



**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 23, 2026

**TO:** HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
And Honorable Members

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

**RE: HB1970-HD1 -- RELATING TO UH CANCER CENTER**

**HEARING:** Wednesday, February 25, 2026 @ 2:00 pm; Conference Room 308

**POSITION:** SUPPORT with COMMENTS

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Testimony:

SHPDA supports HB 1970-HD1, which appropriates approximately \$1.5 Million in general funds for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR) at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (HTR) for fiscal year 2026-2027, as a critical part of Hawaii's longstanding commitment to public health surveillance and cancer control. HTR is our state's official cancer surveillance system, providing the capacity for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on cancer incidence, survival, and mortality for all residents of Hawai'i.

Recent federal funding cuts are adversely affecting HTR's ability to continue to provide the essential services of the Registry in these regards. We defer to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center on funding and other background specifics, but also fully support their recommendations to include in this funding the following:

1. Ongoing support for statewide electronic pathology reporting is essential to timely case ascertainment and complete coverage;
2. A long-term funding strategy would help stabilize operations and minimize future disruptions;
3. A reporting provision could ensure transparency and allow the Legislature to monitor implementation outcomes, including impact on data quality, staffing, and reporting restoration.

Thank you for hearing this important measure, and for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA



# 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 Finance  
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Brenda Hernandez, PhD

and

Naoto T. Ueno MD, PhD, Director  
University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

and

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD

Interim Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### HB 1970 HD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i ("University") respectfully offers comments for HB 1970 HD1, which appropriates \$1,539,455 in general funds for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR) at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center for fiscal year 2026-2027. This appropriation aligns with the State's longstanding commitment to public health surveillance and cancer control.

For more than fifty years, HTR has served as the State of Hawai'i's official cancer surveillance system, providing the backbone for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on cancer incidence, survival, and mortality for all residents of Hawai'i.

The HTR operates as the designated public health authority on behalf of the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) to fulfill the State's statutory responsibilities for cancer surveillance, as established under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) §324-21 and §321-43. These statutes require hospitals, laboratories, medical providers, and the DOH to report cancer diagnoses and cancer-related deaths. This statutory authority also extends to the collection of biological specimens and other relevant materials necessary to support surveillance, research, and public health efforts related to individuals with cancer or pre-cancerous conditions.

This includes data across age groups, ethnicities, and geographic areas, which are essential to understanding cancer burden and guiding prevention, early detection, and treatment strategies. HTR directly supports statutorily mandated surveillance functions and fulfills Hawai'i's role in national cancer data systems.

HTR is part of the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program, which provides approximately 80 % of its funding. The Registry also meets the federal contract requirement of a 20 % minimum cost share from the University. Recent federal funding reductions have jeopardized HTR's ability to continue operations at its prior capacity. This bill's appropriation will help restore the program's ability to:

- Offset recent federal reductions in contract support;
- Meet the mandatory cost-share requirement to retain federal contract eligibility;
- Sustain the statewide tumor biorepository that supports advanced research; and
- Rebuild electronic pathology reporting capabilities across Hawai'i's hospitals and labs.

HTR provides the only comprehensive cancer surveillance system for Hawai'i. Accurate, timely data are vital for:

- Tracking trends in cancer incidence and outcomes;
- Among the recent statewide trends reported by the HTR:
  - Uterine cancers now tie colon & rectum cancers as the third most common cancer among Hawai'i women with incidence rates significantly higher than that of the U.S. overall and mortality (death) rates increasing at nearly 5% per year.
  - Colon & rectal cancer incidence rates are increasing among younger adults (both men and women), and rates in all males are higher than those of the U.S. overall.
  - Prostate cancer remains the most common cancer among men, with over 1,000 newly diagnosed cases each year, and its incidence is increasing nearly 4% per year. Native Hawaiian males have the highest proportion of advanced-stage prostate cancers.
- Supporting research into cancer disparities among Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other ethnically diverse populations;
- Informing community health interventions and state policy responses;
- Partnering with the Department of Health on investigations (e.g., suspected cancer clusters) and evaluating impacts of public health events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Without this funding, critical HTR functions would be scaled back, compromising the State's ability to monitor cancer trends and undermining public health planning.

HTR employs highly trained cancer surveillance professionals. Loss of adequate funding would likely result in staff reductions, diminished institutional capacity, and the erosion of decades of built expertise that is difficult to replace.

While HB 1970 HD1 appropriately supports core operations and essential tools, we respectfully request that the Committee consider the following enhancements:

- Ongoing support for statewide electronic pathology reporting is essential to timely case ascertainment and complete coverage;
- A long-term funding strategy would help stabilize operations and minimize future disruptions;
- A reporting provision could ensure transparency and allow the Legislature to monitor implementation outcomes, including impact on data quality, staffing, and reporting restoration.

Cancer remains a pressing public health challenge for Hawai'i families. Continuing robust funding for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry is an investment in evidence-based health policy, early detection, prevention, and improved health outcomes for all communities across the Islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



## Hawaii Medical Association

1360 South Beretania Street, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814  
Phone: 808.536.7702 • Fax: 808.528.2376 • hawaiimedicalassociation.org

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Representative Chris Todd, Chair

Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Date: February 25, 2026

From: Hawaii Medical Association (HMA)

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD - Chair, HMA Public Policy Committee

Christina Marzo MD and Robert Carlisle MD, Vice Chairs, HMA Public Policy Committee

### **RE HB 1970 HD 1 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.**

University of Hawaii Cancer Center; Hawai'i Tumor Registry; Appropriation.

### **Position: Strong Support**

This measure would appropriate funds for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center Hawai'i Tumor Registry.

Maintaining robust cancer surveillance through the UH Cancer Center Tumor Registry is critical to tracking trends over time, identifying disparities across Hawaii's population, and evaluating the impact of public health interventions — all of which are essential to reducing cancer burden statewide and improving health equity for our diverse communities.

Data shared in early 2025 based on updated state surveillance indicates that over 9,000 Hawaii residents would be diagnosed with cancer in 2025, with more than 2,000 expected to die from the disease, representing an uptick in cases. This is a trend that the UHCC Tumor Registry's longitudinal surveillance made visible and actionable for prevention, early detection, and treatment planning across the islands.

Projections and trend data are vital to quantify the ongoing burden of cancer in Hawaii and guide resource allocation. HMA strongly supports sustained registry funding, informing healthcare strategies for increases in cases and careful evaluation of statewide prevention efforts.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify in support of this measure.

#### **2026 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team**

Elizabeth A Ignacio, MD, Chair • Robert Carlisle, MD, Vice Chair • Christina Marzo, MD, Vice Chair  
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

#### **2026 Hawaii Medical Association Officers**

Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President • Jerald Garcia, MD, President Elect • Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, • Immediate Past President  
Laeton Pang, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

## REFERENCES AND QUICK LINKS

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. *“New Study Shows Cancer Rates Rising in Women; Advocates Urge Hawaii State Lawmakers to Support Cancer Fight in 2025.”* American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, 17 Jan. 2025, [www.fightcancer.org/releases/new-study-shows-cancer-rates-rising-women-advocates-urge-hawaii-state-lawmakers-support](http://www.fightcancer.org/releases/new-study-shows-cancer-rates-rising-women-advocates-urge-hawaii-state-lawmakers-support)

University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center. *“UH Cancer Center’s Hawai‘i Tumor Registry Releases Updated Cancer Statistics.”* University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center, 19 May 2022, <https://www.uhcancercenter.org/about-us/2022-news-articles/887-uh-cancer-center-s-hawai-i-tumor-registry-releases-updated-cancer-statistics>

### **2024 Hawaii Medical Association Officers**

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, President • Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President Elect • Angela Pratt, MD, Immediate Past President  
Jerris Hedges, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

### **2024 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team**

Beth England, MD, Chair  
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director



House Committee on Finance  
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026

**ACS CAN STRONG SUPPORT HB 1970: RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.**

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawai'i Guam  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 1970 HD1: RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER, which provides critical state funding to sustain the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR)—the backbone of cancer surveillance in our state. We work to ensure that cancer patients and survivors in Hawaii and across the country have a fair and just opportunity to find, treat and survive cancer.

Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in Hawai'i, with over 9,400 new diagnoses and over 2,700 deaths in 2026<sup>1</sup>. Continuous, high-quality cancer surveillance is essential to understanding how, where, and in whom cancer occurs. These data guide prevention strategies, ensure timely treatment, and help all patients—regardless of geography or background—benefit from early detection.

Tumor registries provide a road map in the fight against cancer. They allow public health leaders and clinicians:

- Monitor cancer incidence and mortality trends over time;
- Evaluate cancer patterns within populations and identify high-risk groups;
- Guide the planning and evaluation of cancer control programs;
- Prioritize the allocation of limited resources; and
- Support research into cancer causes and prevention strategies to determine which interventions improve health outcomes.

The Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR) is the state's only comprehensive cancer surveillance program. It ensures reporting of *all invasive cancer diagnoses statewide* and provides the high-quality data that drive:

- Targeted cancer screening programs in underserved communities;
- Evaluation of treatment access and disparities across ethnic and geographic groups;
- Rapid response to cancer clusters, emerging trends, and other urgent public health concerns; and
- Research that informs prevention, early detection, and clinical care, strengthening Hawai'i's ability to fight cancer effectively and equitably.

Without HTR, Hawai'i would lose the ability to measure cancer burden accurately and respond effectively.

Policies such as the federal STAR Act, the National Firefighter Registry, and national efforts to address childhood, young adult, and rare cancers all rely on state-level cancer registry data. Without strong, local data from HTR, Hawai'i risks being excluded from lifesaving national initiatives and research opportunities.

Recent federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's SEER program have reduced HTR's funding by over 20%. Without state support, HTR may soon be unable to maintain current staffing levels; delay or suspend case reporting; reduce data quality; scale back or eliminate critical registry functions.

HTR's data have been vital in identifying disparities affecting Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and rural communities. Hawai'i is one of the most diverse states in the country; maintaining a strong, culturally representative cancer registry is essential to ensuring that cancer control policies are equitable and grounded in evidence.

ACS CAN urges the Legislature to pass HB 1970 HD1 to protect public health, strengthen cancer equity, and support data-driven solutions that save lives. In the fight against cancer, we cannot manage what we cannot measure. Reliable cancer surveillance is not optional—it is a core public health responsibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at [Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org](mailto:Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org) or 808.460.6109.



**HB-1970-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:44:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

1970 HB RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance  
Wednesday, February 25, 2026; 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1970, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII  
CANCER CENTER.**

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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. 1970, House Draft 1, RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.

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 appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2026-2027, to support the ongoing work of the Hawaii Tumor Registry by:

- (1) Offsetting a reduction of federal funding;
- (2) Covering a mandatory minimum 20% cost sharing;
- (3) Establishing a tumor biorepository; and
- (4) Acquiring statewide pathology reporting software.

The appropriation would be expended by the University of Hawaii, and take effect on July 1, 3000.

**Testimony on House Bill No. 1970, House Draft 1**  
**Wednesday, February 25, 2026; 2:00 p.m.**  
**Page 2**

The HPCA recognizes that severe cutbacks in federal funding to higher learning institutions throughout the United States have taken a drastic toll on existing programs and opportunities. This is especially true for the State of Hawaii with its limited population size, geographic isolation, and workforce shortages.

The James A. Burns School of Medicine and the Cancer Research Center have especially found it difficult to obtain sufficient resources to continue much of their essential work. Now, with the changing priorities by federal funders, the situation threatens the viability of existing programs and research.

Because FQHCs are at the frontline in rural and isolated communities, we have partnered with both the American Cancer Society and the Cancer Research Center to assist in obtaining critical data for a variety of projects. We also serve as a conduit for relationship building with affected patient populations. Such partnerships are necessary to further all research activities and utilize the breakthroughs obtained for the benefit of our citizenry.

While the focus of FQHCs is on the provision of primary care to the most vulnerable populations in our State, the HPCA recognizes the importance of research on maladies confronting our patients. Medications and treatments available today were just a hope by patients in the recent past.

Ending research ends hope. Please keep hope alive.

**For this reason, we respectfully urge your favorable consideration of this measure.**

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](mailto:eabe@hawaiiipca.net).

**HB-1970-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:30:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josh Fowler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**STRONG SUPPORT**

**HB1970 – Relating to the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center**

I am writing in **strong support of HB1970**, which appropriates funding to sustain the Hawai‘i Tumor Registry operated by the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center.

**Key Points:**

- **The Hawai‘i Tumor Registry is essential public health infrastructure.**  
It collects and maintains detailed cancer data across the state—helping researchers, hospitals, and public agencies track cancer rates, identify disparities, and improve treatment planning.
- **The Registry is part of the national SEER program.**  
SEER stands for Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results—a federally funded program managed by the National Cancer Institute that supports high-quality cancer data collection in select regions. Hawai‘i is one of just 17 SEER registries in the country, and the only one representing Pacific Islanders and a large Asian American population.
- **Federal funding cuts now threaten Hawai‘i’s participation.**  
Recent reductions to the SEER budget have created a funding shortfall. Without state support, Hawai‘i could lose its SEER designation, resulting in a major setback to cancer tracking and research.
- **Losing the Registry would harm both local and national efforts.**  
The Registry supports research on military health, firefighter cancer risks, and racial disparities in outcomes. It is vital for understanding trends specific to Hawai‘i’s population and for ensuring equitable care.
- **HB1970 provides targeted funding for urgent needs:**
  - \$460,266 to cover the federal shortfall
  - \$579,179 to meet the 20% cost-sharing requirement for SEER participation
  - \$300,000 for the tumor biorepository (critical for future research)
  - \$200,000 for upgrading pathology reporting infrastructure

**Conclusion:**

I respectfully urge passage of HB1970. Without this support, Hawai'i risks losing a foundational cancer surveillance program with statewide and national importance.

Sincerely,

**Joshua Fowler**

Kapolei, Hawai'i 96707

**HB-1970-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:37:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daryl Kurozawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Todd and Vice Chair Takenouchi and committee members:

My name is Dr. Daryl Kurozawa and I am an advocate for UH Cancer Center's Community Advisory Board. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970: Relating to University of Hawai'i Cancer Center.

As a surgeon based on Hawai'i Island I have experienced first hand the importance of the Hawai'i Tumor Registry. Information from the registry allows providers to offer consistent and improved cancer care. The tumor registry tracks cancer treatments and short term and long term outcomes. This information is vital to care and survival for cancer patients in Hawai'i.

Due to the federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's SEER program, funding for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry will decrease by over 20%. This change is significant and will result in the loss many expert staff. Services such as cancer case reporting and vital functions such as the state's tumor biorepository and the rebuild of electronic pathology reporting will be at risk. Please join us in supporting funding for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry.

I urge the Legislature to pass HB1970 to protect public health and advance cancer equity.

Sincerely,

Daryl Kurozawa, MD

Kealakekua, Hawai'i

96750

**HB-1970-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:14:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cheryl K. Okuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Strong Support of HB 1970 HD1: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026; TIME: 2:00PM

Committee on Finance

Chair Todd and Vice Chair Takenouchi and committee members:

My name is Cheryl K. Okuma and I am a cancer survivor. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970 HD1: Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center.

As a cancer survivor, with family members and friends who have battled or are battling cancer— having a screening program is critical to our fight against this disease.

Federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute’s program reduced Hawaii Tumor Registry funding by over 20%. Lack of state support, will adversely impact this Registry’s functions and delay cancer case reporting.

The Hawai’i Tumor Registry is the state’s only comprehensive cancer surveillance program.

It ensures all invasive cancer diagnoses is reported statewide. This database is valuable as it is informative in terms of prevention, screening, treatment access, and research.

I urge the Legislature to pass HB1970 HD1 to protect public health and advance cancer equity.

Sincerely,

Cheryl K. Okuma

Wailuku, 96793

Lynda Asato  
Honolulu, HI 96817

RE: Strong Support of HB 1970 HD1: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center  
Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026; TIME: 2:00PM  
Committee on Finance

Chair Todd and Vice Chair Takenouchi and committee members:

My name is Lynda Asato and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970 HD1: Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center. I am a survivor of three breast cancer recurrences, and I rely on the UH Cancer Center to continue the life-saving programs, research, and community resources that have supported me and so many others. Cancer has also deeply affected my family, with multiple relatives impacted by this disease. This work is not abstract to us—it's personal.

In addition to being a patient, I currently serve on the UH Cancer Center's Patient Advisory Council, where I see firsthand how vital the Center's data, research, and patient-focused programs are for Hawai'i's diverse communities. Continued funding is essential to ensure that local patients receive care informed by accurate data and research that reflects the people of Hawai'i.

Why HB 1970 is Urgently Needed

- Federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's SEER program reduced Hawaii Tumor Registry (HTR) funding by over 20%.
- Without state support, HTR may be forced to lay off expert, experienced staff, delay cancer case reporting, and curtail vital functions.
- Researchers depend on the HTR data base to track progress in reducing cancer morbidity (incidence) and mortality (deaths).

I urge the Legislature to pass HB1970 HD1 to retain and make visible the gains made by our public health system and to demonstrate how this state's UH Cancer Center advances cancer research and equity. We shall overcome cancer someday.

Sincerely,  
Lynda Asato  
Honolulu, 96817

**HB-1970-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:10:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elton Fukumoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Todd and Vice Chair Takenouchi and other members of the House Finance Committee:

My name is Elton Fukumoto, and I am in support of HB1970 HD1.

We need to use all of the tools we have to combat the deadly disease of cancer.

This disease respects no one. One of my high school classmates died of cancer last year (I am 72 years old). He was a physician and did everything right to insure his personal health. But he was still felled by this dread disease.

Please vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you.

Elton Fukumoto

Manoa resident

**HB-1970-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:11:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anamalia Su'esu'e	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and committee members:

My name is Ana Su'esu'e and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970 HD1: Relating to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. My father was diagnosed with cancer in the summer of 2019, and like too many Pacific Islander families in Hawai'i, we experienced the heartbreak of a cancer diagnosis at a very late stage, leaving us only a year and a half with him before he passed.

Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in our state, and without strong cancer surveillance through the Hawai'i Tumor Registry, too many of our loved ones will continue to be diagnosed too late. The Registry's data are critical to identifying disparities affecting Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders and ensuring that early detection and screening programs reach underserved communities. Federal funding cuts threaten this essential work, and without state support, reporting delays and reduced capacity will put lives at risk.

I urge the Legislature to pass HB1970 HD1 to protect public health, advance cancer equity, and help prevent other families from experiencing the loss ours has endured.

Mahalo,  
Ana Su'esu'e  
Volcano, 96785

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Finance

RE: Strong Support of HB 1970 HD1: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center

Hearing: Wednesday, February 25, 2026; TIME: 2:00PM  
Committee on Finance

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Chair Todd and Vice Chair Takenouchi and committee members:

My name is Michelle Hashimoto, a current Pu'unui resident, 1988 graduate of Moanalua High School, 1992 graduate of University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, current staff of the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center ... and long-time cancer fighter in my community. I am also an advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. I am writing in strong support of SB2390: Relating to Insurance, particularly, the **Hawai'i Tumor Registry** (HTR).

*As a caregiver for my father who battled cancer, a concerned parent, and an active community member, I am in STRONG SUPPORT of **HB1970 HD1** : Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center.*

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawai'i, with over 9,000 new cases and over 2,400 deaths each year. Sustained cancer surveillance is essential to understanding how, where, and in whom cancer is occurring—and to ensure all patients benefit from early detection and treatment.

### **Why HB 1970 is Urgently Needed**

- Federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's SEER program reduced HTR's funding by over 20%.
- Without state support, HTR may be forced to lay off expert staff, delay cancer case reporting, and curtail vital functions. I can speak firsthand that each and every staff is essential.
- The bill will restore essential capacity by offsetting federal funding losses; meeting federal cost-sharing requirements; sustaining the state's tumor biorepository; and rebuilding electronic pathology reporting infrastructure across hospitals and labs.

My 86-year old father was diagnosed with esophageal cancer a few months before his passing. Although he didn't pass from cancer, please know that through research studies, lifesaving findings help folks like my father get diagnosed earlier as well as have more treatment options and **better health outcomes**. Our families and friends need your support for today and ... for our future.

I humbly ask for your **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 1970 HD1.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Hashimoto  
2533 Stream Drive  
Honolulu, HI 96817 / (808) 741-5854

**HB-1970-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:35:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lenora Loo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Tumor Registry provides critical information that is necessary to continue to keep our community informed. Leading to information necessary for prevention, treatment, and over cancer care for members of our unique community. I strongly encourage the continued support of the Hawaii Tumor Registry.

Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony presented to the Hawaii State Legislature **House Committee on Finance (FIN)**

Re: In **SUPPORT of HB 1970** to appropriate funds to the Hawaii Tumor Registry at the University of Hawaii  
Cancer Center

Date: February 24, 2026

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

First of all, I thank the House members, Rep. Chun et al., who introduced this important bill of statewide concern.

Cancer surveillance and accurate cancer statistics are the foundation of cancer control. High quality cancer surveillance is the most fundamental step toward reducing population burden of cancer, allowing for concerted delivery of resources for effective cancer screening, cancer care, and cancer prevention.

Cancer surveillance is, therefore, mandated under the Hawaii Revised Statutes.

The Hawaii Tumor Registry has solely carried out this vital function for the entire State of Hawaii with distinction of excellence from the NAACCR – the oversight body for the nation’s tumor registries – consistently through the years since 1960.

Suffice it to say, given the critical role and the excellent performance of the Hawaii Tumor Registry, it warrants the State’s designated support, especially in times of challenging funding environments.

Currently, 80% of the Registry’s budget is covered by competitive federal contract grants. The federal contracts come with a 20% minimum cost-share requirement, which has been born out of the University of Hawaii Cancer Center’s operational budget. This bill will appropriate funds in FY26-27 to fill the projected deficit in the Registry’s budget, stemming from the recent federal funding cuts and the funding restrictions put on by the State Senate on the Cancer Center’s use of cigarette tax revenues.

I respectfully urge the Finance Committee and the House to place their full support and high priority **all the way through the final decking to pass this bill**. Many important bills that advance with unanimous committee approvals seem to fall through the cracks or become significantly modified in closed-door sessions to lose effectiveness. This bill is too important for such mishaps.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Unhee Lim, PhD  
Cancer Epidemiologist and Professor  
University of Hawaii Cancer Center

**HB-1970-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:10:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mickey LaVarre	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you chair Todd and Vice chair Takenouchi and committee members, My name is Mickey LaVarre and I am a cancer survivor and a retired oncology nurse who worked at Wilcox Hospital for 20 years. I am in very strong support of HB 1970 HD 1 relating to the UH cancer center. The tumor registry has been a tool we have used as clinicians for as long as I've been a nurse and is instrumental in helping us serve our communities. It helped us see cancer patterns on my island of Kauai years ago when we were seeing an increase in patients being diagnosed with cancer at a younger age on the westside of the island. Thank you for your support, and I still believe that it takes a village to support and care for those touched by cancer.

**HB-1970-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:59:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Karen Copeland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Vice Chair,

My name is Karen Copeland, and I am a cancer survivor and an advocate with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. I am writing in strong support of HB1970: Related to funding the Hawaii Tumor Registry.

Funding the Hawaii Tumor Registry is a critical step to accessing precision medicine which includes targeted therapies that can lead to improved survivorship and better quality of life for cancer patients.

I was diagnosed with a type of rare high grade cancer in 2017. I am only alive today because I had the means and ability to travel off island for care. I continue to fly off island for appointments and I continue to be cancer free, but I know things could have turned out much different. All people who live in Hawaii deserve a fighting chance which is why this bill is so important. Everyone is touched by cancer in some way during their lives so this bill is for you and your loved ones as much as anyone else living in this beautiful state.

I urge you to support HB1970 to make it possible for more patients to have access to important information to guide their treatment.

With cancer every second is critical and makes a difference between life or death.

Sincerely,

*Karen Copeland*  
*Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706*