
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that access to health
2 care is often complicated for rural residents. Many of the
3 State's specialty practices are located in the urban portions of
4 Oahu, and many medical specialists are unwilling to practice in
5 underserved rural areas of the State. This inherent barrier to
6 care underscores the severe need for comprehensive health care
7 coordination in rural areas.

8 The legislature further finds that the department of
9 health's office of primary care and rural health, in partnership
10 with community organizations such as Community First, conducted
11 a community health needs assessment for Hawaii island titled
12 "Access to Care -- Health for Our Communities". The assessment
13 analyzed 3,287 resident survey responses and identified delays
14 in health care delivery as residents' greatest obstacle to care.
15 Nearly six in ten respondents reported delays, often due to the
16 limited availability of specialists.



1 The legislature further finds that larger societal
2 concerns, including affordable housing, the State's high cost of
3 living, transportation difficulties, and child care challenges
4 are barriers to care that disproportionately affect residents of
5 underserved rural areas. To ensure health equity, the State
6 must look beyond the symptoms of social determinants of health
7 to address the root causes of negative health outcomes that
8 disproportionately affect rural communities, low-income
9 communities, communities of color, and sexual and gender
10 minorities.

11 The legislature further finds that coordinated efforts at
12 all levels are necessary to examine social determinants that
13 impact a community's access to health care resources and to
14 improve public health. The establishment of a strong health
15 network in underserved areas will allow these areas to
16 efficiently develop health care plans that encompass
17 preventative and primary health care, specialty care, and urgent
18 and emergency care. Comprehensive plans to align health care
19 priorities with existing resources will foster collaboration
20 between providers, avoid service duplication, and streamline
21 care delivery for the State's most vulnerable residents.



1 The purpose of this Act is to:

2 (1) Require the office of primary care and rural health to
3 oversee and support community efforts to
4 collaboratively address the health and wellness needs
5 of the State's most underserved rural residents and
6 facilitate discussions between key community health
7 and social service organizations to develop plans to
8 address community needs highlighted by the Access to
9 Care needs assessment; and

10 (2) Appropriate funds for full-time equivalent
11 (FTE) program specialist IV positions within the
12 department of health's family health services
13 division.

14 SECTION 2. (a) The office of primary care and rural
15 health shall oversee and support community efforts to
16 collaboratively address the health and wellness needs of the
17 State's most underserved rural residents and facilitate
18 discussions between key community health and social service
19 organizations to develop plans that align with appropriate
20 providers' goals and objectives.



1 (b) The office of primary care and rural health shall
2 include a one-time summary of community plans addressing the
3 Access to Care needs assessment with the report that is to be
4 submitted to the legislature prior to the regular session of
5 2024, pursuant to section 321-1.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

6 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
8 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
9 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
10 year 2024-2025 for the establishment of permanent full-time
11 equivalent (FTE) program specialist IV positions within the
12 department of health's family health services division to:

- 13 (1) Oversee the development of community plans; and
- 14 (2) Coordinate efforts across departments and nonprofit
15 community partners to address the social determinants
16 of health and health equity issues affecting
17 underserved rural areas statewide;

18 provided that the funds shall support travel and activities
19 necessary for the development of the community plans.

20 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
21 of health for the purposes of this Act.



1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on June 30, 3000.



Report Title:

Office of Primary Care and Rural Health; Rural Residents; Family Health Services Division; Department of Health; Positions; Report; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the office of primary care and rural health to oversee and support community efforts to collaboratively address the health and wellness needs of the State's most underserved rural residents to develop plans that align with appropriate providers' goals and objectives. Requires the office of primary care and rural health to include a one-time summary of community plans with the report that is to be submitted to the legislature prior to the regular session of 2024. Appropriates funds for the establishment of permanent positions within the department of health's family health services division. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD2)

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