

Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Friday, April 10, 2026
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229 and Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
G.M. 776, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE HAWAII MEDICAL BOARD,
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, REBECCA SAWAI,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2030**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Kor, and I am an Executive Officer of the Hawaii Medical Board (Board). The Board supports the confirmation of Dr. Sawai's reappointment to the Board as a licensed physician member from the City and County of Honolulu.

Dr. Sawai has held a current, active, and unencumbered medical license in the State of Hawai'i since 2008 and has served on the Board since her appointment on July 1, 2022. She is currently an attending surgeon in general surgery and colon and rectal surgery at Kaiser Moanalua Medical Center and an Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa John A. Burns School of Medicine. In addition to her clinical and academic roles, Dr. Sawai serves in leadership positions within professional organizations, including as Medical Director of Clinical Risk and Quality Assurance for the Hawaii Permanente Medical Group and as President of the Hawaii Chapter of the American College of Surgeons.

Since her appointment, Dr. Sawai has been a highly reliable and consistent Board member, maintaining a 95 percent attendance rate. She was also appointed by her peers to serve as a Legislative Liaison for the 2024 legislative session, where she provided clinical and professional support to the Executive Officer. Board meeting minutes reflect her focus on clinical standards, patient safety, and the rigorous regulation of medical practice. Dr. Sawai comes well prepared, asks thoughtful and relevant questions, and demonstrates a clear understanding and application of Board statutes, administrative rules, and policies to all agenda matters. Her expertise helps

ensure Board decisions remain both practical for physicians and aligned with the Board's mandate to protect the public.

The Board believes that Dr. Sawai's continued service, professional expertise, and commitment to the community will further strengthen the effectiveness of the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Hearing: Friday, April 10, 2026, 9:30 a.m., Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96813

Re: In **SUPPORT** of GM 776 – For consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Medical Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, REBECCA SAWAI, MD, FACS for a term to expire 6-30-2030.

Aloha e Senator Keohokalole,

It is with pleasure that I write to support Dr. Rebecca Sawai's appointment to the Hawai'i Medical Board for a second term to expire June 30, 2030. Dr. Sawai is currently in her first term as a member of the Medical Board and I believe she will continue to make valuable contributions to the Medical Board and the State in her second term.

Dr. Sawai has been a surgeon with the Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group since 2008 and currently serves as an attending surgeon specializing in colon and rectal surgery at Moanalua Medical Center. Dr. Sawai is also the Medical Director for Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i's Clinical Risk & Quality Assurance Committee and a member of the Credentialing and Privileging Committee.

Dr. Sawai's experience, especially in treating colorectal cancer, a disease for which surgery can make a big difference in patients' lives, as well as her compassion for all her patients will help to inform her decisions and recommendations as a member of the Hawai'i Medical Board. She is incredibly knowledgeable and understands the larger issues facing the practice of medicine.

Dr. Sawai is a well-liked and trusted colleague who is frequently sought out for her advice – leading her to be recognized as a Hawai'i Healthcare Hero by the Healthcare Association of Hawai'i in 2018. Furthermore, she has consistently been named to "Best Doctors" and "Top Doctors" lists in Hawai'i, both of which are peer-nominated honors. Therefore, I believe she will continue to be asset to the Hawai'i Medical Board, especially in a time as Hawai'i continues to face a shortage of physicians.

Accordingly, on behalf of Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i, I urge the committee and the Senate to support the appointment of Dr. Rebecca Sawai for a second term on the Hawai'i Medical Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Ching
Head of Government Relations