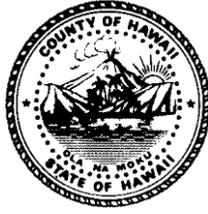


C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



William V. Brilhante, Jr.
Managing Director

Merrick Nishimoto
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i ~ Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • Phone (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
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Testimony of
C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

Before the House Committee on
Health
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Friday, February 13, 2026, 9:00 A.M.
State Capitol Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

In consideration of
House Bill 1978
Relating to the West Hawai'i Regional Health Care System

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee on Health,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of House Bill 1978, which appropriates funds for the planning, design, site work, and construction of a new outpatient care center in North Kona.

Timely, reliable health care remains a challenge in West Hawai'i. In North Kona, population growth has outpaced the growth of outpatient and specialty services, leading to longer travel times, delayed care, and pressure on emergency resources. This bill addresses these issues by advancing the construction of a new outpatient care center.

This investment aligns with the 2024 needs assessment and statewide planning efforts. It also directly addresses the daily challenges faced by West Hawai'i residents and first responders.

The County also emphasizes our readiness and commitment to support this project. We are prepared to coordinate permitting and infrastructure connections to help ensure the project moves forward efficiently. From our perspective, House Bill 1978 is an investment that must proceed without delay and will provide tangible benefits to our island community.

Beyond better access to care, this project supports workforce stability and economic growth islandwide. It will attract medical professionals and create more quality jobs. The outpatient center also establishes a foundation for expanding hospital services, a critical long-term need for West Hawai'i.

I strongly support House Bill 1978. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Michelle M. Galimba
Council District 6
Portion N. S. Kona/Ka'ū /Volcano



Phone: (808) 323-4277

Cell: (808)430-4927

Fax: (808) 329-4786

Email: Michelle.Galimba@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAII COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair

The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Members of the House Committee on Health

RE: Strong Support for HB1978 – Relating to West Hawaii Regional Health Care System

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

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1978, which appropriates funding for a new outpatient care center in Kona.

Access to health care is a daily challenge for many families in our region. Long travel times, limited services, and physician shortages have real impacts on our health and quality of life. A new outpatient care center in Kona would significantly improve access to essential medical services and reduce the burden on residents who currently, must travel far for care.

I am especially encouraged by the partnership between the West Hawaii Region of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation and The Queen's Health Systems. This investment represents a long-term commitment to the health of our community and lays the groundwork for a future full-service hospital in Kona.

Please support HB 1978 and invest in the health, safety, and future of West Hawai'i families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.



HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS
C O R P O R A T I O N

"Quality Healthcare For All"

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair

Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy, Vice Chair

February 13, 2026

9:00AM

Hawaii State Capitol

Room 329 & Via Videoconference

Testimony in Support of HB 1978

Appropriates funds for the planning, design, site work, and construction of a new outpatient care center in North Kona.

Edward N. Chu

President & Chief Executive Officer

Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation

On behalf of the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) Corporate Board of Directors, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of **HB 1978**.

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) and Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly develop an Outpatient Care Center in Kona that will house clinical services and office space and ensure continuity of care for patients throughout the community. Under this collaboration, Queen's will donate approximately three to five acres of land to HHSC's West Hawaii Region as the future site of a 50,000+-square-foot medical facility adjacent to the new hospital that Queen's has already announced it is building. HHSC is asking for an initial \$50 million in state funding support for the planning, design, and site work of the new facility.

The new Outpatient Care Center will be located in the central part of Kailua-Kona to ensure area patients have easy access to services. The Outpatient Care Center strengthens the HHSC West Hawaii Region's healthcare infrastructure by:

- **Expanding Access to Care:** Increasing outpatient and specialty care capacity in one integrated location.
- **Improve Patient Experience:** Reducing travel and wait times through centralized services.
- **Growing the Workforce:** Attracting and retaining physicians, nurses, and specialists, which will create new clinical and support opportunities for local residents.

HHSC would propose an amendment to Section 2 of this bill to replace the words "general revenues" with "general obligation bond funds" to be consistent with the Governor's budget recommendation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.



February 10, 2026

Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue Keohokapu Lee Loy, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health
Hawaii State Legislature

Support for HB1978

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu Lee Loy and Members of the House Committee on Health,

On behalf of the Kohala Coast Resort Association (KCRA) thank you for providing us with the opportunity to provide our **SUPPORT of HB1978** providing funding for the planning, site work, design and construction of a new outpatient care center in North Kona.

The health care needs of Hawaii County residents are severely underserved. We hope that this new outpatient care center in North Kona will be beneficial for our employees, their families, our residents, and our visitors.

On behalf of our 5,500 employees and their nearly 20,000 family members, mahalo for moving this important bill forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie P. Donoho". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Donoho, Administrative Director, Kohala Coast Resort Association

Craig Anderson, VP Operations, Mauna Kea Resort – President
Charlie Parker, General Manager, Four Seasons Hualalai – Vice President
Mark Goldrup, General Manager, Waikoloa Beach Marriott – Secretary
Pete Alles, Regional VP and GM, Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts Collection – Treasurer
Pat Fitzgerald, CEO, Hualalai Investors – Board of Directors
Daniel Scott, Managing Director Rosewood Kona Village – Board of Directors
Samantha Jones, DOSM, Fairmont Orchid – Board of Directors
Scott Head, VP Resort Operations, Waikoloa Land Company – Board of Directors
Jim Russell, Director of Rooms, Hilton Waikoloa Village – Board of Directors
Rob Gunthner, Area VP Resort Operations, Hilton Grand Vacations – Board of Directors



**HILO BENIOFF MEDICAL CENTER
HONOKA`A HOSPITAL
KA`U HOSPITAL
Y. OKUTSU STATE VETERANS HOME**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH**

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato Rep. Jenna Takenouchi
Rep. Daisy Hartsfield Rep. David Alcos III
Rep. Lisa Marten Rep. Diamond Garcia
Rep. Ikaika Olds

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Friday, February 13, 2026
TIME: 09:00 am
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
 Conference Room 329

STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1978

RELATING TO THE WEST HAWAII REGIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.
Appropriates funds for the planning, design, site work, and construction of a new outpatient care center in North Kona.

On behalf of the East Hawaii Region of Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, consisting of Hilo Benioff Medical Center, Ka`u Hospital, Honokaa Hospital, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home, and our network of East Hawaii Health Clinics, we offer our strong support of HB1978 to appropriate funds for the planning, design, site work, and construction of a new outpatient care center in North Kona.

We believe a stronger healthcare system for the people served in West Hawaii will result in a stronger, collective healthcare system on our Hawaii Island for all communities.

We urge the House EastHealth Committee to support and advance HB1978 to fund the new outpatient care center in North Kona.

The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

RE: Strong Support for HB1978 – Relating to West Hawaii Regional Health Care System

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

My name is Dennis Tognoli, and I am a health care administrator in West Hawai'i. I strongly support HB 1978 and its appropriation for the development of a new outpatient care center in Kona.

West Hawai'i continues to face serious challenges related to health care capacity, particularly workforce shortages, recruitment and retention, and the increasing demand driven by population growth. These challenges directly affect access to timely care and place significant strain on existing providers.

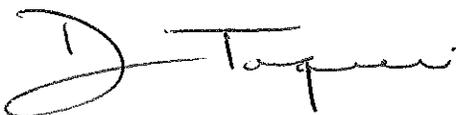
The outpatient care center proposed in this bill represents a critical investment in health care workforce development. It will create new employment opportunities, support the recruitment and retention of physicians and health care professionals, and provide a modern setting for integrated outpatient services. Strengthening our health care workforce is essential to improving patient access, reducing burnout among providers, and ensuring long-term system sustainability.

Importantly, this project also advances The Queen's Health Systems' commitment to construct a new hospital adjacent to the outpatient center in the future, further reinforcing a long-term vision for health care infrastructure and workforce growth in West Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the committee to support HB 1978 and prioritize investments that build a strong, sustainable health care workforce for our community.

Mahalo for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Tognoli". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dennis Tognoli BSN, RN
Interim President/CEO
Ali'i Health Center



79-1019 Haukapila St. Kealahou, HI 96750
phone: 808.322.4423 fax: 808.322.4488 clayton.mcghanl@hhsc.org

TO: The Honorable Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health

FROM: Clayton McGhan, Regional Chief Executive Officer
Hawaii Health Systems, West Hawaii Region

SUBJECT: Support of HB1978 – Relating to the West Hawaii Regional Health Care System

DATE: February 11, 2026

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) – West Hawaii Region, we submit this testimony in strong support of HB1978, which provides critical state funding for the planning and early development of an Outpatient Care Center to serve West Hawai'i.

West Hawai'i is facing growing challenges in access to care as our population continues to increase, age, and shift northward. Kona Community Hospital is experiencing capacity constraints that contribute to longer wait times and limited access to specialty services. Many outpatient and specialty services remain dispersed across small, aging facilities that are no longer adequate to meet the health care needs of our region.

An independent analysis conducted by ECG Management Consultants underscores the urgency of this issue. The study found that approximately 40% of inpatient cases and 62% of outpatient procedures for West Hawai'i residents currently occur off-island or outside the region. Patients routinely experience wait times exceeding 30 to 60 days for critical specialties such as cardiology, pediatrics, and orthopedics. These access challenges are further compounded by a shortage of at least 25 physicians across key service areas. The Legislature has already demonstrated its commitment to addressing these challenges by funding the needs assessment and site assessment that informed both the planning and location of the proposed Outpatient Care Center.

HB1978 supports the development of an Outpatient Care Center on three to five acres of land generously donated by The Queen's Health Systems, adjacent to its new

hospital campus. The proposed facility, totaling more than 50,000 square feet, will consolidate outpatient and specialty services into a single, modern, and accessible location. This center will complement services at Kona Community Hospital while expanding capacity to meet current and future community needs.

Importantly, this project delivers near-term benefits while broader hospital planning continues. By expanding outpatient and specialty care capacity, the Outpatient Care Center will reduce wait times, improve the patient experience, and keep more care in West Hawai'i—minimizing the need for costly and disruptive off-island travel. The facility will also strengthen the local health care workforce by helping attract and retain physicians, nurses, and specialists, while creating new clinical and support jobs for island residents.

HHSC – West Hawaii Region's request for state funding to support planning, design, grading, and other preparatory work is a necessary and prudent step to move this project forward. Early investment now will strengthen West Hawai'i's health care infrastructure and ensure our community has timely, equitable access to the care they deserve.

For these reasons, we respectfully request your strong support of HB1978. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this measure.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Greg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Health

From: Jason C. Chang, President & Chief Executive Officer, The Queen's Health Systems
Jacce Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 13, 2026

Re: Support of HB1978 - Relating to the West Hawai'i Regional Health Care System.

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 10,000 affiliated physicians, caregivers, and dedicated medical staff statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of HB1978, which appropriates \$50 million dollars to the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation for planning, design, and construction of a new outpatient care center in North Kona on the Island of Hawai'i. We are honored to be working alongside our colleagues on Hawai'i Island to bring to fruition a new, state-of-the-art medical campus to provide needed medical services to the Kona, and surrounding, communities.

In December of 2025, Queen's and HHSC signed an agreement to jointly develop an Outpatient Care Center in Kona that will house clinical services and office space, as well as ensure continuity of care for patients throughout the community. Under this collaboration, Queen's will donate approximately five acres of land to HHSC's West Hawaii Region as the future site of a 50,000-square-foot medical facility adjacent to the new hospital that Queen's plans to construct.

This effort represents a unique opportunity to expand health care access for a growing community through a shared investment between the state and Queen's. The new Center will provide a seamless transition between inpatient and outpatient care, while creating a one-stop hub for primary and specialty care services that will reduce wait and travel times for patients. The construction of the facility is expected to create jobs and, once completed, will enhance West Hawaii Region's ability to attract and retain providers at a time when the community is facing a critical physician shortage. Hawai'i Island patients have already begun seeing the benefit of our collaboration with HHSC, as Queen's surgeons are currently rotating at Kona Community Hospital.

The mission of The Queen's Health System is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.

We are grateful to the Legislature and Governor Josh Green for your support of this project. We look forward to deepening our relationship with the Kona community and Hawai'i Island through this project.

Mahalo for allowing Queen's to provide testimony in support of HB1978.



February 12, 2026

RE: HB 1978 Relating to the West Hawai'i Regional Health Care System.

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the House Committee on Health,

Since 1968, the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce has advanced the quality of life in West Hawai'i by supporting a strong, sustainable economy on Hawai'i Island. Representing more than 460 member businesses and organizations, we serve as the leading voice for the West Hawai'i business community and advocate for policies that support long-term community stability and regional economic growth.

The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce **strongly supports** and urges passage of HB 1978 Relating to the West Hawai'i Regional Health Care System.

Access to healthcare is directly tied to workforce stability, business retention, and overall community well-being. Without adequate healthcare infrastructure, West Hawai'i faces increasing challenges in recruiting and retaining physicians and healthcare professionals. A new hospital will not only improve health outcomes in our community but will also strengthen our workforce, create quality jobs, and support the long-term economic future of our region.

We applaud the partnership between the West Hawai'i Region of the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation and The Queen's Health Systems. This collaboration represents a serious, long-term investment in West Hawai'i and establishes a clear path toward developing a future full-service hospital in Kona. This type of public-private partnership is exactly what is needed to address complex regional healthcare needs.

West Hawai'i cannot afford to delay progress on healthcare infrastructure. Our community, workforce, and economy depend on it.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to pass HB 1978 Relating to the West Hawai'i Regional Health Care System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy J. Laros". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Wendy J. Laros, President and CEO
Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce

HB-1978

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:18:02 AM

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

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Glen Kagamida | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

HB-1978

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 12:52:09 PM

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

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ross Wilson Jr. | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Access to health care on a neighbor island and in a rural setting is critical for our community.
Please kokua and support!

Mahalo,

Ross Wilson Jr.

Kailua-Kona

HB-1978

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 2:56:38 PM

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

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Tyler McMurry | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. T. Scott McMurry, DO. I am a practicing family medicine physician in Kailua-Kona, Hawai‘i, and I am writing in strong support of H.B. 1978.

West Hawai‘i is one of the fastest-growing regions in the state, yet we continue to experience severe limitations in access to timely medical care. This bill recognizes what local families already know: our community can support a thriving hospital, expanded services, and an integrated medical group, and the need for increased capacity in North Kona is both urgent and long overdue.

H.B. 1978 is not simply a construction appropriation, it is a meaningful step toward building a health care system that matches the realities of West Hawai‘i today. The appropriation for planning, design, site work, and construction of a new outpatient care center in North Kona is a practical and necessary investment in the future health of our region.

From the standpoint of a frontline physician, the benefits of this bill are clear:

1) It will reduce dangerous delays in care

Patients in West Hawai‘i routinely face long wait times for specialty evaluation and procedures. Many must travel across the island, or even to O‘ahu, for medically necessary services. That burden results in delayed diagnoses, worsening disease, avoidable complications, and higher overall costs.

2) It will help recruit and retain physicians

A modern outpatient center, with a clear pathway toward an adjacent hospital, creates the kind of clinical environment that makes it possible to attract specialists who would otherwise not consider relocating to Hawai‘i Island.

3) It will allow expansion of services that West Hawai‘i currently lacks

In West Hawai‘i, we are not simply short on physicians, we are short on entire categories of care. A well-designed outpatient center will help expand access to essential services that are not currently available in our community, including:

- Hyperbaric wound care
- Rheumatology
- Neurology
- Endocrinology
- Interventional pain management

These are not “luxury services.” These are essential fields for chronic disease management, disability prevention, diabetic limb preservation, stroke risk reduction, and keeping patients functional and working.

4) It is an investment in outcomes, jobs, and stability

This investment will create jobs and opportunities in West Hawai‘i. In addition, expanding local care helps keep health care dollars in our region, reduces costly emergency transports, and improves continuity of care for families who want to remain close to home.

In closing, H.B. 1978 is a well-founded and necessary response to the growing needs of North Kona and the broader West Hawai‘i region. I respectfully urge you to pass this measure and continue the work of building a health care system that our community deserves.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,
T. Scott McMurry, DO
Family Medicine Physician
Kailua-Kona, Hawai‘i

LATE

HB-1978

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:39:12 PM

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

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Alan Silverman | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am submitting testimony strongly in support of th proposed Kona Outpatient Care Center. The need is clearly here with a serious shortage of medical professionals, especially those with specialties that are particularly important to seniors like me. I feel that this facility will go a long way toward improving not only the quality, but also the accessibility of health care. The proposed location puts it in easy reach of the people who currently have to travel to Hilo or even Oahu for life-saving care. I urge you to approve the measure and help this facility go forward. Kona and the entire west side of Hawai`i island need it ...and have needed it for years. The time to act is now. Mahalo.