



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1550
RELATING TO HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 13, 2026 @ 9:00 am

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health SUPPORTS this measure and offers comments.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Communicable Disease and Public Health Nursing Division
4 (CDPHND) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department.

5 People who use drugs purchased outside of pharmacies are at risk of harm from contaminants,
6 including drugs that are more powerful than what they intend to consume. Consuming these
7 substances can lead to overdose, poisoning, and serious injury. Testing illicit drugs to
8 determine whether a controlled substance contains chemicals, toxic substances, or hazardous
9 compounds in quantities that can cause physical harm or death has been shown to reduce
10 overdose and drug-related harm. Research indicates that knowledge of what is in their drugs
11 often contributes to people changing their drug use to prevent overdose, injury, or poisoning.

12 The department supports removing barriers to drug checking by excluding drug testing
13 products from the definition of drug paraphernalia.

14 **Offered Amendments:** None

15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**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'OKOLE

JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, MD
ADMINISTRATOR

February 12, 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 1550 -- RELATING TO HEALTH

HEARING: Friday, February 13, 2026 @ 09:00 am; Conference Room 329

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports HB 1550 with comments.

This bill strengthens Hawai'i's overdose-prevention and harm-reduction efforts by ensuring that drug checking tools are legally accessible and not treated as "drug paraphernalia." By exempting additional testing products from the paraphernalia definition, the bill seeks to give individuals, service providers, and communities accurate information about what may be present in a substance to help reduce accidental and fatal overdoses.

This bill can save lives by making it easier for people and frontline organizations to identify harmful contaminants in an increasingly unpredictable drug supply, which can help prevent accidental overdoses and guide safer, faster responses. It also supports public health outreach by allowing programs to use a wider range of drug-checking tools, so they can better spot emerging threats like xylazine and medetomidine and customize education and services. The bill helps reduce barriers for providers and community partners working to keep people safer and connect them to care.

In closing, this bill is a practical step to strengthen Hawai'i's response to a rapidly changing overdose crisis. It supports evidence-based strategies, helps communities stay ahead of new drug threats, and reinforces a compassionate approach that prioritizes safety and prevention. Thank you for hearing HB 1550

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA

HB-1550

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 3:30:26 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/13/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aaron Ruddick	Hep Free Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hep Free Hawaii strongly supports HB1550.



To: Committee on Health

Hearing Date/Time: Friday February 13, 2026 9 am

Re: Testimony in Strong Support HB 1550

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

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports HB 1550** which Excludes drug testing products from the definition of drug paraphernalia under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act.

Hawaii continues to experience an overdose crisis that led to more than 100 people dying from opioid-related drugs in 2025. One of the best practices according to SAMHSA is to provide access to drug checking equipment such as fentanyl test strips to identify potentially fatal adulterants. While the legislature passed a bill exempting fentanyl test strips from the paraphernalia law two years ago, any other drug checking/testing equipment would be considered paraphernalia and illegal to distribute or use in order to save lives. We hope you will support overdose prevention by passing this bill.

HHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

HB-1550

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:19:40 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/13/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Fukuzawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Representatives:

I am respectfully opposing bill HB1550. I am opposing this because making the idea of legalizing the paraphernalia would not be making things better or safer for our community.

Sincerely,

David Fukuzawa, SAS-5 (Retired)