



**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

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

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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

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 2026¹. 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 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

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 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.

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

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 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

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 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

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 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

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 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

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