



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ÖNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony Hō‘ike Mana‘o I Mua O Ka ‘Aha‘olelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
Wednesday, February 4, 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 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i ("University") respectfully offers comments for HB 1970, 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 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.

HB-1970

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:46:12 PM
Testimony for HED on 2/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daryl Kurozawa	American Cancer Society	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Garrett 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 Hawaii Cancer Center.

As a surgeon based on Hawaii Island I have experienced first hand the importance of the Hawaii 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 Hawaii.

Due to the federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's SEER program, funding for the Hawaii 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 Hawaii Tumor Registry.

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

Sincerely,

Daryl Kurozawa, MD

Kealakekua, Hawaii

96750



HPCA

HAWAII PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

Testimony to the House Committee on Higher Education
Wednesday, February 4, 2026; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference

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

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, 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, 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 \$1,539,455 in 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 in the amount of \$460,266;
- (2) Covering a mandatory minimum 20% cost sharing in the amount of \$579,179;
- (3) Establishing a tumor biorepository in the amount of \$300,000; and
- (4) Acquiring statewide pathology reporting software in the amount of \$200,000.

The appropriation would be expended by the University of Hawaii, and take effect on July 1, 2026.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1970
Wednesday, February 4, 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@hawaiipca.net.



fightcancer.org

House Committee on Higher Education

Rep. Andrew Garrett, Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 4, 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 in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 1970: 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 2026ⁱ. 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 to:

- 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 including the federal STAR Act and the National Firefighter Registry are representative of national efforts to address cancer which 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 to 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 or 808.460.6109.

ⁱ American Cancer Society [Cancer Facts & Figures 2026](#)



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 HIGHER EDUCATION

Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Date: February 4, 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 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

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

HB-1970

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 11:36:37 AM
Testimony for HED on 2/4/2026 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

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:09:59 PM
Testimony for HED on 2/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Hausler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2026; TIME: 2:00PM

Committee on Higher Education

Chair Garrett and committee members:

My name is Jennifer Hausler and I am an advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network . I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970: Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center.

My late husband, Glenn Shimada died in 1979 at age 32 of colon cancer and before he passed was added to the tumor registry. His two sons are living proof that research from the registry helped them live 20 years longer than their father.

HB1970 is urgently needed because:

- The Hawai‘i Tumor Registry is the state’s only comprehensive cancer surveillance program.
- It ensures reporting of all invasive cancer diagnoses statewide, providing data that inform prevention, screening, treatment access, and research.
- HTR’s work supports lifesaving efforts like:
 - Targeted screening programs in underserved communities;
 - Evaluating treatment disparities across ethnic and geographic groups;
 - State response to cancer clusters and emerging trends.
- 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.
- The bill will restore essential capacity by:
 - Offsetting federal funding losses;

- Meeting federal cost-sharing requirements;
- Sustaining the state's tumor biorepository;
- Rebuilding electronic pathology reporting infrastructure across hospitals and labs.

I urge the Legislature to pass HB1970 to protect public health and advance cancer equity.
Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hausler

Pearl City, 96782

HB-1970

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:37:02 AM
Testimony for HED on 2/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Story	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Garrett and committee members:

My name is Karen Story and I am a member of UH Cancer Center's Community Advisory Board. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970: Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center. I am a 2 year cancer survivor and I work in cancer program administration for one of the large healthcare systems in Hawaii.

State cancer registry data is extremely important for us to show trends in new cancer cases by disease, survival and death rates by disease. The only way to do this for our state is through a state registry. Registry data helps us understand where we need to focus on screening and preventaion activities, and informs what research focus should be for our communities.

Please support this important public health imparitive - cancer is the 2nd leading cause of death in our state.

HB-1970

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:43:46 AM
Testimony for HED on 2/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2026; TIME: 2:00PM

Committee on Higher Education

Chair Garrett and committee members:

My name is Cheryl K. Okuma and I am an advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (optional). I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970: 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 comprehensive cancer surveillance program is critical to our fight against this disease.

- The Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR) is the state's only comprehensive cancer surveillance program. It ensures statewide reporting of all invasive cancer diagnoses; and provides data valuable for prevention, screening, treatment, and research.
- Without state support, HTR may be forced to lay off expert staff, delay cancer case reporting, and curtail vital functions.

- Hawai‘i has one of the most diverse populations in the U.S.—this registry data is vital for equitable cancer control policies.

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

Sincerely,

Cheryl K. Okuma

Wailuku, 96793

HB-1970

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:54:12 PM
Testimony for HED on 2/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Willingham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Mark Willingham. I am a Community health educator at the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai‘i or the UH Cancer Center.

I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970: Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawai‘i, with nearly 8,000 new cases and 2,400 deaths each year. Therefore, 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 and this is where the Hawai‘i Tumor Registry is essential as the state’s only comprehensive cancer surveillance program. Federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute’s SEER program reduced HTR’s funding by over 20% and without state support, HTR may be forced to lay off expert staff, delay cancer case reporting, and curtail vital functions. This bill will provide support and stabilize for the HTR during these unstable times. Hawai‘i has one of the most diverse populations in the U.S. and registry data must continue to reflect this to guide equitable cancer control policies.

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

Sincerely,

Mark Willingham

Honolulu, 96813

RE: STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 1970: Relating to the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2026; Time 14:000hr
Committee on Higher Education

To the Honorable Chair Garrett, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keith B. Kanetani, and I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of HB1970: Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center.

I am a Big Island resident, fully employed with a Hawai‘i-based, international Architectural / Engineering firm and a metastatic prostate cancer patient diagnosed with Stage IV cancer in late 2021. Like many neighbor-island patients, my cancer journey has been shaped not only by the disease itself, but also by the very real challenges of access, coordination, and continuity of oncology care outside of O‘ahu. Being seen in a timely manner, navigating referrals, and receiving consistent specialty care can be difficult, even when one is actively fighting for their life.

In my search for answers, understanding, and hope, I was introduced to the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center. Through this connection, I was deeply honored to be selected as a participant in the Inaugural 2024 Cohort of the Community Research Scientist Program. That experience changed how I understand cancer care. It showed me that behind every patient is a vast and essential system of data collection, cancer surveillance, pathology reporting, and research infrastructure that quietly informs better care, better policy, and better outcomes for all of us.

HB1970 is about protecting that foundation.

The Hawai‘i Tumor Registry, supported by the UH Cancer Center, is not an abstract research tool. It is the backbone that allows our state to understand cancer trends, disparities, outcomes, and needs; especially for neighbor-island, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and rural communities. As federal funding for this work is reduced, state support is not optional, but essential.

From the perspective of a patient, I can say this clearly:

When cancer data systems are weakened, patients are weakened; particularly those of us living outside O‘ahu.

HB1970 ensures that Hawai‘i can continue to meet federal cost-share requirements, maintain cancer surveillance capacity, support pathology reporting systems, and preserve biorepository resources that future research; and future patients, will depend on. These

investments may not always be visible at the bedside, but they shape everything that happens there.

I also write as someone who is now committed to giving back. Inspired by my experience with the UH Cancer Center, I am currently developing a nonprofit organization, *Designing for Cancer Cure*, focused on patient advocacy, education, and community-based support for cancer research in Hawai'i. This work has only reinforced my belief that sustained public investment and community partnership must go hand in hand.

HB1970 represents responsible, forward-looking stewardship of Hawai'i's cancer research infrastructure. It honors patients, supports researchers, and protects future generations.

In Closing, I offer this testimony not only for myself, but for the many individuals across Hawai'i who may never know how profoundly the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center works behind the scenes to give patients not just treatment, but the **chance to truly live**.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **Support and pass HB1970**.

Mahalo nui loa for your time, your service, and your commitment to the health and well-being of the people of Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,



Keith B. Kanetani

Big Island, Hawai'i

Metastatic Prostate Cancer Patient

Inaugural Community Research Scientist, 2024

University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

HB-1970

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:28:22 AM
Testimony for HED on 2/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Garrett and committee members,

My name is Ana Su'esu'e and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970: Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center.

Cancer touches nearly every family across the U.S., and especially here in Hawai'i. My father passed away from cancer in 2020, and I have lost several other family members to this disease, losses that make this issue deeply personal for me. If we are serious about continuing the fight against cancer, we must support the research and data systems that help our medical community understand how to prevent, detect, and treat it more effectively.

The tumor registry is a critical tool for doctors and researchers to understand how cancer affects different populations, and it is especially vital for underserved communities like Pacific Islanders, who experience disproportionately high cancer mortality. Sustained cancer surveillance allows us to see where cancer is occurring, who is most affected, and how to ensure earlier detection and better outcomes for everyone. I strongly urge the Legislature to pass HB1970 to protect public health and advance cancer equity in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Anamalia
Volcano, 96785

LATE

HB-1970

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:05:36 PM
Testimony for HED on 2/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Kalanta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Garrett and Committee Members,

My name is Karen Kalanta; as a nurse, volunteer Community Scientist, Patient Advocate, and cancer survivor, I am in Strong Support of HB1970:Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center.

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

Very Respectfully,

Karen A. Kalanta, RN, MSN

Kapolei 96707