
SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE HAWAI'I HEALTH SYSTEMS CORPORATION'S EAST HAWAI'I REGIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON ESTABLISHING A RURAL HEALTH CLINIC OR COMPARABLE RURAL HEALTH ACCESS POINT TO SERVE THE VOLCANO COMMUNITY.

1 WHEREAS, the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation's East
2 Hawai'i Regional Health Care System (HHSC East Hawai'i Region)
3 operates the Hilo Medical Center, Ka'ū Hospital, and its Rural
4 Health Clinic, Hale Ho'ola Hamakua, and a network of East Hawai'i
5 Health Clinics that together provide essential medical services
6 to communities across East Hawai'i; and
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8 WHEREAS, the long-standing designation of the Ka'ū Hospital
9 as a Critical Access Hospital and the establishment of its
10 Medicare-certified Rural Health Clinic have enabled the HHSC
11 East Hawai'i Region to expand primary care access to rural
12 communities while strengthening the region's financial stability
13 and provider recruitment capacity; and
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15 WHEREAS, the community of Volcano, located between the
16 districts of Puna and Ka'ū, remains one of the largest rural
17 population centers on Hawai'i Island that is without direct
18 access to primary care services, emergency stabilization
19 capacity, or a locally based medical provider; and
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21 WHEREAS, the community of Volcano's geographic isolation,
22 distance from Hilo and Ka'ū hospitals, increased wildfire risks,
23 volcanic-related hazards, and limited transportation options
24 create chronic barriers to timely health care access for
25 residents; and
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27 WHEREAS, the Volcano Community Association (VCA) recently
28 completed a Medical and Health Care Services Needs Assessment,
29 which identified the development of a clinic offering primary
30 and other health care services as a long-term need for the area



1 due to its aging population, rural character, and anticipated
2 population growth; and

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4 WHEREAS, the VCA's Medical and Health Care Services Needs
5 Assessment further identified the recruitment of a part-time
6 primary care provider who could establish medical services in
7 the Volcano community at least two days per week as a short-term
8 goal; and

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10 WHEREAS, the VCA has expressed strong willingness to
11 partner with the HHSC East Hawai'i Region to identify potential
12 clinic sites, coordinate community outreach, support provider
13 recruitment, and assist with long-term planning efforts; and

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15 WHEREAS, the purpose of the Volcano Health Collaborative is
16 to improve the health status of residents of the community of
17 Volcano and its neighboring communities by increasing the
18 accessibility of quality, affordable medical and associated
19 health care; and

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21 WHEREAS, Volcano Village and Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park
22 receive millions of visitors annually, dramatically increasing
23 the volume of people passing through the area and creating a
24 heightened need for accessible medical services to respond to
25 visitor injuries, respiratory distress, and other urgent needs
26 arising from outdoor and volcanic-environment exposure; and

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28 WHEREAS, emergency medical services for the Volcano area
29 are currently located within Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and
30 operated out of Kilauea Military Camp, serving both residents
31 and the substantial visitor population, further underscoring the
32 need for a dedicated community-based health care access point in
33 the Volcano community; and

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35 WHEREAS, establishing a Rural Health Clinic in the Volcano
36 community, whether permanent, mobile, or hybrid, would
37 strengthen the overall East Hawai'i rural health network, support
38 the Ka'u Hospital in its role as a Critical Access Hospital
39 serving remote communities, and improve health outcomes for both
40 residents and visitors; now, therefore,



1 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
2 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
3 that the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation's East Hawai'i
4 Regional Health Care System is requested to conduct a
5 feasibility study on establishing a Rural Health Clinic or
6 comparable rural health access point to serve the Volcano
7 community; and

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the HHSC East Hawai'i Region is
10 requested to examine the following in its feasibility study:

- 11
12 (1) Potential sites within Volcano Village or adjacent
13 areas for a clinic or satellite office;
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15 (2) Operational models, including part-time provider
16 service, mobile-clinic deployment, telehealth
17 integration, or co-location with existing community
18 facilities;
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20 (3) Staffing requirements, including short-term options
21 for providing primary-care services at least two days
22 per week;
23
24 (4) Start-up and ongoing costs, including eligibility for
25 rural health clinic reimbursement and other federal
26 rural-access funding;
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28 (5) Opportunities for partnership with the Volcano
29 Community Association, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park,
30 local nonprofits, organizations, and educational or
31 medical-training institutions; and
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33 (6) Potential benefits to emergency response, chronic
34 disease management, and visitor-safety services; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the HHSC East Hawai'i Region is
37 requested to submit the completed feasibility study; its
38 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
39 legislation; and an implementation timeline to the Legislature
40 no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular
41 Session of 2027; and
42



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the President and Chief Executive
3 Officer of the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation, Chief
4 Executive Officer of the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation's
5 East Hawai'i Regional Health Care System, Superintendent of the
6 Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, President of the Volcano
7 Community Association, and President of the Volcano Health
8 Collaborative.

