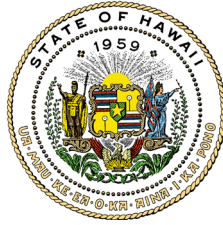


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB705 HD1
Relating to the Executive Office on Aging

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

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Monday, March 10, 2025 1:00 p.m.

Room Number: 225

EOA's Position: The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of Health, **strongly supports HB705 HD1.**

Fiscal Implications: This measure appropriates funds for SFY 2025-2026 and the same sum for SFY 2026-2027 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position within EOA and operating costs.

Purpose and Justification: The bill establishes a Medi-Medi pilot project within the Advocacy, Education, and Outreach Section (AEOS). The project will assist older adults, individuals with disabilities, Medicare beneficiaries, and underserved who may qualify for low-income subsidy programs to navigate and apply for eligible benefits. The project will assist individuals who already struggle to make ends meet, with benefits to offset their healthcare costs while keeping money in their pockets.

With 33 years of proven experience, staff and volunteer counselors educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries to make cost-effective, informed health care decisions. based on their own needs and ability to pay.

Hawai'i is No.1 in the nation with the highest cost of living as well as having the longest average lifespan at 80.7 years of age. Residents continue to struggle with the increasing costs for healthcare services and prescription drugs. Since the pandemic, the Department of Human Services (DHS) reported the number of Medicaid members rose 24.4% from 46,013 to 58,085. The Medicaid eligibility redetermination period began in 2023 and ended in December 2024. Throughout this period, a significant increase in the volume of calls, emails, website visits, and referrals were received from Med-QUEST and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to help those who lost coverage. Two staff and the volunteer counselors successfully addressed the demands, however, the program experienced slower than usual response rates.

Currently, this Section screens for eligibility for low-income subsidy programs such as Medicaid, Medicare Savings Program, and Extra Help. In addition, uninsured individuals are assisted in MarketPlace options and provide information and referrals to other assistance programs to address food, housing, or caregiving needs.

The benefits of the Medi-Medi project are threefold. First, individuals will have a streamlined and timely application process thus receiving benefits to offset their healthcare costs. Second, MedQuest will more time to work on eligibility renewals. Third, EOA will build its infrastructure. EOA's intent was to demonstrate this as a project and make it a permanent program in future years as these needs will continue to grow. By supporting the general funded 1.0 FTE for this project, EOA will be able to bill for Medicaid Administrative Claiming thus building a sustainable funding stream for ongoing operating costs.

We are proposing technical amendments for clarity by replacing Section 2(b) as follows:

(b) The medi-medi project shall:

1) Develop and implement a community outreach program,

2) Streamline the eligibility application process for various low-income subsidy programs, and

3) Provide referrals and assistance to other low-income programs.

Delete section 2(d).

Recommendation: EOA **strongly supports** this measure provided that its enactment does not reduce or replace priorities with the Administration's budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

March 10, 2025

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Buenaventura, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB705 HD1 Relating to the Executive Office on Aging

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB705 HD1**, which establishes a temporary Medi-Medi Project within the Hawaii State Health Insurance Assistance Program administered by the Executive Office on Aging to assist older adults, Medicare beneficiaries, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations who may qualify for various low-income subsidy programs to gain access to their benefits. Requires the Executive Office on Aging to submit reports to the Legislature.

To ensure that this bill effectively meets the needs of individuals with disabilities under the age of 65, it is essential that appropriations be directed toward services and programs specifically designed to support this group. This includes ensuring that the Executive Office on Aging (EOA) has the necessary resources to implement and manage initiatives that assist individuals with disabilities.

From past projects such as the No Wrong Door and the Aging and Disability Resource Center, we have learned that the Executive Office on Aging has faced challenges in addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities due to appropriations constraints and limited resources. We are grateful for EOA's continued inclusion of our disability community in projects and look forward to working closely with them in supporting our vulnerable populations.

For individuals in the intellectually or developmentally disabled (I/DD) community, this bill could help improve access to long-term services that promote independent living, increase care coordination to reduce gaps in support, and enhance resources for family caregivers.

HB705 HD1 Relating to the Executive Office on Aging

March 10, 2025

Page 2 of 2

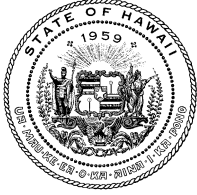
Strengthening these areas would allow individuals with I/DD to receive the appropriate care and services they need to participate fully in their communities and lead meaningful lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB705 HD1**.

Sincerely,



Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, M.D.
ADMINISTRATOR

1177 Alakea St., #402, Honolulu, HI 96813 Phone: 587-0788 Fax: 587-0783 www.shpda.org

March 7, 2025

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
And Honorable Members

FROM: John C (Jack) Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA

RE: **HB705, HD1 – RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING**

HEARING: March 10, 2025 @ 1:00 pm

POSITION: SUPPORT

TESTIMONY:

This bill establishes a temporary Medi-Medi Project within the Hawai'i State Health Insurance Assistance Program administered by the Executive Office on Aging to assist older adults, Medicare beneficiaries, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations who may qualify for various low-income subsidy programs to gain access to their benefits. The patients are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. The bill requires the Executive Office on Aging to implement the project and reports to the Legislature.

The EOA Medi-Medi Project is 100% federally funded. And the need for these services is clear. EOA is willing to partner with DHS to expand services for older adults who face barriers in applying for low-income programs.

The benefits for kupuna and to us, obvious. The Project will increase access to trained help with eligibility and enrollment, ensure applications get submitted properly and timely. It should also benefit the Med-QUEST team by improving eligibility and renewal applications and related processing times for those who qualify for available services.

SHPDA defers to EOA on details and likely need for at least one staff. To overlook funding this request will be to overlook care that is federally funded for kupuna who need it.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

--Jack Lewin MD, Administrator SHPDA



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**The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Monday, March 10, 2025
1:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for H.B. 705, HD1 Relating to Executive Office on Aging (Medi-Medi)

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals aged 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP is in support of H.B. 705, HD1 which seeks to establish the Medi-Medi project under the Executive Office on Aging. This initiative is crucial for the well-being of our kupuna and other vulnerable residents who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

Hawai'i residents continue to struggle with the increasing costs for healthcare services and prescription drugs. Since the pandemic, the Department of Human Services (DHS) reported the number of Medicaid members rose 24.4% from 46,013 to 58,085. The proposed Medi-Medi project under the Executive Office on Aging (EOA) will screen residents who may be dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid and assist them in making cost-effective, informed health care decisions based on their own needs and ability to pay. This will help streamline the Medicaid application process and ensure the submission of applications, helping individuals with quicker access to benefits. The project would help Med-Quest save time and resources, resulting in faster intake processing for initial applications.

In due course, the Medi-Medi project will help:

- **Improve Health Outcomes** by facilitating quicker access to healthcare services which will help prevent the escalation of medical conditions, leading to better health outcomes for our residents.



- **Reduce Administrative Burden** by streamlining the application process and alleviate the administrative burden on both applicants and state agencies, allowing for more efficient use of resources.
- **Promote Equity**- The project will help bridge the gap in healthcare access for low-income individuals, promoting greater equity in our healthcare system.

Hawaii House Bill 705 represents a significant step forward in supporting our dually eligible residents. AARP appreciates the committee's consideration to pass this bill and help ensure that all Hawai'i residents have access to the healthcare services they need.

Thank you for the opportunity to support H.B 705, HD1.



LATE

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB705 HD1, RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
ON AGING**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
MARCH 10, 2025**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB705 HD1, RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING. The Democratic Party of Hawaii's platform emphasizes the importance of public funding for kupuna and family care programs, ensuring equal access to medical services and long-term care without exhausting personal and family resources.

The recent challenges faced by our community, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 Maui wildfires, have highlighted the critical need for robust support systems for our most vulnerable populations. The Medi-Medi Project is a timely and essential initiative that addresses these needs by providing a vital safety net for those who need it most. This project will significantly enhance community outreach, streamline processes, and offer additional services to ensure that underserved populations are fully informed about and can access the benefits available to them. This bill represents a significant step forward in our commitment to supporting our kupuna and ensuring that all members of our community receive the care and support they deserve.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of HB705 HD1, RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Tuesday, March 10, 2025

TIME: 1:00 PM

**HB 705, RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON
HD1 AGING**

Aloha

Chair

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

My name is Linda Dorset, a resident of Maui County and a SHIP Volunteer. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 705 HD1. which is requesting funding for 1 full time employee and operating expenses to launch a Medi-Medi initiative. As a SHIP volunteer, I have experienced firsthand the need for education and assistance with low-income subsidy programs More and more beneficiaries are calling the helpline asking about programs to help pay for their health insurance and MedQUEST is heavily relying on community partners like SHIP/MIPPA to help beneficiaries with eligibility screening and application submission. With additional funding and 1 dedicated staff, the Executive Office on Aging can 1) Increase application assistance, 2) Streamline Medicaid/MSP/Extra Help enrollments, 3) Reduce wait times to submit applications, 4) Expedite processing time, and 5) Ensure applications are submitted correctly and received by MedQUEST. This would be especially beneficial to our kupuna, who are typically less adaptable to searching the internet for answers without help. And some of the people I have interacted with don't know enough to know what they don't know.

Please support HB 705 HD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Linda Dorset

Wailuku

LATE

HB-705-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 8:30:18 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support a temporary Medi-Medi project to study the needs of Medicare recipients, individuals with disabilities and other underserved populations, to make sure that they are aware of and connected to services.

Mahalo for allowing me the opportunity to testify.

Barbara J. Service. MSW

Child Welfare Supervisor (ret.)

Passionate Kupuna advocate



LATE

To: The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Director of Public Policy
Sarielyn Curtis, External Affairs Specialist

Hearing: Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:00PM, Conference Room 225

RE: **HB705 HD1 Relating to the Executive Office on Aging**

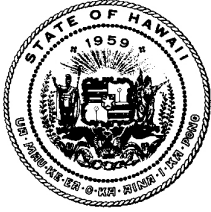
AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB705 HD1**. This measure establishes a temporary Medi-Medi Project within the Hawai'i State Health Insurance Assistance Program administered by the Executive Office on Aging to assist older adults, Medicare beneficiaries, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations who may qualify for various low-income subsidy programs to gain access to their benefits; requires the Executive Office on Aging to submit reports to the Legislature; and appropriates funds.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 70,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 37 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

As a safety-net health plan dedicated to serving our state's Medicaid and Medi-Medi population, AlohaCare appreciates expanding resources to help our kūpuna access support navigating an oftentimes complex maze of programs and services. We support this measure to improve access to healthcare and other services toward whole-person health.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB705 HD1**.

LATE



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Rm. 118 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129 • (808) 204-2466 (VP)

March 10, 2025

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

House Bill 705 HD1 – Relating to Tenant Selection

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 705 HD1 – Relating to the Executive Office on Aging. This bill establishes a temporary Medi-Medi Project within the Hawai'i State Health Insurance Assistance Program administered by the Executive Office on Aging to assist older adults, Medicare beneficiaries, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations who may qualify for various low-income subsidy programs to gain access to their benefits. Requires the Executive Office on Aging to submit reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

This initiative is crucial in providing support to older adults, Medicare beneficiaries, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations who may qualify for various low-income subsidy programs.

Access to medical care is a fundamental right, yet many individuals in these groups face significant challenges in navigating the complex landscape of available health benefits. The Medi-Medi Project will address these challenges by assisting these vulnerable populations in obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled, thereby promoting greater access to healthcare and improving their quality of life.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director