

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



CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR
Executive Office on Aging

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony COMMENTING on HB1597 HD1
RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS
RESEARCH**

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

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

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 10:00 A.M., Conference Room: 329

- 1 **EOA Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of
- 2 Health (DOH), appreciates the intent of HB1597 HD1 and offers comments. EOA requests that
- 3 this program and appropriation not conflict with, reduce, or replace priorities identified in the
- 4 executive budget.
- 5 **Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates funds to establish an Alzheimer's Disease and Related
- 6 Dementias (ADRD) Research Center within the University of Hawai'i, including establishing
- 7 staff positions.
- 8 **Purpose and Justification:** This measure establishes an Alzheimer's Disease and Related
- 9 Dementias Research Center within the University of Hawai'i to build capacity and position the
- 10 State for future National Institute on Aging designation. According to the Alzheimer's

1 Association of Hawai'i, approximately 31,000 Hawai'i residents aged 65 and older are living
2 with Alzheimer's disease, and an estimated 60,000 caregivers provide support to loved ones.
3 National and global trends indicate that the prevalence of Alzheimer's and related dementias will
4 continue to rise significantly.

5 ADRD Research Centers play a critical role in advancing detection, diagnosis, treatment,
6 and prevention strategies, while improving care and support for individuals and families affected
7 by dementia. Establishing such a center in Hawai'i will enhance local research efforts, foster
8 collaboration, and improve outcomes for patients and caregivers.

9 **Recommendation:** EOA appreciates the intent of this measure and defers to the University of
10 Hawai'i regarding its implementation and feasibility.

11

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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 Health
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 10:00 a.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

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1597 HD1 – RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH.

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1597 HD1, which establishes and appropriates funds for an Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research center at the University of as the first phase of a strategic plan to build capacity and position Hawai'i for future ADRC designation by the National Institute on Aging. This is a necessary step to eventually be able to apply for a National Institute on Aging (NIA)-designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC).

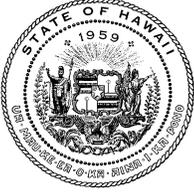
Although Hawai'i has numerous ongoing and historical dementia-related research projects, education initiatives, and community programs, these activities lack a coordinated structure. The state does not currently have the centralized research infrastructure, shared cores, or integrated data and clinical systems required to be competitive for NIA-funded ADRC designation. Establishing an ADRC Research Center would allow the university to build on existing strengths, reduce fragmentation, and create the foundation necessary for Hawai'i to prepare for future ADRC application cycles.

Hawai'i has the longest life expectancy in the United States, and the aging population is increasing rapidly. Approximately 31,000 people are living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia in Hawai'i, reflecting over 11% of the population aged 65 years and older. They require 111 million hours of unpaid care by 62,000 caregivers, valued at 2,891 million dollars in 2025. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPIs) face a higher risk of dementia, and at younger ages. The odds of early-onset dementia among Native Americans (including Native Hawaiians) are over double that of Caucasians.

Establishing an ADRD Research Center at the University of Hawai'i will create a foundation to apply for future NIA ADRC designation and deliver significant benefits to the university, the state, and its residents. This center will advance interdisciplinary research, bringing together researchers from medicine, public health, nutrition, social sciences and others, thus enhancing UH's research capabilities and reputation, attracting major federal research dollars, and expanding opportunities for local talent in biomedical research and healthcare. The Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research center also creates the opportunity to advance scientific research focused on Asian American and NHPI populations which are historically underrepresented in dementia research, and will include unique genetic, behavioral, socio-cultural, and environmental factors affecting dementia risk. The research will improve patient care and access to clinical trials for our kūpuna. Importantly, this will strengthen collaboration between many academic and community partners, including the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), UH Cancer Center, UH Center on Aging, Kuakini Medical Center, Hawai'i Pacific Neuroscience, The Queen's Health Systems, Hawai'i Pacific Health, Native Hawaiian Health Systems, the Alzheimer's Association Hawai'i Chapter, and other community-based organizations. It will align with academic growth and workforce development, complementing JABSOM's upcoming Neurology residency program.

The UH Mānoa at Kaka'ako campus has the capacity to physically house the ADRD Research Center, including laboratory and office spaces. JABSOM requests an appropriation of \$375,000 and the allocation of positions to establish an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center which will support statewide community assets, and is in the best interests of our community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



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

JOSH GREEN, MD
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, MD
ADMINISTRATOR

February 18, 2026

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Honorable Members

FROM: John C. (Jack) Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA, and Sr. Advisor to
Governor Josh Green, MD on Healthcare Innovation

**RE: HB 1597 HD1 -- RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND
RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH**

HEARING: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 @ 10:00 am; Conference Room 329

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports HB 1597 HD1, with comments.

This bill establishes an Alzheimer's Disease and related Dementias Research Center (ADRD) at the University of Hawaii

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are among the most pressing health challenges of our time, disproportionately affecting Hawaii's aging population. Our state's unique demographic composition—particularly our large Asian American and Pacific Islander communities—presents an unparalleled opportunity to advance research that reflects genetic, cultural, and environmental factors not studied elsewhere. This will lead to more effective, culturally tailored interventions for our residents.

Pulling together the resources associated with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in a coordinated and collaborative way to build the research capacity within our state makes good sense and would maximize our resources.

We defer to the University regarding the specifics, details and cost of establishing such a center.

HB 1597 HD1: testimony of SHPDA (2026), continued.

SHPDA believes that having an Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research center in our state would allow us to build research capacity and be able to design our own evidence-based models focused on our diverse populations.

Thank you for hearing HB 1597 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA



February 17, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **HB1597 HD1**, Relating to Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia Research

To: Representatives Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representatives Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

From: Llasmin Chaine, LSW, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB1597 HD1**, Relating to Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia Research

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women recognizes the significant and disproportionate impact that Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias have on women, both as individuals living with these conditions and as primary caregivers, thus our **support** of **HB1597 HD1**. Establishing a dedicated research center at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine aligns with our mission to advance gender equity and improve health outcomes for women across the state.

Women are statistically more likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease and to serve as caregivers for loved ones affected by dementia. The lack of localized research and culturally relevant interventions can exacerbate the unique challenges faced by women in Hawaii, including those in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. By supporting the creation of a research center focused on these issues, the **bill addresses a critical gap in the state’s healthcare infrastructure and supports the development of resources tailored to the needs of local women and their families.**

A research center at JABSOM would also **foster collaboration** among medical professionals, community organizations, and policymakers, leading to improved public awareness, early detection, and access to support services. These efforts are consistent with best practices in public health, which emphasize the importance of research-driven approaches and community engagement to address complex health challenges.

Thank you for considering this important investment in the health and well-being of Hawaii’s women and families. We respectfully urge this Committee to **pass HB1597 HD1**.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



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[Twitter.com/aarphawaii](https://twitter.com/aarphawaii) | facebook.com/aarphawaii

**The State Legislature
House Committee on Health
Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Conference Room 329, 10:00 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
POSITION: Support for H.B. 1597, HD1 Relating to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia Research

Aloha Chair Takayama 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 Hawai'i is in support for H.B. 1597 HD1, which establishes and provides funding for an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) research center at the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). This measure represents a critically needed investment in the future health, well-being, and economic resilience of Hawai'i's rapidly aging population.

Hawai'i faces a significant and growing burden of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. According to state analyses, more than 31,000 Hawai'i residents are living with Alzheimer's disease, yet as many as half may remain undiagnosed due to limited access to specialized memory services. [alzimpact.org] This demographic challenge is magnified by Hawai'i's unique population makeup. House Bill 1597, HD1 correctly notes that the state's large Asian American and Pacific Islander population offers a rare opportunity to advance research into genetic, cultural, and environmental dementia-related factors that remain understudied in mainland cohorts.

More than 6 million Americans live with dementia—including Alzheimer's disease—and the number is rising sharply. Family caregivers provide billions of hours of unpaid care each year, often at great economic, emotional, and physical cost.



Innovative research is essential because traditional drug-development pathways have repeatedly failed, underscoring the urgency for new approaches and expanded clinical research capacity. Thus, AARP strongly supports efforts that expand research infrastructure, improve diagnosis, foster innovation, and enhance culturally appropriate care—all key goals of H.B. 1597,HD1.

The establishment of an Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias research center at the University of Hawai’i represents a forward-looking, cost-effective, and scientifically sound investment that aligns with AARP’s support in dementia research and our commitment to improving the lives of older adults and their families.

We urge the Committee to pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.



2026 Hawaii Leadership Board

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LJ R. Duenas,
Executive Director
Alzheimer's Association

Testimony to the House Committee on Health Wednesday, February 18, 10:00 AM, Room 329 and Videoconference RE: House Bill No. 1597 HD 1 – RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of HB1597 HD1, which establishes a Dementia Research Unit (DRU) at the University of Hawai'i. My name is Coby Chock, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the Alzheimer's Association.

Hawai'i urgently needs a coordinated research structure for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Nationally, the NIH invests \$3.8 billion annually in Alzheimer's research, and federally designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers (ADRCs) can receive up to \$2.925 million per year in direct core funding, along with additional project and clinical trial awards. Yet out of more than 460 NIH funded Alzheimer's trials, Hawai'i currently leads just one. This means substantial federal funding, clinical trials, and scientific partnerships are not flowing into our state because we do not have the foundational infrastructure required to compete for these awards.

The SR163 report states that while Hawai'i has many dementia related research activities, they are spread across institutions and not coordinated through shared cores, integrated data systems, or unified leadership. Without an organized research unit, Hawai'i cannot realistically pursue ADRC designation or attract multiyear federal support. At the same time, our population offers a unique scientific opportunity. Hawai'i is home to one of the largest Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations in the nation, groups that experience earlier onset, higher vascular risk, and younger age at diagnosis. These disparities are underrepresented in national dementia studies, and the lack of local research infrastructure prevents Hawai'i from contributing the data needed to close these gaps.

What HB1597 HD1 accomplishes:

- Establishes the DRU as an organized research unit within JABSOM, enabling shared services, collaboration, and coordinated research oversight.
- Provides \$375,000 in start-up funding to hire a senior clinician scientist (tenure track) and a center coordinator. These positions are necessary to develop grant applications, clinical protocols, and partnerships that bring in federal funding.
- Unifies existing dementia related assets across the UH Center on Aging, UH Cancer Center, Kuakini Medical Center, Hawai'i Pacific Health, and Queen's Health Systems, creating a statewide structure that meets NIH expectations for competitive centers, trials, and data integration.

The DRU is the essential first step toward unlocking federal research dollars. It creates the foundation needed for Hawai'i to join national clinical trials, host locally accessible research studies, and eventually apply for ADRC designation, which brings large and recurring federal awards. It also improves access to diagnosis and treatment innovation, strengthens workforce development, and brings new economic activity through research jobs and indirect cost recovery. Most importantly, it expands research opportunities for neighbor island and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities that have been historically underrepresented in dementia science.

HB1597 HD1 represents a strategic and high value investment. It fills Hawai'i's research gap, strengthens our ability to compete for federal funding, and establishes the structure required for long term growth. By creating the Dementia Research Unit, the Legislature positions Hawai'i to advance scientific discovery, improve care, and capture the federal resources that are currently out of reach.

Mahalo for your consideration. 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

SB2657/HB1597

[ALZIMPACT.ORG/HAWAII](https://alzimpact.org/hawaii)

PLEASE SUPPORT THESE BILLS TO ESTABLISH A DEMENTIA RESEARCH UNIT (DRU) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

- \$3.8 billion is appropriated to the NIH annually for Alzheimer's research.
- Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers (ADRCs) may receive up to \$2.925 million per year in direct costs (P30 core grant) + multiple R01, U01, or P01 research grants, clinical trial funding, supplemental awards, etc.
- Many states begin with research units like a DRU before qualifying for Exploratory Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) status

FDA-approved Alzheimer's treatments and hundreds of investigational therapies now exist, but access depends on timely diagnosis and participation in research—making local research capacity essential.



**460+ NIH Funded
Alzheimer's trials
nationwide.
Hawai'i leads just
one.**

What the DRU would do...

- Serve as a centralized hub for Alzheimer's and dementia research in Hawai'i
- Expand local access to clinical trials and observational studies
- Collect Hawai'i-specific data to inform care, policy, and prevention
- Build capacity to participate in national research networks

BUILDING HAWAII'S DEMENTIA RESEARCH CAPACITY

Components of SB2657 / HB1597

- Creates the Dementia Research Unit (DRU) at the University of Hawai'i as an organized research unit administered by a director and affiliated with JABSOM
- Authorizes efficiencies and shared services across JABSOM, the DRU, Center on Aging, and UH Mānoa
- Appropriates \$375,000 to launch the DRU funding 1.0 FTE Senior Clinician Scientist (tenure track) 1.0 FTE Center Coordinator (administrative lead)

Phased Plan to Establish ADRC

- Years 1–2 (Foundation Building): Establish the Dementia Research Unit at JABSOM; recruit a senior clinician-scientist and core staff (foundation-building)
- Years 2–3 (Research Activation): Expand faculty; coordinate statewide dementia research; launch clinical studies and trials
- Years 3–4 (NIH Readiness): Build NIH-aligned research infrastructure and community partnerships
- Year 5 (National Recognition): Apply for National Institute on Aging Alzheimer's Disease Research Center designation

The Path to Federal Funding



State Investment



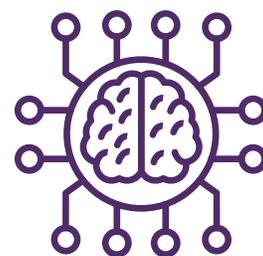
DRU



NIH Grants



NIH Designation



ADRC

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 7:58:23 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support.

Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521-8995



COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 10:00 AM
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

Comments on HB1597 RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH

HB1597 would establish and appropriate funds for an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center at the University of Hawai'i, to be administratively affiliated with the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine, including the establishment of full-time positions.

Of the 63 million Americans over the age of 65, 7.2 million have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, 1.4 to 1.6 million have been diagnosed with Neurocognitive Disorder with Lewy Bodies, often diagnosed as Parkinson's Disease with Dementia, and 16 million have been diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment. Cumulatively, 24.5 million out of 63 million older adults – almost 39 percent – have some degree of cognitive impairment, ranging from mild to debilitating. These figures are expected to double by the year 2060.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data from 2020, Hawaiian residents aged 65 and over make up 21.5% of the state's population. This percentage has been increasing, rising from 19.3% in 2020 to 21.1% in 2023, reflecting Hawaii's aging population trend. The state's median age also increased from 40.2 in 2020 to 41.3 in 2023, outpacing the national average.

Because a significant and growing number of Hawaiian citizens are directly affected by Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias, as well as at least an equal number of family members and other Hawaiians providing direct care to those affected, the Hawai'i Psychological Association strongly supports the establishment and appropriate funding for an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center at the University of Hawai'i, to be administratively affiliated with the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine, including the establishment of full-time positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important bill.

Sincerely,

Alex Lichten, Ph.D.
Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee



**Testimony to the House Committee on Health
Wednesday, February 18, 2026; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1597, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH.

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, 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** House Bill No. 1597, House Draft 1, RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH.

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 an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center at the University of Hawaii as the first phase of a strategic plan to build capacity and position Hawaii for future aging-designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Center designation by the National Institute on Aging. To do this, the bill would appropriate unspecified amounts of general funds for fiscal year 2025-2027, to establish an unspecified number of positions.

This bill would take effect on July 1, 3000.

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, the HPCA believes that this bill will further the goal of making the University of Hawaii a leading institution on the research of this malady. We assert that because the vast majority of our population is growing older, we need to better prepare our citizens on how to deal with Alzheimer's Disease and Dementias.

Accordingly, we are honored to partner with the Alzheimer's Association on this important measure 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@hawaiipca.net.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Greg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Health

From: Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 18, 2026

Re: Comments on HB1597 HD1- Relating to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research.

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 10,000 affiliated physicians, caregivers, and dedicated medical staff statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to submit comments supporting the intent of HB1597 HD1, which establishes and appropriates funds for an Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research center at the University of Hawai'i, including the establishment of two full time positions. This Research Center will expand access to clinical trials, research, education, and community outreach, particularly benefiting rural and neighbor island communities who often face the greatest barriers to dementia care. Hawai'i's unique AAPI population is deeply underrepresented in dementia research; this center fills critical gaps and supports culturally relevant care.

Queen's has one of the largest and most robust Geriatrics programs in the state and we believe this measure correctly attempts to leverage these programs across systems to ensure better care for our kupuna. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on HB1597 HD1.

The mission of The Queen's Health System is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.

LATE

February 17, 2026

House Committee on Health
Chair Gregg Takayama
Vice Chair Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy
Members of the Committee

Re: HB 1597 HD 1 – Relating to Alzheimer’s Disease and Related to Dementia Research – SUPPORT

Aloha kākou!

Leading Age Pacific West is pleased to support House Bill 1597 HD 1 which would establish and fund a research center dedicated to Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias within the University of Hawaii.

LeadingAge Pacific West is a leading advocate for quality, mission-driven housing, care and services for older adults. Our nonprofit members include providers of affordable senior housing, residential care facilities for the elderly (assisted living), life plan communities, skilled nursing care, home and community-based services, home health and hospice care.

Currently, there are over 31,200 individuals in Hawaii living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, which accounts for 11.3% of adults over the age of 65¹. In addition, Alzheimer’s disease is the 5th leading cause of death in Hawaii. HB 1597 HD 1 provides Hawaii with the opportunity to build on current national research being done on Alzheimer’s disease and fills important gaps in the demographics currently being studied in other areas of the country.

HB 1597 HD 1 is an important step toward supporting Hawaii as a leader in Alzheimer’s disease research. For these reasons, LeadingAge Pacific West is pleased to support HB 1597 HD 1 and thanks you for your leadership on this important measure. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at aking@leadingagepacificwest.org.

Sincerely,
Amber King
Vice President, Legislative Affairs

¹ State data provided by: [Alzheimer's Association](https://www.alz.org)

LATE

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:19:26 PM
Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	CARES	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 11:02:42 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1597, HD 1 for the establishment and appropriation of funds for an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center at the University of Hawaii. As Hawaii's aging population increases, this is timely and is needed to address our multi-ethnic groups' needs statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 1597, HD 1 passage this session.

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 11:02:43 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am writing to show STRONG SUPPORT for passing this bill as the trend is significant increase in older adults with Alzheimer's Disease and dementia. Hawaii should take action to address this important issue. More families are becoming burden with caregiving for the elderly with those type of conditions and UH JABSOM has the potential to slow progression when properly funded. We need to get ahead of the growth in aging populations who are likely to develop these conditions. Thank you for your kind consideration!

Sincerely,
Michelle

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 1:10:44 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordyn Nakaguma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the committee,

My name is Jordyn Nakaguma, and I live in Oahu, Hawaii. Many families, including my own, have been impacted by Alzheimer's or dementia. My grandparents on both sides of my family had Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, which was very difficult for my family to navigate. I am testifying in strong support of HB1597 HD1 that would establish an Alzheimer's research unit at UH which would allow the University to receive federal research funding to conduct culturally relevant Alzheimer's research, participate in national research projects, and provide local access to clinical trials.

Hawai'i is home to more than 31,000 residents living with Alzheimer's disease, and this number is expected to grow as our population ages. Yet despite the increasing need, our state currently lacks a coordinated research structure to better understand dementia, improve early detection, and expand access to new treatments and clinical trials. Families across Hawai'i, especially those caring for loved ones diagnosed at younger ages or experiencing rapid decline, often struggle to find answers or research opportunities close to home.

The Dementia Research Unit (DRU) would help fill this gap by creating a centralized hub at the University of Hawai'i dedicated to dementia research, collaboration, and community support. Establishing the DRU is the first step Hawai'i needs to eventually qualify for major federal Alzheimer's research funding and to bring more clinical trials and scientific resources to our state. This will ensure that Hawai'i's diverse communities, including Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations who face higher dementia risks, are included in research that reflects their unique needs.

I respectfully urge you to support this important bill so that Hawai'i can build the research capacity needed to better understand dementia, improve care, and bring new hope and new resources to families across our islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

[Your Name]

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 2:09:57 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Jennings	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the passage of this measure. As a retired physician--whose mother succumbed to dementia--I recognize how very important that we devote more resources towards combatting and preventing dementia.

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 2:09:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kira Miyatake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the committee,

My name is Kira Miyatake, and I live in Kailua, Hawaii. Alzheimer’s has affected me deeply through my family. My aunty’s father lived with the disease, and it was heartbreaking to watch him become increasingly lost and confused, even though he couldn’t help it. Our family supported him as much as we could until he eventually passed. Experiencing this showed me how devastating Alzheimer’s is, not only for those diagnosed but also for the families who care for them. Supporting this bill would help us better understand the disease and move closer to effective treatment and, ultimately, an end to its impact on families like mine. I am testifying in strong support of HB1597 HD1 that would establish an Alzheimer's research unit at UH which would allow the University to receive federal research funding to conduct culturally relevant Alzheimer's research, participate in national research projects, and provide local access to clinical trials.

Hawai‘i is home to more than 31,000 residents living with Alzheimer’s disease, and this number is expected to grow as our population ages. Yet despite the increasing need, our state currently lacks a coordinated research structure to better understand dementia, improve early detection, and expand access to new treatments and clinical trials. Families across Hawai‘i, especially those caring for loved ones diagnosed at younger ages or experiencing rapid decline, often struggle to find answers or research opportunities close to home.

The Dementia Research Unit (DRU) would help fill this gap by creating a centralized hub at the University of Hawai‘i dedicated to dementia research, collaboration, and community support. Establishing the DRU is the first step Hawai‘i needs to eventually qualify for major federal Alzheimer’s research funding and to bring more clinical trials and scientific resources to our state. This will ensure that Hawai‘i’s diverse communities, including Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations who face higher dementia risks, are included in research that reflects their unique needs.

I respectfully urge you to support this important bill so that Hawai‘i can build the research capacity needed to better understand dementia, improve care, and bring new hope and new resources to families across our islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Kira Miyatake

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:31:03 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 17, 2026

RE: House Bill 1597 HD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED
DEMENTIAS RESEARCH.
Report Title: UH; JABSOM; Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias
Research Center; Appropriation (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 1597 HD1. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:58:56 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this measure.

Testimony on HB1597, HD1
RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH
Wednesday, February 4, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the committee,

My name is Calvin Hara and I live in Kaimuki. I am in support of HB 1597 HD1. During my thirty-year career in long term care, I have seen many people with Alzheimer's disease along with their family caregivers. I have been a caregiver myself for loved ones. As we know, Alzheimer's disease is a difficult disease and there is no cure.

HB1597 HD1 would establish an Alzheimer's research unit at UH which would allow the University to receive federal research funding to conduct culturally relevant Alzheimer's research, participate in national research projects, and provide local access to clinical trials.

The Dementia Research Unit (DRU) will establish the groundwork for dementia research, collaboration, and community support. Establishing the DRU is the first step Hawai'i needs to eventually qualify for major federal Alzheimer's research funding and to bring more clinical trials and scientific resources to our state. This will ensure that Hawai'i's diverse communities, including Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations who face higher dementia risks, are included in research that reflects their unique needs.

I call upon your support of HB 1597 HD1 for the people of Hawai'i affected by Alzheimer's disease and for many more, until there is a cure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Calvin Hara

LATE

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:39:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cardenas Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas Pintor

LATE

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:16:37 PM
Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii would be an ideal place to conduct Alzheimer's research because of the diversity in our state, our growing aging population, and the importance of doing this kind of research.

LATE

HB-1597-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 12:22:33 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/18/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1597 HD1.

Gregory Misakian