearing problem or are deaf. This also includes individuals who lose more of their hearing as they get older. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also note that nearly two-thirds of children who have a vision impairment will have at least one type of developmental disability. This could be intellectual disabilities, hearing loss, epilepsy, or cerebral palsy.

Kaiser supports increasing the early detection of hearing or vision loss in children by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement.

Thank you for your consideration.

**SB-2022**

Submitted on: 1/25/2022 10:14:10 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/26/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Doug Imig	Testifying for Early Childhood Action Strategy	Support	No

Comments:



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**Executive Office on Early Learning**  
2759 South King Street  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

January 25, 2022

**TO:** Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

**FROM:** Coleen Momohara, Interim Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning

**SUBJECT:** **Measure:** S.B. No. 2022 – RELATING TO VISION AND HEARING SCREENING  
**Hearing Date:** Wednesday January 26, 2022  
**Time:** 1:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Videoconference

**Bill Description:** Amends the hearing and vision program statute to increase the early identification of children with hearing or vision loss, by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement.

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support**

Good afternoon. I am Coleen Momohara, Interim Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL supports S.B. No. 2022 and defers to DOH as it relates to vision and hearing screening.

EOEL is statutorily responsible for the development of the State's early childhood system that shall ensure a spectrum of high-quality development and learning opportunities for children throughout the State, from prenatal care until the time they enter kindergarten, with priority given to underserved or at-risk children.

**Early identification of hearing and vision loss, coupled with appropriate follow-up services, provides the resources and support needed for families of children experiencing vision and hearing issues. These supports are essential for children's language and communication development, and learning throughout childhood and beyond.**

The National Survey of Children's Health demonstrates that Hawaii ranks low in rate and vision screening compared to other states (44<sup>th</sup> of 50 states for all ages of children.) Although newborns receive hearing screening, there is a need to identify children who develop hearing loss after the newborn period.

This bill will allow the Department of Health to set recommended standards based on national guidelines and best practices for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement.

As we work to increase access to quality early learning opportunities for our keiki, early identification and treatment of vision and hearing problems support children in their readiness for learning, school performance, and academic achievement. Timely and consistent screening will allow program staff to identify and provide the necessary support to families of infants who may be impacted by vision and/or hearing concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



Hawai'i  
**Children's Action Network Speaks!**  
Building a unified voice for Hawai'i's children

To: Senator Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Baker, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

Re: **SB 2024- Relating to Newborn Hearing Screening**  
1:00 PM, January 26, 2022

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of Senate Bill** , relating to hearing and vision program.

Early identification of hearing loss is important to ensure children and their caregivers are provided the supports and care they need. Hearing loss can occur throughout childhood and therefore, it is critical that screenings are on-going and that there are established evidence-based practices for the medical providers and personnel administering the screenings. House bill 987 HD1 requires the Department of Health to set recommended standards for training, certifications, and qualifications of personnel who conduct hearing and vision screening and it also allows the Department to set standards for ages or grades of screenings, ensuring consistent practice for all children across the state.

Establishing protocols for hearing and visions screening and follow-up and screener training will strengthen the state's on-going work. It will also help make the system more equitable for all children. In the study, *Missed Opportunities: Do States Require Screening of Children for Health Conditions that Interfere with Learning*<sup>1</sup>, children most likely to be impacted by health barriers to learning (which include vision problems and hearing loss) are those living in poverty<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, data collection and reporting is necessary to understanding if current systems of practice are meeting their goals. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House bill 987 HD1.

Kathleen Algire  
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING  
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE (808) 586-8100 FAX (808) 586-7543  
January 26, 2022

The Honorable Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health  
The Thirty-First Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawai'i  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Keohokalole and Committee Members:

**SUBJECT: SB2022 SD1 Relating to Hearing and Vision Program**

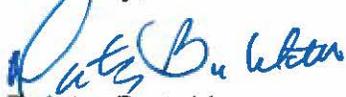
The State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB2022**, which amends the hearing and vision program statute to increase the early identification of children with hearing or vision loss by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement.

Early identification of hearing and vision loss is imperative in order to provide appropriate follow-up services to a child for the development of the child's language and communication skills. These skills are essential for the child to learn in school.

The Department of Health would have to amend Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §321- 101 in order to establish the recommended standards based on national guidelines and best practices for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement. A statewide screening protocol will ensure that all organizations performing screening are using tools, screening procedures, and referral criteria based on evidence and best practice. As such, the Council respectfully defers to the Department of Health for further guidance.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strongly supporting of SB2022**.

Sincerely,

  
Daintry Bartoldus  
Executive Administrator