



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, April 5, 2024 at 10:20 a.m.

By

Denise Eby Konan, Dean
College of Social Sciences

And

Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, Interim Dean
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2805 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of HB 2805 HD1 SD1, provided its adoption does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. This measure appropriates moneys for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The full impact of the Maui wildfires and the resulting devastation on the affected communities remain largely unknown. The effect of the wildfires on the health and welfare of Maui residents as well as the needs of the community should be examined carefully so that informed decisions can be made toward the implementation of policies necessary to the recovery process.

This bill, which supports the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO), within the Social Sciences Research Institute, in collaboration with the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), the UH Cancer Center, the UH Pacific Disaster Center (in Kihei, Maui), and numerous community-based organizations, seeks to conduct a comprehensive social and health study on the impacts of the 2023 Maui wildfires on a diverse group of individuals. Additionally, the study aims to establish a registry of those affected by the wildfires to assess their long-term health and well-being, and the impacts on communities. We firmly believe that this research endeavor will provide invaluable information for the State of Hawai'i, local organizations, and policymakers.

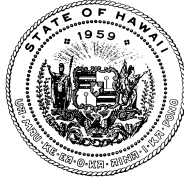
The UHERO and related University of Hawai'i partners, including JABSOM, are ideally positioned to conduct a multiethnic cohort study which would provide policy makers with

vital information concerning the Maui wildfires, health risks, and both short-term and long-term community needs.

UHERO has already begun the process of inviting Maui residents to participate in the study. Recent recruitment drives for the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES), has been incredibly successful but also financially challenging. As of February 2024, nearly 700 participants across ten sessions were recruited. However, further recruitment efforts were paused as the initial seed funding from HCF was exhausted. Although additional bridge funding is being sought, a state commitment would be invaluable to ensure that the project completes both the recruitment and analysis of its findings.

Providing the funds needed to continue the study would benefit Maui and the state as a whole. The information gained from this study will add to the knowledge gained from work done in partnership between members of the Maui community, emergency, social and health systems with many University of Hawai'i units and additional JABSOM investigators exploring mental health, preparedness, response, recovery, and resiliency efforts. All of this will be helpful to mitigate the consequences of future disasters, including those attributed to climate change.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2805 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO HEALTH

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing: Friday, April 5, 2024; 10:20 AM; Conference Room 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests that this measure be
2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the
3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governors executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Communicable Disease and Public Health Nursing Division
6 (CDPHND) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department.

7 The Department of Health supports this measure to fund the University of Hawai‘i’s Economic
8 Research Organization’s multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires. This
9 study is vital to enhance the understanding of the broad and long-term health impacts of
10 wildfires and other natural disasters on the diverse communities of Hawai‘i.

11 The Maui wildfires caused not only immediate devastation but has also created long-term
12 health risks to the communities impacted, many of which are unknown. This study will allow
13 public health workers to better understand these health risks to guide resource allocation and
14 prevention activities. Further, the study’s design as a prospective cohort study using a pre-
15 existing multiethnic cohort for comparisons is vital to understanding the many ways Maui’s
16 diverse communities have been impacted, especially those communities that were already

1 experiencing inequitable health outcomes before the wildfires. Understanding these different
2 health outcomes is crucial for state and local organizations, as well as policymakers, to best
3 allocate resources and develop health interventions and policies that meet the specific needs of
4 these communities. In addition, strengthening the local capacity to investigate and monitor
5 post-disaster health effects will benefit Hawaii into the future.

6 The Department is available to provide technical assistance and support the project from a
7 public health perspective and staff are collaborating with the Investigators.

8 The Department also recognizes the significance of this study in contributing to our broader
9 understanding of the human health impacts of wildfires and other climate-related disasters.
10 Climate change is a public health crisis, and our State needs as much data as possible to
11 strengthen our public health resiliency as we move into the future.

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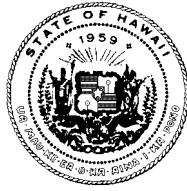
15

16

17 **Offered Amendments:** None

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

April 3, 2024

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2805 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.**

Hearing: April 5, 2024, Time 10:20 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this important measure and respectfully requests that appropriations not replace or reduce budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: This bill appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study and develop and maintain a registry regarding the health effects of the August 2023 Maui wildfires. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. Effective 7/1/3000. (SD1)

Committees on Water & Land and Higher Education & Technology (HD1) amended this measure by:

- (1) Specifying that the scope of the multiethnic cohort study is the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires;
- (2) Specifying that this measure is a matter of statewide concern;
- (3) Requiring the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization to maintain a registry of those affected by the wildfires to assess their long-term health and well-being;
- (4) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and

- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Committees on Higher Education and Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs (SD1) amended the measure by:

- (1) Requiring the University of Hawaii to seek matching, or more, federal and community funding, in addition to appropriations, to complete the multiethnic cohort study and registry; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The University of Hawaii –Economic Research Organization (UHERO) and the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) are best positioned to conduct the multiethnic cohort study and registry regarding the short and long-term effects of the Maui Wildfires. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the same group of researchers from JABSOM conducted community-relevant research that informed planning and response activities. Already, this study's preliminary findings have led to communication between researchers and the Med-QUEST division regarding available health care coverage. Notably, study participants may gain insight into their exposure as they contribute to the community's data necessary for recovery and future planning needs.

Other states impacted by fire, such as [California](#), have solicited proposals for *retrospective* studies of exposure to wildfire smoke and are examining direct health effects on individuals with asthma, medication use, hospitalizations, physician/emergency department visits for respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and impacts in disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups. Notably, the California proposal aims to estimate the health-related economic impacts of exposure to wildfire-specific air pollutants.

Further, a significant priority and effort of the Maui recovery is developing short and long-term housing options for Maui residents. There is a growing body of research that identifies both housing quality and stability as significant social determinants of health. Housing quality, including overcrowding, is linked to physical illness as well as psychological distress. Housing instability can result in long-term health outcomes, school and employment disruption, and increased family stress. In housing stressed and high-rent environments like

April 3, 2024

Page 3

Hawaii's, low and fixed-income renters are particularly vulnerable to evictions that negatively impact short and long-term well-being.

Lastly, the DHS supports the study with the Director's staff serving on the study's community advisory board and has reached out to federal partners seeking funding for this research.

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



Hawaii Medical Association

1360 South Beretania Street, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Phone: 808.536.7702 • Fax: 808.528.2376 • hawaiimedicalassociation.org

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M Dela Cruz Chair
Senator Sharon Y Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Date: April 5, 2024
From: Hawaii Medical Association
Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD, HMA President

RE HB 2805 HD1 SD1 Relating to Health - UHERO; Multiethnic Cohort Study; Maui Wildfires; Appropriation; General Fund Expenditure Ceiling Exceeded Position: Support

This measure would appropriate moneys for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires and declares that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025.

The Maui Wildfire Exposure Cohort Study (MauiWES) addresses a critical gap in knowledge about the effects of environmental hazards and socioeconomic challenges on the health of those affected by the wildfires. The data that includes biospecimens from over 1000 residents impacted by the wildfires will provide vital insights into the short- and long-term health outcomes such as chronic diseases, mental health issues, and the broader social implications.

Beyond the immediate analysis to address the current crisis, the study will inform preventative strategies and improve future disaster response, prioritizing health and well-being in the wake of natural disasters. We urge our lawmakers to support this study for a strong Maui recovery as well as Hawaii crisis mitigation and management in the future.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify on this issue.

REFERENCES, QUICK LINKS:

The Maui Wildfire Exposure Study. University of Hawaii and UH Economics Research Organization UHERO. <https://www.mauiwes.info/> Accessed Jan 29, 2024.

Maui Strong. Hawaii Community Foundation. <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/home> Accessed Jan 29, 2024.

2024 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, President • Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President Elect • Angela Pratt, MD, Immediate Past President
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2024 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Beth England, MD, Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 11:14:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara De Lucca	Testifying for Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Barbara De Lucca, President of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hawai‘i, and we are in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The research conducted through HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH, which includes the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES), is crucial for the Hispanic community in Hawai‘i for several reasons:

1. **Health Equity:** The study aims to understand the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires on a diverse group of individuals, including the Hispanic community. By examining how different populations have been impacted, it can shed light on potential health disparities and inequities that may exist, allowing for targeted interventions to address these issues.
2. **Community Well-Being:** Wildfires can have far-reaching consequences on the well-being of affected communities, including physical and mental health. Understanding these effects is vital for providing appropriate support and resources to the Hispanic community and ensuring their recovery.
3. **Future Preparedness:** The insights gained from this research can inform future disaster preparedness and response strategies. This knowledge is particularly important for minority communities like the Hispanic population, as they may face unique challenges and vulnerabilities during disasters.
4. **Inclusive Policy:** Research outcomes can lead to the development of more inclusive and effective policies that consider the specific needs and concerns of the Hispanic community in Hawai‘i. This can result in better healthcare access, disaster preparedness, and recovery support tailored to their requirements.

In summary, this research is essential for the Hispanic community in Hawai'i to promote health equity, enhance community resilience, and ensure that their unique needs and challenges are recognized and addressed in disaster-related policies and interventions.

I humbly ask for your PASS and FUND HB2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Sincerely,

Barbara De Lucca, President

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Friday, April 4, 2024, at 10:20 am

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2805, House Draft 1, Senate Draft 1, Relating to Health

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education, and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association in Hawai'i and across the nation is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases.

The American Lung Association strongly supports House Bill 2805, HD1, SD1, relating to health. The bill appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The importance of the information provided by the study in this bill cannot be overstated. As over 2,200 structures burned in Lahaina and Kula on August 8, 2023, many people across Maui County, including people on the islands of Moloka'i and Lāna'i, were exposed to a multitude of possible toxic elements that can cause serious disease. The Hawai'i State Department of Health reported elevated levels of arsenic, lead, antimony, cobalt, and copper in wildfire ash collected in Maui¹. Many of these chemicals are known carcinogens that can cause deadly forms of cancer, including lung cancer, the number one cancer killer of men and women in Hawai'i, as well as a multitude of other lung diseases.²

The funding provided in HB 2805, HD1, SD1 will ensure that we are able to determine the long-term impacts of the Maui wildfires. Having this type of study is a hard lesson learned after the attack on the World Trade Center, where hundreds have since died of exposure to the toxic substances that burned on September 11, 2001, in New York City. Studies have shown that many people have died of lung and other cancers after being exposed to the dangerous fumes after the 9/11 attacks³.

¹ <https://health.hawaii.gov/news/newsroom/lahaina-ash-characterization-testing-show-elevated-levels-of-toxic-substances/>

² NTP (National Toxicology Program). 2021. Report on Carcinogens, Fifteenth Edition. Research Triangle Park, NC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. <https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/go/roc15> (EndNote XML)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22427/NTP-OTHER-1003>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. World Trade Center Health Program. <https://www.cdc.gov/wtc/atag glance.html>

The American Lung Association in Hawai'i supports the addition of the registry for all survivors of the Lahaina fires. This will be in addition to the multi-ethnic cohort study and will keep accurate recording of the people impacted by the fires, even if they don't participate in the study. The registry is modeled after the registry created after the World Trade Center attack to account for the various people and diseases that developed after that catastrophic event.

We humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805, House Draft 1, Senate Draft 1 for state funding.

With gratitude,

Pedro Haro
Executive Director
American Lung Association in Hawai'i
pedro.haro@lung.org



April 5, 2024

The Honorable Glenn Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB 2805 HD1 SD1– Relating to Health

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2805 HD1 SD1, which will appropriate moneys for the University of Hawai'i to conduct a multiethnic cohort study and registry regarding the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires.

HMSA appreciates the efforts of the University of Hawaii to study the long-term health impacts of the 2023 West Maui wildfires. The data will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and the ability to address imminent community needs and inform the long-term recovery process with an empirical foundation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2805 HD1 SD1.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 10:02:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dayna Moore	Testifying for Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Friday, April 5, 2024, 10:20, Conference Room 211

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

Aloha and mahalo for this opportunity to share how the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study can benefit Maui. My name is Dayna Moore. I am submitting testimony on behalf of Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui which is in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I am kānaka maoli and a nurse. I was born and raised on my home island of Maui, where my roots are. Maui is the only home I've known. Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui, which has been involved in crisis response and relief throughout the evolution of Covid-19 and Maui fires relief. Our hui is spearheading numerous grassroots relief efforts, and I've been involved in assisting Dr. Lorrin Pang of Maui District Health Office in the re-entry process giving PPE, education, and doing mental health screenings for Lāhainā.

Our hui is a Hawai'i based, non-profit bridging community members and leaders in Health Advocacy, Resources, Education, and Support. We contribute to health equity by identifying

needs among many populations, including Kānaka Maoli, Asian Pacific Islanders, and underserved segments of the population.

Our hui mission is to work together with community partners and Hawai'i leadership to educate, advocate, innovate, and take actions to promote health and the well-being of Hawai'i. We actively respond to the wildfires disaster and recovery on Maui by coordinating between subject-matter experts, licensed healthcare professionals, multiple non-profit relief programs, and community-based organizations on Maui through a statewide Hawai'i Community Health & Safety Alliance.

Advocacy for the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (Maui WES) is supported broadly across the health community. The data collected by the UHERO team and partners can be used by local organizations, healthcare providers, health advocates, leaders, and policy makers.

Dr. Ruben Juarez, Ph.D., Dr. Alikea Maunakea, Ph.D. and Dr. Carl Bonham, Ph.D. of the University of Hawai'i are spearheading this novel Hawai'i study which will inform decision-makers who are directing resources to improve supports and systems that serve our Kānaka Maoli and members of the community. Data can serve as early warning and help alert physicians, healthcare providers, and patients so that treatment and interventions can be provided in a timely way.

This opportunity also allows for participating individuals who have been affected by our Maui fires to be empowered and take an active role in the care of their health. By supporting the expansion of this study to include first responders, volunteers and workers who are exposed in the burn zones, and especially our keiki, we have an opportunity to impact future generations in perpetuity. Our hui supports this work and is actively involved in creating locally sustainable solutions.

Healthcare providers, scientists, and health advocates knowledgeable in wildfire disaster recovery are highly concerned about exposure to toxins from the fires which will impact the long-term health of our community, keiki, and environment. Experts have referred to Maui's post-fire impacts as "The Disaster After the Disaster" and have emphasized that we need to learn the lessons from 9/11, other major urban wildfires, and Red Hill. We are only at the beginning of a long recovery, anticipated to span over approximately 10+ years, and there is already evidence of negative impact to health and mental health for which there is not adequate support.

It is imperative to plan for the long-term now, and dedicate critical funding at this early phase where there is opportunity to directly engage Maui community members from the onset and gather data that can help to inform decision-makers, leaders, and the healthcare community to optimize disaster recovery resources.

Rapid data from the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study has already been made available to the public, and expanding this study will help us measure the scope of immediate and long-term problems which are compounding strain on our fragile Maui, and Hawai'i, healthcare systems which need to be protected. Scientific evidence can assist experts who are recommending

preventative measures and risk reduction strategies as a way to mitigate ongoing direct exposure to anyone who is in, around, or near any burn zone for any reason.

Those who are directly and indirectly affected include kānaka maoli, our disabled and disadvantaged, kūpuna, keiki, and anyone who needs and deserves access to safe, comprehensive, and quality healthcare in a timely way. The Maui WES data will inform smart, efficient prevention measures, consistent educational messaging, and active role-modeling of safety, protect public health and help alleviate the burden on our fragile health systems in the long-run.

In conclusion, the groundbreaking research being done has potential to be used as a model nationally, making Hawai'i a leader in effective response to large scale disasters which affects keiki education and well-being, public health, and socioeconomics and creates impacts from trauma, lack of stable housing, and limited access to timely and comprehensive healthcare and mental health support.

Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui is honored to support the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study and is humbly asking for your support of Maui in the passing of HB 2805 - RELATING TO HEALTH. Our hui is dedicated to helping Maui nei throughout our long-term recovery.

Mahalo for your time. Our hui is sending aloha to all who are impacted by the Maui fires.

Sincerely,

Dayna Moore, BSN, LPN

Director - Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui

Hawai'i Community Health & Safety Alliance

Email: info@hawaiicommunityhealth.org

Maui, Hawai'i



Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521 -8995

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

April 5, 2024 10:20 A.M. – Room 211 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

The Hawaii Psychological Association testifies in strong support of HB 2805 HD1 SD1.

This measure appropriates moneys to the University of Hawai'i to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The full impact of the Maui wildfires and recovery efforts on the mental health of the residents of Maui and the resulting economic and emotional aftermath is still yet to be fully appreciated. Of particular concern is the stress this disaster has had on the capacities of Hawai'i's mental health providers – demand for which is already at crisis-level shortages.

We support very focused effort on determining and studying the mental health and well-being of those communities impacted; and helping us chart a path toward full recovery and prevention.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex Lichten, Ph.D.

Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee



Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Friday, April 5, 2024

ACS CAN SUPPORTS HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawaii Guam
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity in STRONG **SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH which appropriates moneys for the University of Hawaii to conduct a multiethnic cohort study and registry regarding the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, non-partisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society advocates for public policies that reduce death and suffering from cancer. ACS CAN works with federal, state, and local government bodies to support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

Data collection is critical to understanding and reducing cancer disparities that might result from the 2023 Maui wildfires. The University of Hawaii Cancer Center provides important cancer research, access to life-saving treatment including clinical trials which play a critical role in reducing the cancer burden for communities in the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT on this important matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at 808.460.6109, or Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org.

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 12:46:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Salazar Hyman	Testifying for Tagnawa for Maui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Michelle Salazar Hyman and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

As a member of Tagnawa for Maui, an on the ground Filipino outreach group in Maui post fires, I have seen first hand the concern and relief on the faces of participants in this study. They want to participate and see how their health has been affected long term. This will be possible through the funding provided by this Bill.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Michelle Salazar Hyman

Aiea, 96701



April 4, 2024

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Hrg: Friday, April 5, 2024, 10:20AM, Conference Room 211

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 400 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Additionally, HPHA aims to call attention to issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), which can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is also advocating for equity in all policies.

The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a health registry. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT of HB 2805 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

LATE

Before:
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Kitagawa, Vice Chair

April 4, 2024
10:10 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference

Re: HB 1827, HD2, Relating to Healthcare Workforce Development.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1827, HD2, which appropriates funding to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and Department of Education to support healthcare workforce development programs, specifically the public high school healthcare workforce certificate program and glidepath program for certified nurse aides.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS HB 1827, HD2.

Kaiser Permanente is one of the nation's largest not-for-profit health plans, serving 12.6 million members nationwide, and more than 274,000 members in Hawai'i. In Hawai'i, more than 4,200 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group physicians and advanced practice providers work in our integrated health system to provide our members with coordinated care and coverage. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i has more than 19 medical facilities, including our award-winning Moanalua Medical Center. We continue to provide high-quality coordinated care for our members and deliver on our commitment to improve the health of our members and the 1.4 million people living in the communities we serve.

Thank you for hearing this very important measure that will continue to help build upon our local healthcare workforce. In January 2023, Kaiser Permanente, UNITE Here! Local 5, and the University of Hawaii Maui College launched their Practical Nurse Trainee Program, an 18-month program for current Kaiser Permanente employees who wish to pursue a career in the nursing field. The program's inaugural cohort consisted of 18 students, of which 11 are employees from various Kaiser Permanente departments and disciplines, including medical assistants and hospital aides.

The program's curriculum built and enhanced technical skills in primary and specialty care areas. The goal of the program is to provide a pathway for employees to become licensed and fill open Kaiser Permanente Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) positions across the state.

In December 2023, the first cohort of medical assistants, hospital aides, and technicians completed the rigorous curriculum and graduated from the University of Hawaii Maui College. Participants are preparing to take the NCLEX licensure exam to become licensed and fill LPN vaccines.

The funding from HB 1827, HD2 will support the public high school healthcare workforce certificate program, which is vital to addressing the shortage of healthcare professionals within the state. **We ask the committee to PASS HB 1827, HD2 adopting the amendments of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Testimony on HB 2805, Relating to Fund for UHERO Multiethnic Health Study on Maui Wildfire Impact

From: Micah Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President - Hawai'i Community Foundation

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support for HB 2805, which provides funding for a multiethnic health study on the Maui wildfire impacts.

Funding is key to the work HCF undertakes within the "H" Sector of our CHANGE Framework – Health and Wellness. The CHANGE Framework seeks to assess and improve the overall wellbeing of our communities through data driven decisions and collective actions. The study that the UHERO will undertake with the funding provided by HB 2805 will be an important data set for our collective work on serving West Maui residents in both the short term and long term. With the data sets that UHERO's work will create, we at HCF will be in a better position to make decisions and deploy philanthropic efforts and resources.

It is well documented through past incidents – from fires to hurricanes to 9-11 – that an effective way to mitigate long-term negative health effects of the disaster is to have strong baseline and ongoing longitudinal data of those impacted by the wildfires. While this directly allows individuals and health care personnel to recommend and implement intervention treatments earlier, it also allows our citizens to be well-informed and empowered to actively manage their health trajectory. It also allows supporting organizations like HCF to collaborate with the public and private health sector to help place the infrastructure and materials needed to facilitate those treatments.

HCF believes that the data collection and research being funded by HB 2805 are a prudent and proactive way to support the holistic health of the community affected by the wildfires, provide insights to prepare for future disasters, and will serve as a valuable model for others to follow. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our support for HB 2805 and are hopeful that this will be the basis of a successful public-private partnership.



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

Department of Economics and UHERO
Ruben Juarez
HMSA Distinguished Endowed Professor
rubenj@hawaii.edu
Phone: 808-956-7143

April 3, 2024

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee



Re: Urgent Support needed for HB 2805 SD1 – Relating to Health

Dear Senators Dela Cruz, Moriwaki, and members of the WAM committee,

I'm the HMSA Professor in Health Economics at the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization (UHERO) and I'm in Strong Support of HB2805. HB2805 will fund the expansion of the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES), a multi-ethnic cohort, and the health registry for individuals affected by the wildfire. These two grassroots initiatives are led by UHERO and the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) in partnership with dozens of community organizations. MauiWES stands as the most comprehensive study to understand and mitigate the health and social impacts of the Maui wildfires. Our study not only provides participants with valuable knowledge about their personal exposure risks (often their first screening since the wildfires) and links them to resources but also contributes vital data to bolster community resilience during recovery. In an unprecedented effort, MauiWES has completed enrolling almost 700 individuals in under a month, gathering a diverse array of social and biomedical samples, including urine, blood, lung, and saliva, and health screenings to evaluate their exposure risk. We hope we can follow these individuals over time to evaluate their risk, but equally important, support our community with data to intervene early before diseases manifest. The scope and speed of this data gathering effort are unmatched in Hawaii's history and could be considered a model of efficiency and thoroughness, akin to what would have been highly desired during other major disasters, such as the September 11 attacks in New York.

As part of the team leading MauiWES, I've had the firsthand privilege of seeing the impact of our work. Our mission goes beyond research; it's about real people and their lives post-disaster. Our preliminary results paint a stark picture and a dire need of survivors. They were published the latest UHERO report in February and include:

- **Social Impacts:** A staggering 65% of participants now reside in temporary housing, with 58% experiencing job loss due to the wildfires. Although over half have found new employment, a significant 24% remain unemployed.
- **Health Outcomes:** Nearly half (49%) report deteriorated health post-wildfires. Alarming, 24% lack consistent medical care access, and 13% are uninsured, a drastic increase from the state's 1.7% uninsured rate last year.
- **Physical Health:** We've identified an elevated cardiovascular disease risk, with 20% presenting high blood pressure and a concerning 74% potentially suffering from respiratory issues.
- **Mental Health:** A pronounced rise in depressive symptoms was noted in 55% of participants, with older residents being particularly affected, signaling the extensive psychological trauma inflicted by the wildfires.

These preliminary results only indicate that without the support of HB2805, we face the grim prospect of higher mortality, increased hospitalizations, and a community left in the dark about the risks they face. To underscore the critical importance of HB2805, let's consider the significant financial implications of delayed or inadequate response to health crises, drawing a parallel with the aftermath of the 9/11 disaster. In a centralized and more cost-effective framework, like the treatment centers established for 9/11 survivors that took years to be realized, the annual cost of medical treatment per individual exceeds \$10,000 and continues increasing. This figure notably excludes the indirect costs such as loss of employment, decreased quality of life, etc. Given Hawaii's elevated healthcare expenses and the absence of a centralized clinical/treatment center should the health repercussions of the Maui Wildfires mirror those observed post-9/11, *we anticipate the direct and indirect medical costs and associated losses could escalate to tens of thousands of dollars per affected individual per year.*

In light of this, HB2805 presents a proactive strategy focusing on prevention and early intervention, which is not only essential for the well-being of our state's residents but also for the economic sustainability of Hawaii by potentially curbing these exorbitant costs.

We are in a critical phase of ramping up our efforts, aiming to complete the recruitment for our study while awaiting the to hear about competitive federal funds (e.g., NIH grant) that will sustain this initiative long-term. Additionally, we've garnered support from foundational/corporate sources, with Hawaii Community Foundation and Kaiser Permanente each committing \$250,000, demonstrating a community and institutional trust in our initiative. Our funding request to the state of Hawaii is twofold:

- **Multi-Ethnic Cohort Expansion:** We seek **\$1,500,000** to broaden our participant base by 1,500 individuals, costing roughly \$1,000 per participant. This investment will not only fuel the direct research but will also return approximately 70% of the funds back into the community through medical testing, participant incentives, community support, etc. This endeavor is envisioned to sustain itself in future years through federal and private funding partnerships, but we urgently need the State of Hawaii to get this started now.
- **Registry of Affected Participants:** An investment of **\$835,000** is requested to establish a registry. This one-time funding will support the registration process, obtain consent for accessing medical records for those willing, and build the necessary infrastructure for communication and data management. We hope to sustain this long-term from federal funds.

This approach not only addresses immediate health concerns but also sets a precedent for managing health crises efficiently, reducing long-term costs, and, most importantly, saving lives. Your support for HB2805 is a step toward a resilient, healthier future for Hawaii. I humbly ask you to **pass and fund HB2805.**

Sincerely,
Ruben Juarez, PhD



'Ahahui o nā Kauka

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 1015

Honolulu HI 96813

Phone 808.548.0270

E-mail huikauka@gmail.com

2023-2024 Advocacy Committee

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April 3, 2024

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Group Testimony in support of HB2805HD1SD1 RELATING TO HEALTH

'Ahahui o nā Kauka is an organization of Native Hawaiian physicians dedicated to the health of the people of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians in particular. Several of our hui members volunteered for the medical relief efforts after the Maui wildfires, experiencing first-hand the immediate devastation as well as the emerging effects on the physical, mentally, and social determinants of health. We support the appropriation of moneys to the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In our continued dedication to the people we serve, we believe the data from this study will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 2:02:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trina Orimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Trina Orimoto and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Trina Orimoto

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 2:03:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nori Tarui	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Friday, April 5, 2024, 10:20, Conference Room 211

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Nori Tarui and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

Collecting information about the wildfire-affected community through this survey is critical for effective recovery and better disaster preparedness.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Nori Tarui

Honolulu, 96816

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 2:06:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Walsh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Friday, April 5, 2024, 10:20, Conference Room 211

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Catherine Walsh and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I have recently moved to Hawaii and it has already become a place of meaning and importance to me. For those living in Maui for many generations, I know how important the land and the history is to them. I believe that this research could help researchers and health professionals understand the health effects of the fires and aid in mitigation and prevention of long-term health effects of any future disasters.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Catherine Walsh

Kailua, 96734

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 2:07:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dusko Pavlovic	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is (Name) and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

As an educator with many students impacted by the Lahaina fire, I have seen the full evidence of support for our Maui oahan from all people of our State and hope that the political structures will follow their constituents in supporting this action.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Dusko Pavlovic

Honolulu, HI 96822

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 2:10:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Binh Le	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Binh Le and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The research is pretty important to local people because I learned from the initial WESMaui report that local people were strongly frustrated after the wildfire. The research is a way for local people raise their voice to the community. They are suffered from losing housing, environment, mental health. They need supports from us - community and government.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Binh Le

Honolulu, 96848

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 2:13:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikima Glatt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of Lahaina deeply impacted by the recent Maui fires, I cannot overstate the importance of this bill in addressing the long-term health effects faced by survivors like myself.

Allow me to provide some context. I am a mother residing in Lahaina, where my child attends Lahainaluna High School. Professionally, I serve as a nurse practitioner, and since the day of the fires, I have been on the frontlines working as a medic. Having personally survived the wildfires in Lahaina, I'm already witnessing the emergence of severe healthcare complications. I have been hospitalized four times post-fire, leading to me having to step away from two jobs and relinquishment of my role as the medical director of the Maui Medic Healers Hui due to health complications.

Furthermore, I am currently pursuing my Ph.D. in public health, a journey that has been significantly disrupted by the aftermath of the fires. I have had to defer my classes both last semester and this semester due to the overwhelming challenges posed by my own health struggles and the pressing needs of my community.

In addition to my professional responsibilities, I serve as a co-investigator on the MauiWES study under Dr. Maunakea and Dr. Juarez. This study aims to comprehensively examine the long-term health impacts of the Maui fires, underscoring the urgency of measures outlined in House Bill 2805.

While I understand the myriad demands placed on legislators, HB2805 is pivotal in documenting and addressing the long-term impacts faced by Maui survivors. **Failure to do so not only jeopardizes countless lives but also poses significant financial burdens for the county, the state, and for every single resident on Maui impacted by these fires.** Drawing from the lessons of history, such as the establishment of the health registry post-9/11, underscores the urgent necessity of the provisions outlined in this bill.

The preliminary data is terrifying and the health impacts from these wildfires will not only drive up costs to the county and state, but for every individual impacted. I myself am facing having to file bankruptcy due to medical bills and the cost of living I can non longer afford for both me and my immunocompromised son due to the loss of my jobs due to these wildfires.

Preliminary results:

- **74% of participants may be experiencing poor respiratory health**
- **49% exhibiting signs of mild to severe lung obstruction**
- **65%, are in temporary homes**
- **58% of participants lost their jobs directly related to the fires.**
- **74% of participants reported a drop in their household income.**
- **49% said their health is now worse than last year (prior to the wildfires).**
- **24% reported that they do not have steady access to medical care.**
- **13% reported that they do not have health insurance, much higher than last year's survey of Maui residents where only 1.7% reported being uninsured, similar to that reported statewide.**
- **20% of the cohort participants showed high blood pressure at the level of stage 1 and 2 hypertension**
- **33% with compromised lung function linked to impaired tissue oxygenation.**
- **55% exhibiting depressive symptoms, notably higher than the state which is at 33%**
- **4.4% showed suicidal ideation, increased compared to about 1% pre-wildfires and ~19 suicides since the fires.**

These numbers are astounding and unacceptable. Drawing from lessons of 9/11 there will inevitable be costly healthcare associated complications that will worsen long-term if we fail to grasp the necessary public health education for prevention. You possess the opportunity to proactively halt further harm to our community. I urge you to do what is right and help us make this happen for Maui.

Your attention to this matter is deeply appreciated. By prioritizing HB2805 we can take proactive steps to mitigate the enduring repercussions of the Maui fires and ensure the well-being of affected individuals and communities.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Nikima Glatt, APRN-RX, FPMHNP-BC

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 2:14:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniela Bond-Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee

I wish to express my strong support for HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a health registry. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

Based on my professional experience as a data scientist at the University of Hawaii at Manoa working on health research, I can assure you that this project is essential. There is no alternative data that could be used to comprehensively monitor and analyze the health impact of the Maui wildfires. This data will make it possible to not only assess the short and long-term impacts for the study cohort, but statistical methods can be used with the proposed study design to derive results that are representative of the health impact of the Maui wildfires for entire population of affected survivors. The study also does an exceptional job in working with community representatives to ensure that community priorities are honored.

I hereby ask for your support and allocation of state funding for HB2805 SD1.

Mahalo for your consideration

Dr. Daniela Bond-Smith

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 2:16:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marzuka Tartil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Marzuka and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

As an economist in training, I am strong proponent of performing elaborate studies on phenomenons that have the potential for permanantly altering our economic system. The Maui wildfire is such an event, and we need more data to support any decision that will inevitably aid in the recovery of the island. The bill in question allows UHERO to play a crucial part in advancing the knowledge of sustaining an island economy, which may be extended to other island around the world as well. We should not let go of this opportunity to learn important insights that will improve the quality of life for not only the citizens of Hawai‘i, but also the world.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Marzuka Tartil
Honolulu, 96814

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

DATE: Friday, April 5, 2024
TIME: 10:20 AM
PLACE: Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2805, HD1, SD1 RELATING TO HEALTH

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee,

My name is Cynthia J. Goto, and I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2805, HD, SD1 relating to health. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Environmental Health states that public health disaster studies help identify associations between disaster-related exposures and mortality or morbidity. Understanding the adverse health effects of disasters provides situational awareness and provides timely and accurate health information for decision-makers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Cynthia J. Goto, M.D.

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 2:41:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew K. Ing	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Friday, April 5, 2024, 10:20, Conference Room 211

Aloha esteemed members of the Way and Means Committee,

I submit this written testimony in **strong support** of HB 2805 SD1 - RELATING TO HEALTH. This vital study provides an important baseline and trend analysis of the health outcomes for those exposed to the 2023 Maui fires. Many of these individuals, especially those low-income or first generation citizens, would not otherwise have access to health check-ups and tests if not for this study. The exposure to toxic chemicals in the wake of the 2023 Maui fires presented an urgent public health crisis that requires us to monitor outcomes over an extended period of time.

UHERO, partnered with JABSOM, have proven their ability to work effectively with grassroots communities and families on the ground on Maui, guided by trusted members of various communities to provide an expert and objective service. Data collected from this study will allow government, public and private agencies, and community partners to respond to the most fundamental needs of human life and livelihood as the long recovery progresses.

I humbly urge the Committee to pass HB 2805 SD1 - RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Me ke aloha,

Matthew Kaulana Ing

Wahiawa, 96786

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 3:37:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Suechting	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Bryan Suechting and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

Through my involvement with the MauiWES project, I've witnessed firsthand the incredible and desperate need of the people of Lahaina and Maui island in general. I can't tell you how many times people have described their inability to receive care in the face of severe health issues following the fires. The appreciation from the community and the local health care workers/first responders has been palpable. This research will not only improve our ability to provide care in the long term while improving responses to future disasters, likely to become more frequent given current climate trajectories, but will also greatly benefit the community in the short term.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Bryan Suechting

Honolulu, HI 96826

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 3:51:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marsha Lowery ND	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Marsha Lowery, I am in strong support of HB2805. This bill will allow the University of Hawaii to continue their study regarding the wildfires and the health effects of our community. This information is vital for our people both in the short-term and long-term.

Thank you,

Dr. Marsha Lowery

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 4:01:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT

We don't know, what we don't know!

Thank you for scheduling this hearing!

This is a bill that will have a huge impact for affected members of the community, healthwise, by the Maui fire of August 8, 2023. If you look back at the November 21, 2021 Jet Fuel Contamination of the Navy's Drinking water Distribution system, you may recall the immediate affects of drinking the water, inhaling fumes, or dermal contact affects. We are at 2 1/2 years and only now the registry is being "talked about." The health problems were not just acute, they are having long term chronic health problems. As you may recall, the Navy had a narrative that the water was safe. Residents continued drinking this water and cooking with it and bathing with it beginning the week of Thanksgiving through 10 days before the the Department of Health issued a water advisory. Let's not let those on Maui end up as those who were contaminated at Red Hill. Please give them a fighting chance! Susan A. Pcola-Davis



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of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

John A. Burns School of Medicine
Department of Anatomy, Biochemistry and Physiology
1800 East-West Rd, Office 215
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822
Email: amaunake@hawaii.edu

Dear Honorable Members of the Legislative Assembly,

My name is Alika Maunakea, and I am writing to express my emphatic support for HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. This critical piece of legislation will bolster the efforts of the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization and its partners to conduct a comprehensive multiethnic cohort study. Our focus is the profound health impacts of the catastrophic 2023 Maui wildfires—a disaster whose effects are still felt across our communities.

Through HB 2805, we seek to equip the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with indispensable data that will be pivotal in addressing urgent community needs. Moreover, this information will be instrumental in guiding the recovery process, enhancing our collective preparedness for future calamities, saving money and lives.

As a Native Hawaiian biomedical researcher, I am at the forefront of the Wildfire Exposure Study, which is a critical initiative to understand and combat health disparities, particularly among our most vulnerable groups, including Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Our state currently faces a significant data gap regarding the long-lasting repercussions of environmental hazards, like those post-wildfire, on the health of our people. The support of HB 2805 is not a mere contribution; it is an essential investment in the systemic collection of data that will inform and transform the approach of federal, state, and local entities, alongside community-based organizations, in instituting robust policies and practices. There is no other effort like this in the state.

Our efforts have already brought almost 700 participants into the fold of the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES), and we seek to extend our reach into schools and other community organizations with your support. This expansion is not just about numbers; it's about laying down a roadmap for preventative strategies that will substantially curtail the escalating healthcare costs and social challenges linked to heightened morbidity and mortality rates among those affected by the wildfires. Ultimately saving money for the state of Hawai'i.

The absence of this study leaves us in the dark, unprepared for the ongoing challenges faced by Maui's communities, and vulnerable to the health risks of future disasters. This study is, therefore, essential for researchers and the state—each responsible for safeguarding the health and welfare of our diverse citizenry.

I humbly urge you to recognize the gravity of this initiative and to lend your crucial support. I request that you vote in favor and fund HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH, thereby securing the state funding that will enable us to continue and expand this vital work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alika'.

Alika K. Maunakea, PhD
Professor – Epigenomics and Health Disparities Research
University of Hawai'i, Manoa

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 7:02:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leonard Nakoa III	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need this research done for Lahaina

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 7:22:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
robin knox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 7:47:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Yan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. Hrg: Friday, April 5, 2024, 10:20, Conference Room 211

Dear Honorable Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Stephanie Yan and I am a physician in Maui and in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness. I believe this is our best chance of detecting early effects of the long term health consequences of the fires here in Maui and prevent any costly late treatments if we are not vigilant upfront. I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Yan, MD

General and Trauma Surgeon and Critical Care Surgeon

96793

Kenneth Hayashida, Jr., MD
1968 S. Coast Hwy, #3578
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
April 4, 2024

Hawaii Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Dear Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I write to express STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2805 SD1. Many thanks to you and the entire committee and staff for hearing this urgently needed bill. Your prioritization of state funding of this research helps to assure that findings are open to public review and the legislature.

We have five generations of our family who immigrated to the Kingdom of Hawai'i since 1892 and who are residents of Lahaina for over 110 years. The first responders exposed to smoke, the recovery workers exposed to toxic debris, and the many thousands of Maui residents directly exposed to this disaster are facing clinically significant physical and mental health challenges while handling the financial impact from the losses in historic Lahaina.

State legislators need this study fully funded in order to quantify the economic impact of the Maui wildfire complex disaster. Study findings have already informed and assisted yourselves in setting budgetary priorities and benchmarking immediate disaster related costs.¹

Objective information that aligns to high academic research quality is essential to better predict future state and county response needs. This is vital to the restoration of our state economy and, more importantly, the health and well-being of impacted individuals.

Full-funding for this bill and future publicly funded research is vital to the interest of the state. Impact to tourism and hospitality, education and healthcare systems are significant and need documentation for your offices and others. Please support this bill and sustain your current oversight.

Mahalo and aloha,

Kenneth Hayashida, Jr., MD

¹ "Initial Findings of the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study", University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization, University of Hawaii Manoa John Burns School of Medicine, February 8, 2024

Thursday, April 4 2024

To:

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Friday, April 5, 2024, 10:20, Conference Room 211

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Loic Le Marchand. I am an epidemiologist at the UH Cancer Center and I provide this testimony as a private resident.

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a prospective study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I have over 35 years of experience in chronic disease prevention research in Hawaii. Most relevant is my experience, since 2012, in leading the Multiethnic Cohort study which has contributed many findings on the causes of chronic diseases (e.g., cancer, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, Alzheimer, etc.) in Hawaii and the reasons for the major differences in risk we observed in the occurrence of these diseases across ethnic and racial groups. These findings have led to significant prevention intervention and policies to improve the health of our community.

I strongly believe that a prospective study of the individuals affected by the August 2023 Maui wildfires is critical to assessing the health effects of this devastating event and help improve readiness for future wildfires. Such an epidemiologic study characterizing exposures and health events at the individual level will bring critical information that would not be captured by health statistics at the County level.

I humbly ask for your support in passing HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Loic Le Marchand, MD, PhD
Professor in Epidemiology, University of Hawaii Cancer Center
Kaneohe, HI 96744

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 9:42:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonas Yee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Jonas Yee and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Jonas Yee

Kailua, Hawaii 96734

Date: April 4, 2024

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Committee on Ways & Means
Senator Susan Moriwaki, Vice Chair, Committee on Ways & Means
Members of the Committees

Subject: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 SD1— Relating to Health

My name is Carl Bonham, I am the Executive Director of UHERO, and a Professor of Economics at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the College of Social Sciences, I am writing to offer my strong support for HB 2805 HD1 SD1. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i.

I strongly support HB 2805 HD1 SD1— Relating to Health. This bill supports collaboration between UHERO, the College of Social Sciences Health Policy Initiative, and the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the UH Cancer Center, and numerous community-based organizations to conduct a comprehensive study of health and social impacts of the 2023 Maui wildfires. The study will establish a registry of individuals impacted by the wildfires, enabling a thorough assessment of the long-term health and well-being effects on these communities.

This collaboration will provide invaluable information for the State of Hawaii, local organizations, and future policymakers. It will deliver crucial health information to both study participants and those addressing immediate community needs, including community organizations and policy makers. Beyond an examination of environmental exposures, the study concentrates on the health and well-being of those deeply affected individuals. The data and insights derived from this research will enable healthcare policies and interventions that will ultimately reduce the cost for exposed residents and state agencies for long-term treatment and care. By enabling an expansion of the initial study to include keiki, state funding will save money in the long-run.

State support for MauiWES, will extend the study's viability beyond our initial funding from the Hawaii Community foundation. We have also applied for a competitive federal grant from the National Institutes of Health, and will need support from all parties to make this work a success. This study continues UHERO's long-standing tradition of public-private partnerships to support research of critical practical significance to the people of Hawaii.

With over twenty-five years of economic and policy research, UHERO has developed a comprehensive and robust data infrastructure. Our public facing data portals and dashboards cover a wide range of topics, and serves as a valuable resource for policymakers and the community daily. Similarly, the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) has successfully established the Hawai'i All-Payer Claims Database, positioning it as the primary data center in collaboration with various state entities such as the Department of Health, Office of Enterprise Services, and Medicaid (Med-QUEST). The combined efforts of UHERO and SSRI's robust infrastructure will be invaluable for informing and guiding disaster recovery efforts, offering insights and data-driven solutions to aid in the rebuilding process.

MauiWES is a collaborative effort, drawing upon the support and expertise of numerous community partners who have been unwavering in their commitment since the outbreak of the wildfires. By supporting this initiative, the legislature can demonstrate its unwavering dedication to the well-being of its constituents and the resilience of the Maui community, ultimately ensuring a faster and more efficient recovery for everyone involved.

I respectfully urge your support for HB 2805 HD1 SD1 to secure state funding for this pivotal research partnership.

Sincerely,

Carl Bonham

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 9:53:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvonne Baumer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

My name is Dr. Yvonne Baumer and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

In 2011 I immigrated to the USA from Germany to start a position as a scientist at JABSOM in Honolulu. My time in Hawaii and its people, my friends, my Hawaiian Ohana will always be in my heart. This was also the first time I experienced/saw first hand health inequities, especially for the ones at highest risk. My research now at NIH in Bethesda is meant to examine exactly this - the impact of adverse social determinants of health on obesity and cardiovascular disease.

When news of the fires spread I was in tears immediately contacting friends, only to find out so many have lost everything, some even their lives. The impact of catastrophes like this are beyond any measure and the one thing we all can do is come together and help. Now, as a scientist I can only help doing science and reporting the facts of the negative impact this tragedy had. The survivors need the support this study can provide. Community-engaged research is the future (please see the new NIH director's statement in Nature and by supervisors research Powell-Wiley TM). The survivors get health screenings, get connected with physical and mental health support, they feel supported and come together as a community. Being heard and seen is one of the first steps to healing. This study is a huge step in the right direction, helping the most affected, the most vulnerable, the community, the ohana, and the islands. What has been accomplished so far is amazing and more support is needed to keep this momentum going. I sincerely hope that you can see what enormous positive impact this project already had. I am almost half a world away and wish I could do more. The survivors in Maui need your help to address immediate and urgent health needs but also the negative impacts for long-term health. Lots of research has been

done showing how trauma will impact future health from CVD to cancer. This project provides immediate support and hopefully will continue long-term.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Baumer, PharmD PhD

New Market, 21774 MD

LATE

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 12:52:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shalom Costa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need the support to research this study please for all of our ohana 🙏



Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki,

On behalf of Roots Reborn, we are in STRONG **SUPPORT** of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

Roots Reborn was a part of the advisory committee for the long-term health study. Our team helped the study by efficiently conducting participant intakes and recruiting migrant and immigrant community members to participate. This study is significant for understanding the effects of environmental hazards and provides insight into the short and long-term health outcomes and how we can better support our community in the immediate and long term.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Veronica Mendoza Jachowski
Executive Director

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 1:48:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lesley Umeda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB2805. As a person involved in the MauiWes study I believe that the information collected in this study is extremely valuable to the community. I believe it is important to expand and support studies that involve the community in order for the people to better understand their health and to improve community health. There are already participants who are receiving care based on the results returned to them.

Oftentimes support comes too late with diagnostic care being more prevalent than preventative. In order to take preventative measures to better health outcomes long term and to support future disaster response it is important to support measures that will both study and provide support to the impacted community. It is imperative that we collect, preserve and act on the information gained from the community in a timely manner to both better serve the needs of the community and to rebuild trust.

LATE

HB-2805-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2024 8:46:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/5/2024 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Logan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Diane Logan and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2805 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

As a founder of the Maui Strong Mental Health Response and a clinical psychologist serving the state, the need for data and monitoring is essential to the long term healing of our communities. Please do not miss this opportunity to support the folx who need it most.

Diane Logan, PhD, ABAP, CSAC, ICADC

Board Certified in Addiction Psychology

Clinical Psychologist, Private Practice, Consultant

National Register Health Service Psychologist

Past President, Hawai'i Psychological Association