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Testimony to the Senate Committee on Higher Education Thursday, February 6, 3:00 PM Room 229 and Videoconference

RE: Senate Bill No. 1252 – RELATING TO DEMENTIA

Chair Kim 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, 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. Additionally, we suggest establishing an Alzheimer's Research Center at the University of Hawaii to organize research efforts in this field, maximize efficiency, and allow the university to pursue National Institute on Aging funding for an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC). 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, 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 1, 2025.

PART II

SECTION 6. The legislature finds that establishing an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) at the University of Hawaii is essential for advancing research, treatment, and care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

The legislature finds that the National Institute on Aging (NIA) provides substantial funding opportunities for Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers, which can significantly enhance research capabilities and resources.

The legislature finds that Hawaii has the largest share of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations in the United States, presenting a unique opportunity to conduct Alzheimer's research that reflects the genetic, cultural, and environmental factors distinct from those studied in mainland research centers.

The legislature finds that the University of Hawaii, as the state's premier higher education institution, has the potential to lead this important initiative and contribute to global research efforts on Alzheimer's disease.

The purpose of this part is to establish an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at the University of Hawaii.

SECTION 7. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part IV, to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§304A- Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii. (a) There is established an organized research unit, hereinafter known as the Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii, to conduct Alzheimer's and dementia research. The Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii shall be administered by a director to be appointed in accordance with board of regents' policy.

(b) The Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii shall be administratively affiliated with the University of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine. The administrative services and infrastructure teams of the Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii and the University of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine may be merged to achieve greater efficiency.

(c) The provost of the University of Hawaii at Manoa shall have authority to direct and achieve efficiencies at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine and Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii.

(d) The programs of the University of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine and Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii, the University of Hawaii Center on Aging, and the University of Hawaii at Manoa shall identify opportunities to:

(1) Capitalize on collaboration between the programs; and

(2) Maximize operational efficiencies between the University of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine and Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii, and the University of Hawaii Center on Aging.

including but not limited to shared services and personnel whenever feasible and utilization of centralized services available through the University of Hawaii at Manoa whenever appropriate.

(e) The Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii's research agenda shall focus on research, education, patient care, and community outreach and reflect an understanding of the ethnic, cultural, and environmental characteristics of the State and the Pacific region.

(f) The Alzheimer's research center of Hawaii may:

(1) Engage in international research collaborations;

(2) Undertake research studies and clinical trials; and

(3) Participate in projects and programs of the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute on Aging including but not limited to Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers.

SECTION 8. 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 an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. The appropriation shall also fund the creation of two faculty positions in the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine specializing in neurology and dementia.

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

SECTION 9. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 10. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Higher Education
Thursday, February 6, 2025; 3:05 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 1252, RELATING TO DEMENTIA.

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 1252, RELATING TO DEMENTIA.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would 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. The bill would also appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2025-2026, and the same amount for fiscal year 2026-2027 for this purpose.

According to the Center for Disease Control:

- Alzheimer's disease is one of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States;
- The 6th leading of death among US adults; and
- The 5th leading cause of death among adults aged 65 years or older.

In 2023, an estimated 6.7 million Americans aged 65 year or older had Alzheimer's disease. **This number is projected to nearly triple to 14 million people by 2060.**

Further, death rates for Alzheimer's disease are increasing, unlike heart disease and cancer death rates that are on the decline. Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, has shown to be under-reported in death certificates and therefore the proportion of older people who die from Alzheimer's may be considerably higher.

In Hawaii, Alzheimer's disease is a growing public health crisis:

- 29,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's in Hawaii;
- 6.7% of people aged 45 and older have subjective cognitive decline;
- 60,000 family caregivers bear the burden of the disease in Hawaii;
- 91 million hours of unpaid care are provided by Alzheimer's caregivers;
- \$1.9 billion is the value of the unpaid care; and
- \$240 million is the cost of Alzheimer's to the State Medicaid Program.

For these reasons, HPCA has worked closely with the Hawaii Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association to improve the health, welfare, and safety of persons and families afflicted with this disease. Accordingly, we are honored to be a partner with the Alzheimer's Association and urge your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

SB-1252

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 2:29:12 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth R. Conklin, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. I'm getting older every day. So far, so good. But we never know what tomorrow might bring.

There are only two possibilities for every one of us: get old, or die. Getting older carries an increasing risk of dementia; and of course younger people can also become afflicted by it.

So it's important for all Hawaii's people to have healthcare providers who are well-educated in how to provide cognitive, emotional, and social support for people who are afflicted with dementia, as well as for their family and community caregivers.

SB-1252

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:55:27 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Nomura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB 1252. By providing this training, we can ensure that healthcare providers are more prepared to handle the challenges of dementia care. The University of Hawaii is in a great position to offer this program because it has the expertise to develop and deliver specialized training. Offering this training benefits local providers who are already familiar with the community and its unique needs. This helps to ensure that high-quality dementia care is provided right here at home.

I encourage everyone to support this important initiative, as it will make a real difference in our community.

SB-1252

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:01:53 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2025 3:05:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this measure.

SB-1252

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:14:21 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/6/2025 3:05:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.