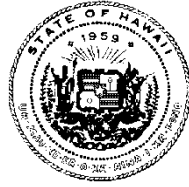


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

TRISTA SPEER
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

February 7, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2185 - RELATING TO MATERNAL HEALTH.**

Hearing: February 8, 2024, 9:45 AM
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and provides comments.

PURPOSE: This measure requires the Department of Human Services to develop and administer an implicit bias training program for health care professionals in the State's perinatal facilities.

Establishing implicit bias training for healthcare professionals, including those in perinatal facilities, is an important step to addressing racial disparities in health care. However, DHS does not have the necessary expertise to develop and administer implicit bias training. As other states have mandated implicit bias training, DHS respectfully suggests that it may be more appropriate for a group of subject matter experts from the medical school, Native Hawaiian health organizations, and the appropriate governing boards to examine the existing implicit bias training programs and identify the standards and outcomes given the context in Hawaii to be an effective implicit bias training program. This will require general fund

February 7, 2024

Page 2

appropriations and time to engage a subject matter expert or consultant who will work with the necessary stakeholders to develop effective training programs.

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



Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 9:45 am
Conference Room 329

House Committee on Human Services

To: Chair Lisa Marten
Vice Chair Terez Amato

From: Paige Choy
Associate Vice President, Government Affairs
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: **Submitting Comments**
HB 2185, Relating to Maternal Health

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the healthcare continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 30,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **comments** on this measure. Our hospital members have taken an active interest in addressing maternal health in Hawaii and have engaged with local and national groups to address disparities and improve clinical processes to ensure the highest standard of care is provided to women throughout the state.

While Hawaii facilities may do better than many other states, we can always improve. Our goal as an association is to consistently work with our members to provide the highest quality of care possible. As a result, we now have staff whose sole focus is on perinatal care and carrying out the goals and objectives of several federal grants we have received to reduce both maternal morbidity and mortality. Over the next four to five years, we will be working with our partners in the maternal health field in the state to implement clinical improvements and evidence-informed strategies to support our mothers and babies.

Our member facilities have been steadfast partners in collaborating on ways to improve maternal health outcomes and have already seen improvements in care over the past several years. We appreciate the legislature's continued focus on supporting moms and families. We would suggest that funding would be needed to help hospitals cover the cost of staff taking time off to receive this specific training.

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



HB2185
RELATING TO MATERNAL HEALTH
House Committee on Human Services

February 08, 2024

9:45 am

Conference Room 329

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) intends to recommend to the Board of Trustees to **SUPPORT** HB2185 and **provide comment**, which requires the Department of Human Services to develop and administer implicit bias training for healthcare professionals in perinatal facilities. **OHA believes this bill is pivotal for the well-being of our community, particularly in addressing the needs of our Native Hawaiian mākuahine.**

Maternal health disparities persist in our nation, with over fifty thousand women annually experiencing complications in pregnancy or childbirth, impacting their short- and long-term health.¹ This has dire consequences for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islander mothers and birthing people. The CDC recently reported that between 2017 and 2019, there were 62.8 pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 births for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women and birthing people. This is more than 1.5 times higher than black mothers and birthing people and nearly 5 times the number of Asian mothers and birthing people. Disparities aren't solely due to prenatal care access, socioeconomic status, or physical health. Studies increasingly show that implicit bias within the healthcare system contributes significantly to unequal treatment and poorer health outcomes for patients of color.²

OHA greatly appreciates this proposal that will require healthcare professionals in perinatal facilities across the state to take part in an evidence-based implicit bias training program. By introducing mandatory training, we can take a proactive approach toward

¹ Declercq, Eugene, and Laurie C Zephyrin. "Severe Maternal Morbidity in the United States: A Primer." Commonwealth Fund, October 28, 2021. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2021/oct/severe-maternal-morbidity-united-states-primer#:~:text=While%20maternal%20deaths%20in%20the%20United%20States%20number,women%20each%20year%2C%20and%20the%20numbers%20are%20increasing>.

² Vela, Monica B et al. "Eliminating Explicit and Implicit Biases in Health Care: Evidence and Research Needs." *Annual review of public health* vol. 43 (2022): 477-501. doi:10.1146/annurev-publhealth-052620-103528



Bill HB2185
RELATING TO MATERNAL HEALTH
House Committee on Human Services

eliminating biases that may result in health disparities. This will help ensure that all patients receive the highest standard of care regardless of their background. OHA suggests emphasizing culturally competent bias training for Native Hawaiians in proposed amendments. This will help healthcare professionals better understand our community's needs and improve maternal health outcomes.

OHA would also like to provide comments for the committee's consideration. We believe this proposal could be enhanced by including the incorporation of discussions on cultural identity specific to Native Hawaiians, perspectives from Native Hawaiian constituency groups, and experts addressing community-specific topics related to identity, race, culture, and provider-community relations. This will fortify the legislation's ability to address implicit biases that may disproportionately affect the Native Hawaiian population.

By mandating implicit bias training, we can ensure that all women, including Native Hawaiians, receive the high-quality and unbiased care they deserve during the perinatal period.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB2185 and urges the Committee to consider our comments and proposed amendment. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.