



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
Friday, March 14, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

T. Samuel Shomaker, MD, Dean,
Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, MD, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs,
Kamal Masaki, MD, Chair, Department of Geriatric Medicine
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 1252 SD2 – RELATING TO DEMENTIA

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present COMMENTS today. The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) supports the intent of SB 1252 SD2, which requires the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents to establish specialized training programs to educate health care providers on methods to best care for patients with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

Hawai'i's aging population is increasing rapidly and approximately 31,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. Recognizing these facts, JABSOM, the University of Hawai'i's Center for Aging, and the University of Hawai'i's Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health provide courses, and actively engage in educating and training students in Alzheimer's disease and dementia. For example, JABSOM's Department of Geriatric Medicine and Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) work with medical students, residents and fellows along with other allied health fields (i.e. social work, public health, and nursing) to build a geriatrics-capable medical workforce in the state and the Pacific Region which includes training in Alzheimer's disease and dementia. The GWEP collaborates with community partners to provide educational lectures and resources to local caregivers.

As programs currently exist within the University of Hawai'i System that provide training in Alzheimer's disease and dementia, it may not be necessary to create a new program. Instead, greater coordination between the various programs may be valuable in addressing specific training in caring for patients with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Implementation of this coordinated effort would require two (2) FTEs at JABSOM's Department of Geriatric Medicine, and an appropriation of approximately \$525,000.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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Alzheimer's Association

Testimony to the House Committee on Higher Education Friday, March 14, 2:00 PM Room 309 and Videoconference

RE: SB1252 SD2 – RELATING TO DEMENTIA

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Coby Chock, and I am the Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the Alzheimer's Association. On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association, I am writing to express our strong support for SB1252 SD2, which aims to establish a specialized training program at the University of Hawaii to educate healthcare providers on caring for patients with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

The Alzheimer's Association recognizes the critical need for specialized training programs to equip healthcare providers with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver high-quality care to individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. This bill addresses a significant gap in our healthcare system and will greatly benefit patients, families, and caregivers across the state.

Statistics highlight the urgent need for specialized dementia training, especially among professions involved in the diagnosis of cognitive impairment and dementia such as physicians, APRNs, RNs, medical assistants, and social workers. Although 85% of Alzheimer's diagnoses are initially made by primary care providers (PCPs), 40% of PCPs say they are never or only sometimes comfortable making a diagnosis. Even when a diagnosis is made, appropriate care may not be available, as two-thirds of PCPs say they learned little to nothing on dementia care in medical school.

To enhance the effectiveness of this important legislation, we respectfully propose amendments to outline the content to be included in the dementia training, the types of training formats (degree course offerings and continuing education), and the professions that the programs should be tailored for. We have attached the detailed suggested amendments for the committee's consideration.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions, please contact Coby Chock at 808-451-3410 or ckchock@alz.org.



Coby Chock
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy
Alzheimer's Association - Hawaii

RELATING TO DEMENTIA

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that a specialized training program to educate healthcare providers on methods to best care for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia is a matter of statewide concern. The purpose of this Act is to establish a training program at the university of Hawaii to educate healthcare providers on caring for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended

by adding a new section to part IV, subpart M, to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§304A- Patients having Alzheimer's disease; care training program. The board shall establish a specialized training program to educate healthcare providers on caring for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. The training program shall consist of university and college course offerings and continuing education credit offerings and shall include but not be limited to curricula for physicians, nurses, clinical psychologists, physical therapists, physician assistants, clinical social workers, occupational therapists, professional counselors, dieticians and certified nurse aides. The training program shall cover relevant topics specific to each profession, including but not limited to:

- Assessment and diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias
- Administration of cognitive assessment tests
- Next Steps: Guidance on the options available if a healthcare provider suspects dementia, including referrals to specialists, further diagnostic testing, and patient and family education
- Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia: Understanding the types, stages, and progression of dementia, with a specific focus on Alzheimer's disease
- Disease-modifying treatments for Alzheimer's disease
- Management of treatment plans and medication administration
- Person-Centered Care: Approaches that focus on the individual's unique preferences, abilities, and needs
- Assessment and Care Planning: Strategies for assessing individuals with dementia and creating personalized care plans

- Activities of Daily Living (ADLs): Best practices for assisting individuals with dementia in performing daily activities such as eating, bathing, dressing, and mobility
- Dementia-Related Behaviors and Communication: Techniques for managing challenging behaviors, such as aggression or wandering, and improving communication with individuals with dementia.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the university of Hawaii board of regents to establish a specialized training program to educate healthcare providers on methods to best care for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the University of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 31, 2050

SB-1252-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 12:13:41 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/14/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lila Mower	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure and request its adoption.

**Testimony on SB1252 SD2
RELATING TO DEMENTIA
Friday, March 14, 2025, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street**

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee,

My name is Calvin Hara and I reside in Kaimuki. Throughout my thirty year career in senior care and as a family caregiver, I have seen many kupuna with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia. It is a very difficult time, from diagnosis to the progression of the disease and ultimately death.

I am in strong support of SB1252 SD2 with the amendments proposed by the Alzheimer's Association which would outline the professions for which curricula shall be developed for and key topics to be included to improve the care, diagnosis, and treatment of individuals living with dementia.

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias primarily affect older adults, with 90% of cases occurring in individuals aged 65 and older. In Hawaii, nearly one in five residents is 65 or older, placing our state at particular risk as our population continues to age. Annually, Alzheimer's and related dementias cost Hawaii's Medicaid program \$285 million.

Early detection and care planning can significantly mitigate these costs. Healthcare providers ranging from physicians, APRNs, RNs, PAs, social workers, counselors, psychologists and other trained professionals are involved in the care continuum of individuals living with dementia. This bill will ensure that regardless of where an individual is on their journey with dementia, they will receive the best care and treatment possible.

The training, specific to Alzheimer's and other dementia will better equipment healthcare professionals to help the people of Hawai'i. Please support SB1252 SD2.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Calvin Harate

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Aloha,

My name is Brooke Oyadomari. I am a resident of Kailua and am currently attending graduate school at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

I am testifying in SUPPORT of S.B. No. 1252 S.D. 2 - RELATING TO DEMENTIA, which will "establish a training program at the University of Hawaii to educate health care providers on caring for patients having Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia." As someone who has firsthand experience of how dementia impacts the individual, their families, and how healthcare is provided, I recognize the critical importance of ensuring that healthcare providers in Hawai'i receive this specialized education.

Alzheimer's disease, a growing public health crisis within the realm of dementia, affects many. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that approximately 31,000 residents in Hawai'i aged 65 and older have this disease. Among Native Hawaiians over 65, about 11.5% are affected, with nearly half lacking a formal dementia diagnosis. Although initiatives such as the Hawai'i Alzheimer's Disease Initiative have made strides, shortcomings remain in areas like dementia capabilities, early detection, care coordination, and caregiver support.

A training program at the University of Hawai'i will help fill this gap by equipping healthcare providers with the skills and knowledge necessary to deliver compassionate, culturally appropriate, and evidence-based care to individuals living with dementia. This program will help empower healthcare providers to meet the complex medical, emotional, and social needs of those affected by dementia. Additionally, this program will have a profound impact on families, caregivers, and the overall well-being of our communities.

To conclude, I urge the committee to support this important legislation that is a meaningful step toward improving dementia care in Hawai'i, providing our healthcare providers with the necessary tools to deliver compassionate, high quality care, and ensure that those living with dementia can receive the dignity and respect they deserve.

This is my earnest request for your consideration and support. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,
Brooke Oyadomari