



# SB2483 RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

| February 5, 2024 | 1:02 PM | Conference Room 225 |
|------------------|---------|---------------------|

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend that the Board of Trustees (BOT) **<u>SUPPORT</u>** SB2483 and respectfully **<u>REQUESTS AMENDMENTS</u>** for SB2483 which proposes the establishment of a three-year Ka<sup>4</sup>ū Community Health Worker Pilot Program. This initiative is crucial for addressing the unique health needs of our community, especially in rural and underserved areas.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) recognizes the importance of community health workers in bridging the gap between residents and essential health care and social services. As the principal public agency in the State responsible for the performance, development, and coordination of programs and activities relating to Native Hawaiians,<sup>1</sup> we believe that the proposed pilot program aligns with the values of community empowerment, capacity building, and collaborative partnerships that are integral to the well-being of our communities.

The Ka'ū Community Health Worker Pilot Program outlined in SB2483 acknowledges the unique challenges faced by residents in Ka'ū, where access to health education, resources, and job opportunities is limited. Native Hawaiians experience health disparities at a greater rate than any other ethnic group in Hawai'i.<sup>2</sup> This disparity gap only widens more for our rural Native Hawaiian communities.<sup>3</sup> By providing health education, outreach, and individual support, community health workers can significantly impact disease prevention, healthy lifestyle practices, and improved health outcomes.

OHA respectfully requests this committee consider to the legislation incorporating specific provisions addressing the unique health needs of Native Hawaiians in Kaʿū. This

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Haw. Rev. Stat. §10-3(1) and (2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Mokuau, Noreen; De Leon, Patrick H.; Kaholokula, Joseph Keawe'aimoku, et al., Challenges and Promise of Health Equity for Native Hawaiians. In: National Academy of Medicine; Alexander C, Murry VMB, Bogard K, editors. Perspectives on Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2017. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Id.



# SB2483 RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

could include culturally tailored health education programs, outreach initiatives that respect and integrate traditional healing practices, and services that consider the cultural diversity within our community. OHA would also like to emphasize reinforcing cultural competency requirements for community health workers participating in the Ka<sup>•</sup>ū pilot program. Community Health Workers should undergo training that enhances their understanding of Native Hawaiian customs, values, and beliefs, ensuring respectful and effective interactions with diverse populations within our community.

We offer the following language to add to section 2 (d) with regard to the qualifications of the contractor:

(4) The capacity to provide culturally competent training and services.

SB 2483 represents a significant step towards improving the health and well-being of the Kaʿū community. OHA wholeheartedly supports this legislation while urging the incorporation of culturally sensitive provisions to address the specific health needs of Native Hawaiians.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to testify on SB2483 and urges the Committee to **PASS** HB1831 and consider making amendments to ensure cultural competency. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.





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

# Testimony COMMENTING on S.B. 2483 RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

# SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR SENATOR HENRY J.C. AQUINO, VICE CHAIR SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: 02/05/2024

Room Number: CR 225

1 Fiscal Implications: The proposed measure appropriates funds out of the general revenues of the

2 State for fiscal year 2024-2025 for a Ka'u community health worker (CHW) pilot program. The

3 Department defers to the Governor's Executive Biennium Budget Request appropriation priorities.

4 Department Testimony: The Department of Health (DOH) respectfully offers comments on S.B.
5 2483 to establish a three-year CHW pilot program. The DOH does not have the legal authority to

6 "authorize" CHWs to provide outreach, education, training, and navigation of services. Also, the

7 DOH does not have the existing personnel to assign the administrative and fiscal responsibilities of

8 the pilot program.

9 This measure creates a stand-alone pilot program for the Ka'u community only and may result in the

10 duplication of efforts among organizations with similar responsibilities. The University of Hawaii,

11 Kapiolani Community College offers a 16-credit CHW online certificate program available to

12 CHW's statewide. Tuition waivers and other materials are provided at no charge for those with

13 financial need. Additionally, the Hawaii Community Health Worker Association (HCHWA) was

14 established to identify tools of support, education, and collaboration needed to assist fellow CHWs

15 across the state. This member-driven organization also serves as a statewide hub for resources,

16 events, employment, and training.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

18 Offered Amendments: None

Mitchell D. Roth Mayor

**Deanna S. Sako** Managing Director

**Robert H. Command** Deputy Managing Director



Susan K. Kunz Housing Administrator

Harry M. Yada Assistant Housing Administrator

### **County of Hawai'i**

**Office of Housing and Community Development** 1990 Kino'ole Street, Suite 102 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8379 • Fax (808) 961-8685 Existing Housing: (808) 959-4642 • Fax (808) 959-9308

Kona: (808) 323-4300 • Fax (808) 323-4301

February 2, 2024

# TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF **SENATE BILL 2483** A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATED TO HEALTH COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair Hearing Date: Monday, February 5, 2024, at 1:02 PM Place of Hearing: Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

Aloha Honorable Chairs San Buenaventura and Aquino, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

On behalf of the Office of Housing and Community Development of the County of Hawai'i, I am providing testimony in **support** of **Senate Bill 2483** which requires the Department of Health to administer a three-year pilot program to authorize community health workers to provide outreach, education, training, and navigation of services to address the social determinants of health in Ka'ū, Hawai'i County.

The overall intent of this bill supports the OHCD's mission to provide for the development of viable communities through decent housing, suitable living environments and expanded economic opportunities.

Many families living in rural areas like Ka'ū comprise diverse communities, including low-income, underserved rural areas, all ethnicities, children, adults, families, elderly individuals, uninsured individuals, homeless individuals, immigrants and migrant workers.

According to U.S Census Bureau American Community Survey data, over 8,200 people reside in the Ka'ū Census County Division. Approximatley, 35.7% of those individuals have an income of less than 125% of the Federal Poverty Level of \$17,310. Additionally, the district, according to the 2023 Point In Time Count, reported 12 homeless individuals on the single-night count.

A program as envisioned in Senate Bill 2483 could provide much-needed outreach, education, training and navigation of the health care and social services system to



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residents of Hawai'i Island's largest district who live 50 miles to 70 miles from the urban centers of Kailua-Kona and Hilo.

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

Mahalo, Susan K. Kunz

Housing Administrator

Mitchell D. Roth Mayor



Deanna S. Sako Managing Director

**Robert H. Command** Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i

Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553 KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740 (808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

February 2, 2024

Committee on Health and Human Services Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Hawai'i State Legislature 415 S. Beretania Street Honolulu, HI 96816

Subject: S.B. 2483 RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS Hearing Date: Monday, February 5, 2024, at 1:02 p.m. Time/Place of Hearing: Via Videoconference and Conference Room 225

Aloha Honorable Chairs San Buenaventura and Aquino, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

The County of Hawai'i is in strong support of S.B. 2483, a bill that seeks to establish a 3-year pilot program for community health workers in  $K\bar{a}^{\dagger}\bar{u}$ , County of Hawai'i.

Community health workers play a central role in connecting rural, underserved communities with essential programs and services that target social factors of health by addressing issues such as access to health care, prevention, outreach, and training. The demand for community health workers is especially vital in rural areas lacking reliable access to health education, resources, or employment opportunities. These dedicated individuals serve as essential intermediaries between residents and health care and social services and possess a unique understanding of their community's needs.

The County of Hawai'i strongly supports the passage of S.B. 2483, recognizing the importance of this initiative in improving healthcare accessibility and promoting community well-being in the  $K\bar{a}^{\dagger}\bar{u}$  District. We respectfully encourage the Committee on Health and Human Services to advance this legislation with a favorable recommendation. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this important matter. Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

then) Q Roth

Mitchell D. Roth Mayor County of Hawai'i

#### WRITTEN TESTIMONY in favor of SB2483

Jennifer Aguiar 1 KAMANI ST | PO BOX 40 PAHALA, HI 96777 PHONE: (808) 932-4370 FAX: (808) 928-8980

Date: February 2, 2024

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair Members of the Senate Committee on Health

Re: Support for SB2483, the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program Bill

Hrg: February 5, 2024, 1:02pm

Dear Chair San Buenavetura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee

I am writing to express my **strong support** for the proposed bill establishing a three-year Community Health Worker Pilot Program in Ka'u, Hawai'i County.

As the Hospital Administrator for Ka'u Hospital with nearly three years of experience in the community, I've observed firsthand the health disparities in this district. Many essential social determinants of health are often inaccessible due to various health and social issues. Having witnessed the impact of Community Health Workers, I recognize their ability to bridge the gap between patients and resources. Often, it's as simple as not knowing whom to contact or how to access services. The demand for community assistance is substantial, and the unique role of Community Health Workers addresses this gap effectively. That's why I endorse SB2483, the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program Bill.

I urge you to support and advance the passage of SB2483. The Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program has the potential to serve as a model for community health initiatives by CHWs, promoting not only the well-being of individuals but also fostering a sense of community empowerment and resilience.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I trust that your commitment to the health and well-being of the Ka'u community will be reflected in your support for the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program.

Sincerely,

Jennifer M. Aguiar



Date: February 4, 2024

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair Members of the Senate Committee on Health

Re: Support for SB2483, the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program Bill

Dear Chair San Buenavetura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee

I, Dr. Adrienne Dillard, PhD, MSW, LSW, CEO of Kula no na Po'e Hawai'i o Papakōlea, Kewalo, Kalawahine, a Community Health Worker with degrees, am writing to express the **strong support for SB2483** the proposed bill establishing a three-year Community Health Worker Pilot Program in Ka'u, Hawai'i County by our board and staff.

Kula no na Po'e Hawai'i (KULA) a community-based nonprofit serving the residents of Papakōlea, Kewalo, Kalawahine a Native Hawaiian Homestead community that covers an area of approximately 177 acres located on Oahu at the heart of its urban core, in the city of Honolulu was established on May 16, 1934, under the federal land trust, Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1921. KULA was established in 1992 by a group of concerned Native Hawaiians (NH) wahine kupuna (elder women) to strengthen relationships between parents and the school system. KULA serves more than 1000 annually in its health programs, believing that the wellness of the NH community can effectively be achieved when healthcare is community-driven, working directly with others. With a staff of 23 and volunteers, KULA provides educational and health activities, traditional NH healing, health screenings, vocational training, and cultural training activities to residents of all ages.

KULA works to decrease the health disparities of Native Hawaiian families by providing culturally acceptable education, health, and cultural programs/services addressing the social determinants of health to achieve health equity using community-based participatory research methods. KULA attributes most of its success to Community Health Worker (CHW) mobilization and engagement of community members. Another key to our success is that most of the 23 KULA team members most were born and raised in Papakōlea (65%), representing their home; 75% are Native Hawaiian, and 15% are fluent in Hawaiian. Additionally, 70% completed a Community Health Worker Certificate Program. Community Health Workers being trained from within is most important to our successful program implementation.



Page 2 February 4, 2024 Support for SB2483

The Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program pilot program will help in providing the needed understanding of the importance of the role and training of CHWs from within their communities who have the longstanding relationships and trust of communities to make meaningful strides toward the elimination of disparities for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations in our state. Our community functions on relationships. CHWs working in their communities build service upon those existing relationships.

We support SB2483 and will support the Ka'u leadership in the implementation of their pilot program.

• SB2483 aims at addressing social determinants of health and enhancing the overall wellbeing of the Ka'u community by utilizing Community Health Workers (CHW). It is an important step towards promoting health awareness and providing essential services. As a pilot program, it will help the State of Hawai'i assess the important contributions CHWs can make to the betterment of all our communities, especially our rural, underserved, vulnerable, and economically distressed communities.

• SB2483, the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program is poised to make a significant impact by leveraging the expertise of CHWs in delivering outreach, education, training, and navigation services to individuals in Ka'u. The comprehensive range of services outlined in the bill, including health education and outreach, individual support and assistance, cultural competency, advocacy, and data collection, reflects a holistic approach to community health.

• The bill's provision for contracting with a nonprofit organization with a history of community empowerment, capacity building, and health education in Ka'u is a wise strategy. Ensuring that the chosen nonprofit's board of directors and staff team include a majority of residents from Ka'u strengthens the community connection and ensures that the program aligns with the community's specific needs.

• Furthermore, the requirement for annual reports to the legislature demonstrates transparency and accountability. These reports will provide valuable insights into the program's activities, accomplishments, and its impact on the community. The inclusion of recommendations will allow the legislature to determine whether to extend the program beyond three years and whether to expand the program throughout Hawai'i.



Page 3 February 4, 2024 Support for SB2483

I urge you to support and advance the passage of SB2483. The Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program has the potential to serve as a model for community health initiatives by CHWs, promoting not only the well-being of individuals but also fostering a sense of community empowerment and resilience.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I trust that your commitment to the health and well-being of the Ka'u community will be reflected in your support for the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program. In closing, please support and ensure the PASSING SB2483. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by: adrienne Dillard

Dr. Adrienne Dillard, PhD, MSW, LSW CEO

2/4/2024





Mission: To Do What It Takes To Keep Ka'u Healthy P.O. Box 878 Pahala, Hawaii 96777 PHONE: (808) 928-0101 Website: KRHCAI.COM

February 3,2024

Auntie Jessie Marques, Executive Director Ka'u Rural Health Community Association, Inc. P.O.Box 82, Pahala, Hawaii 96777 Phone: (808) 928-8206

Dear Chair San Buenavetura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee

I am writing to express my strong support for SB2483 establishing a three-year Community Health Worker Pilot Program in Ka'u, Hawai'i County.

Ka'u Rural Health Community Association Inc. (KRHCAI) has been serving our rural, underserved, vulnerable population of 9,000 in the District of Ka'u in the County of Hawaii over the past 25years. Our Mission is "To Do Whatever It Takes To Keep Ka'u Healthy", and our Health & Wellness Program focus on health, education, resource opportunities and economic sustainability (HEROES).

As a retired nurse, emergency medical technician and mental health case manager, KRHCAI volunteer board of directors responded to community's request to prevent Ka'u hospital emergency room from closure. KRHCAI was not only successful in preventing the closure of Ka'u Hospital Emergency Room we were instrumental for bringing the Federally Designated Critical Access Hospital to the State of Hawaii, resulting in eight other community hospitals receiving the federal designation as Critical Access Hospitals.

KRHCAI is the lead nonprofit community-based organization Ka'u, with a Heallth and Wellnes program focused on health, education resources and economic sustainability (HEROES). KRHCAI is the only Resource and Distance Learning Center and a Ka'u Rural Health Academy that provides access to telehealth (HMSA Kiosk and UHJABSOM telehealth programs), outreach (social determinants of health) computers, internet, and continuing education.

SB2483 the "Community Health Workers three year Pilot program in Ka'u" is not only an asset to our geographically isolated, underserved, vulnerable population and economically distressed community, CHW's work to improve access and increase healthcare out comes. CHW's in Ka'u are trusted, live in the community and are culturally sensitive to the needs of the diverse ethnic populations. The Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program has the potential to serve as a model for community health initiatives by CHWs, promoting



# Mission: To Do What It Takes To Keep Ka'u Healthy P.O. Box 878 Pahala, Hawaii 96777 PHONE: (808) 928-0101 Website: KRHCAI.COM

not only the well-being of individuals but also fostering a sense of community empowerment and resilience.

I sincerely urge you to support and advance the passage of SB2483. Mahalo for your consideration and attention to this important initiative. I trust that your commitment to the health and well-being of the Ka'u community will be reflected in your support for the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program.

Should you have any questions, please contact auntie Jessie at <u>krhcai@yahoo.com</u> or at 808-928-8206.

Sincerely,

Auntie Jessie Marques



894 Queen Street Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Phone: 808.597.6550 www.papaolalokahi.org

**Committee on Health and Human Services** Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

# Monday, February 5, 2024, 1:00 PM, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

## **RE: SB 2483 – RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

Papa Ola Lokahi testifies **in support** of SB 2483, which establishes a pilot program for community health workers (CHWs) in Ka'u, Hawai'i. Pilot program can allow insights into this area of development for the CHW workforce in Hawai'i. CHWs can increase health access, education, and more through providing a variety of services, often serving as a "hub" for community members. We support this opportunity to gain insight and health data for the rural community of Ka'u through a pilot program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this critical legislation.



#### <u>SB-2483</u> Submitted on: 2/2/2024 8:56:17 PM Testimony for HHS on 2/5/2024 1:02:00 PM

| Submitted By         | Organization | <b>Testifier Position</b> | Testify                   |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Shana Wailana Kukila | Individual   | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

#### **RE: SB2483 RELATING TO OUTREACH WORKERS**

POSITION: SUPPORT

1) PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE BEST PRACTICES FOR INDIGENOUS DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT IN THIS PROJECT. THIS WILL BUILD TRUST WITH RESIDENTS KNOWING THEIR DATA WILL BE PROPERLY MANAGED AND PROTECTED.

2) KA'Ū COMMUNITY HOSPITAL SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THIS DATA COLLECTION PILOT PROJECT AT EVERY STAGE, INCLUDING THE CRAFTING OF LEGISLATION AND THE SCOPE OF THE DATA COLLECTION, AS WELL AS HIRING AND REFERRALS OF PROSPECTIVE OUTREACH WORKERS.

MAHALO FOR CONSIDERING MY TESTIMONY,

SHANA KUKILA

HILO, HI

### <u>SB-2483</u> Submitted on: 2/4/2024 11:17:29 AM Testimony for HHS on 2/5/2024 1:02:00 PM

| Submitted By    | Organization | <b>Testifier Position</b> | Testify                   |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Hokulani Porter | Individual   | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Hokulani Porter

88-1525 Ala Pakaua St

Captain Cook, Hi 96704

Hopena Kūloli Medical Training Institute LLC

Ka'u rural health association, board member

Date: 2/4/23

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Members of the Senate Committee on Health

Re: Support for SB2483, the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program Bill

Hrg: February 5, 2024, 1:02pm

Dear Chair San Buenavetura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee

I am writing to express my **strong support** for the proposed bill establishing a three-year Community Health Worker Pilot Program in Ka'u, Hawai'i County.

My name is Hokulani Porter and I am a nurse practitioner living and working in the community. It is well known that our geographical area is a healthcare desert. As an APRN, many of my elderly patients have no home health services should they need higher level care after a life changing event

The Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program Bill provides vital training in providing healthcare needs to those unable to perforn simple task and activities of daily living. No home health agencies serve our area and many of our community members are stuck in awful situations trying to find out how to navigate their current high risk situations. This program not only supplies direly needed jobs to our community, but also allows our kupuna to age in place, providing a more affordable and humane option.

I urge you to support and advance the passage of SB2483. The Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program has the potential to serve as a model for community health initiatives by CHWs, promoting not only the well-being of individuals but also fostering a sense of community empowerment and resilience.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I trust that your commitment to the health and well-being of the Ka'u community will be reflected in your support for the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program.

Sincerely,

Hokulani Porter, RN, APRN



Cathy Ferreira 1550 Wilder Ave. A904 Honolulu, HI 96822-4635

Date: February 5, 2024

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair Members of the Senate Committee on Health

Re: Support for SB2483, the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program Bill

Hrg: February 5, 2024, 1:02pm

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my **strong support** for the proposed bill establishing a three-year Community Health Worker Pilot Program in Ka'u, Hawai'i County.

As clearly demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic, community health workers proved to be invaluable within their respective communities. Their continued support beyond their own communities was evident with their individual and collective presence during the Maui wildfire tragedy. As a volunteer, I witnessed only a small part of a much larger, ongoing collaborative effort by many CHWs from across the islands and the continent.

I am proud to be a recent graduate of the community health worker (CHW) program at Kapi'olani Community College which has enhanced my current full-time position with a health-related nonprofit. However, CHWs directly impact the health and well-being for families, friends and neighbors living in our many rural and ethnically-diverse communities across the islands. *Expanding the workforce through SB2483* will improve the lives of these populations by providing services and connection with trusted community members.

I urge you to support and advance the passage of SB2483. The Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program has the potential to serve as a model for community health initiatives by CHWs, promoting not only the well-being of individuals but also fostering a sense of community empowerment and resilience.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I trust that your commitment to the health and well-being of the Ka'u community will be reflected in your support for the Ka'u Community Health Worker Pilot Program.

Sincerely and with deep appreciation: Cathy Ferreira