

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 14 2025

RE: S.B. No. 1281

S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 1281 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO TELEHEALTH,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Update the State's laws on telehealth services to conform with federal Medicare regulations;
- (2) Require the Insurance Commissioner to report to the Legislature on reimbursements claimed in the previous year for certain telehealth services; and
- (3) Repeal the sunset date of Act 107, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Disability and Communication Access Board, University of Hawai'i System, AlohaCare, Hawai'i Mental Health Coalition, The Queen's Health Systems, AARP Hawai'i, Hawai'i Primary Care Association, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Hawai'i Pacific Health, Hina Mauka, Hawaii Medical Association, Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition, Philippine Medical Association of Hawai'i, Alzheimer's Association, and two individuals.



Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Hawaii Medical Service Association.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services, Insurance Division of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, and Hawaii Association of Health Plans.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii's unique geography, spanning across multiple islands, presents significant challenges in accessing health care services, particularly for rural and remote communities and that telehealth is a critical tool to improve health care access for residents and underserved communities throughout the State. Your Committee further finds that aligning state requirements with federal law, including expanding the areas of health care practice that can be provided by audio-only services is essential for ensuring equal access to vital resources. This measure allows people to access health care services more easily through the use of telehealth, consistent with the framework provided under the Medicare program.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Removing language in the definition of "interactive telecommunications system" that would have allowed a patient to not consent to the use of video technology and instead utilize two way, real-time, audio-only communication technology for any telehealth service;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 1281, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1281, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



