

JAN 23 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEARING LOSS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that hearing loss affects
2 nearly two hundred sixteen thousand Hawaii residents, including
3 seventy-nine thousand residents who report deafness or serious
4 hearing difficulty. Unfortunately, these conditions are likely
5 to be underreported, and the true number of individuals living
6 with hearing loss is probably higher.

7 The legislature further finds that hearing loss
8 disproportionately affects our kupuna. More specifically,
9 hearing loss affects one in three individuals in their sixties,
10 two-thirds of those in their seventies, and more than eighty per
11 cent of individuals in their eighties. Among kupuna, untreated
12 hearing loss drives isolation, cognitive decline, dementia,
13 depression, and falls, creating costly social and healthcare
14 impacts.

15 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
16 department of health to develop and publish a state plan on
17 hearing loss.



1 SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall develop and
2 publish a state plan on hearing loss. At a minimum, the plan
3 shall:

4 (1) Propose actions to minimize hearing loss and improve
5 the early identification, diagnosis, screening, and
6 treatment of hearing loss;
7 (2) Identify common issues, unmet needs, and challenges
8 faced by persons living with hearing loss;
9 (3) Propose actions to develop new services, increase the
10 level of existing services, or take other actions
11 necessary to address the issues, needs, and challenges
12 identified in paragraph (2); and
13 (4) Address any other matters the department determines to
14 be appropriate.

15 (b) No later than twenty days prior to the convening of
16 the regular session of 2027, the department of health shall
17 submit an interim report to the legislature that includes:
18 (1) The department's progress in developing the state plan
19 on hearing loss pursuant to subsection (a); and
20 (2) Preliminary findings and recommendations, including
21 any proposed legislation.



5 (1) The finalized state plan on hearing loss pursuant to
6 subsection (a); and

7 (2) Any other findings and recommendations, including any
8 proposed legislation.

9 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

SB LRB 26-0149.docx



S.B. NO. 2865

Report Title:

Kupuna Caucus; DOH; Hearing Loss; State Plan; Report to Legislature

Description:

Requires the Department of Health to develop and publish a state plan on hearing loss. Requires reports to the Legislature prior to the 2027 and 2028 Regular Sessions.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

