

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep. Lisa Marten, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 23, 2023 – 3:00 pm Conference Room 309

Testimony in Support of House Resolution 210 / House Concurrent Resolution 206

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Resolution 210 / House Concurrent Resolution 206, which requests for the Department of Education to report on the feasibility of stocking short-acting bronchodilators in schools for emergency use. I strongly support this resolution as it is a step closer to allowing schools in Hawai'i to provide more immediate access to medications for students with asthma or suffering from respiratory distress. Asthma can be a deadly disease if flare-ups are not treated immediately. Stocking albuterol in schools has the potential to save lives and keep kids safe in schools.

Asthma impacts millions of lives and has a tremendous impact on our nation's healthcare system and economy. In the U.S., over 25 million Americans, including 5.1 million children have asthma.¹ In Hawai'i, 7.7% of children have asthma, which is higher than the national average.² That's over 20,000 children, which can be made worse by our unique local environmental factors, such as cockroaches, VOG, and the various allergy triggers.

Because asthma attacks can occur anytime and often without warning, children with asthma should always have access to medication that can quickly reverse the blockages in their lungs. This life-saving medication, called a short-acting bronchodilator, is easy to administer, inexpensive, and very safe.

Unfortunately, when children do not have asthma medication, which can occur for a variety of reasons such as forgetting it or not being able to afford it, schools have few options. A parent may not be immediately accessible or close enough to respond promptly. Even if they can, there is a delay during which the asthma attack often gets worse. In such cases, the school must call 911. Doing so is likely to lead to an ambulance transport cost and an emergency department visit costing thousands more. Such events also take children out of the classroom for days at a time and further impede their learning.

These adverse events are largely avoidable with a simple low-cost solution: stock medication or inhalers. Schools can use a single inhaler containing a short-acting bronchodilator along with inexpensive disposable spacers that can be used for anyone who experiences the sudden onset of cough, shortness-of-breath, and chest tightness that signals an asthma attack.

It is critical that school staff other than Keiki nurses are trained in the signs and symptoms of asthma and when it is appropriate to administer the rescue medications. Unfortunately, in Hawai'i there is not a keiki school nurse present in every school. However, because of the safety of the medication used and the life-threatening implications of an asthma attack, it is imperative that we train other staff to assess, access, and administer the required medication that would potentially save a student's life.

This resolution also is a strong first step for the Department of Education to adopt policies already adopted in 15 other states across the nation. I urge you to please pass House Resolution 210 / House Concurrent Resolution 206.

Sincerely,

Gary Y.G. Wong, MBA, RRT
President, Hawaii Society for Respiratory Care

¹ CDC. 2019 National Health Interview Survey.

² CDC. 2020 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Education

Re: **HCR 206 / HR 210 – Requesting the Department of Education to Report on the Feasibility of Stocking Short-Acting Bronchodilators in Schools for Emergency Use**

Hawai'i State Capitol and Via Videoconference
March 23, 2023, 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing **in SUPPORT of HCR 206 / HR 210**. These resolutions request the department of education to report on the feasibility of stocking short-acting bronchodilators in schools for emergency use.

**HCAN Speaks! Board
of Directors**

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in a classroom of 30 children, on average about 3 are likely to have asthma.¹ In Hawai'i, there are disparities in asthma prevalence: Native Hawaiians are disproportionately affected by asthma and experience the greatest burden, with the highest prevalence of 28.3%.²

Asthma attacks can strike at any time, including at school, and often without warning. These episodes may result in hospitalization, and can even be fatal. Quick-relief bronchodilators are a safe and effective treatment for asthma. Ensuring access to rescue medication is part of guidelines-based response to asthma emergencies.³

Best practices recommend that schools be allowed to stock this lifesaving medication and have trained adults ready to administer it in an emergency. Seventeen states have laws or policies allowing schools to stock quick-relief medications for students with asthma.⁴

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass these resolutions.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/asthma/index.htm>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8296946/>

³ https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/resources/lung/NACI_ManagingAsthma-508%20FINAL.pdf

⁴ <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/health-professionals-educators/asthma-in-schools/asthma-medication-in-schools>



LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**Written Testimony Presented Before the House
Committee on Education
Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 and via Videoconference
by
Laura Reichhardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

Comments on H.C.R. 206 / H.R. 210

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.C.R. 206 / H.R. 210.

This resolution requests that the Department of Education report on the feasibility of stocking bronchodilators for emergency use during respiratory distress and authorizing Department of Education employees to volunteer to administer bronchodilators and resolves that the Department should work with community organizations, including the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing.

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing was established by state law to support the state's nursing workforce, including to conduct research on best practice and quality outcomes (HRS 304A-1406). This work is done largely in part by cultivating expertise in evidence-based practice.

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is a longstanding collaborator with the Department of Education to support nursing workforce expansion in the school nursing setting. It would be with pleasure to serve on this committee convened by the department.

Thank you for the consideration of this testimony as it relates to H.C.R. 206 / H.R. 210.

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is that through collaborative partnerships, the Center provides accurate nursing workforce data for planning, disseminates nursing knowledge to support excellence in practice and leadership development, promotes a diverse workforce, and advocates for sound health policy to serve the changing health care needs of the people of Hawai'i.

TO: House Committee on Education
Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Lisa Marten, Vice Chair

DATE: Thursday, March 23, 2023
TIME: 2:00 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE RESOLUTION 210/HOUSE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION 206**

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Cynthia J. Goto, and I am writing to express my support for House Resolution 210/House Concurrent Resolution 206 which requests the Department of Education to report on the feasibility of stocking short-acting bronchodilators in schools for emergency use.

Asthma is one of the most common chronic childhood diseases in Hawaii. In Hawaii, 21,411 children have asthma¹ and allowing schools in Hawai'i to provide more immediate access to medications for students with asthma or suffering from respiratory distress has the potential to save lives and keep kids safe in schools.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on average, in a classroom of 30 children, about 3 are likely to have asthma. Low-income populations, Native Hawaiians, and children living near traffic intersections experience more emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths due to asthma than the general population.

Because asthma attacks can occur anytime and often without warning, children with asthma should always have access to medication that can quickly reverse the blockages in their lungs. This life-saving medication, called a short-acting bronchodilator, is easy to administer, inexpensive, and very safe.

Unfortunately, when children do not have asthma medication, which can occur for a variety of reasons such as forgetting it or not being able to afford it, schools have few options. A parent may not be immediately accessible or close enough to respond promptly. Even if they can, there is a delay during which the asthma attack often gets worse. In such cases, the school must call 911. Doing so is likely to lead to an ambulance transport cost and an emergency department visit costing thousands more. Such events also take children out of the classroom for days at a time and further impede their learning.

These adverse events are largely avoidable with a simple low-cost solution: stock medication or inhalers. Schools can use a single inhaler containing a short-acting bronchodilator along with inexpensive disposable spacers that can be used for anyone who experiences the sudden onset of cough, shortness-of-breath, and chest tightness that signals an asthma attack.

This resolution is a strong first step for the Department of Education to adopt policies already adopted in 15 other states across the nation. Please support the passage of House resolution 210/House Concurrent Resolution 206 to ensure that our children with asthma have access to safe and effective medication which could potentially save a student's life.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Cynthia J. Goto, M.D.

¹ CDC. 2019 National Health Interview Survey.

HR-210

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 5:20:50 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/23/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erica Yamauchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in strong support of this resolution in absence of the original bill.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise

LATE

HR-210

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 11:57:50 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/23/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Scharnhorst	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please consider this seriously for the potential life saving benefits to asthmatic studetns.