



**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

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ADMINISTRATOR

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March 20, 2026

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Senator Donna Meraco Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, 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 2159-HD2 -- RELATING TO HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

HEARING: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 @ 1:10 pm; Conference Room 225

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports HB 2159-HD2, with comments.

This bill is intended to strengthen Hawai'i's health care workforce by funding new full-time equivalent positions within the University of Hawai'i system to expand education, training, and clinical capacity. By investing in additional faculty, the bill seeks to help address severe statewide shortages, especially in rural and underserved communities and in high-need areas like cancer care, neurology/dementia, and behavioral health and addiction medicine.

By adding resources where they are most needed, this bill can help reduce delays in getting appointments and specialty care, strengthen services in rural and underserved areas, and improve continuity of care for patients across the state. Expanding training capacity also supports a more stable, homegrown workforce, thus helping Hawai'i recruit and retain clinicians over time, and while strengthening high-impact areas like cancer care, neurology/dementia, and integrated behavioral health and addiction services.

Thank you for hearing HB 2159-HD2 and mahalo 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
Senate Committee on Education

and

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 1:10 p.m.

By

T. Samuel Shomaker, MD, JD, MSM, Dean

John A. Burns School of Medicine

and

Naoto T. Ueno MD, PhD, Director

University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

and

Clementina D. Ceria-Ulep, PhD, RN, Dean and Professor

UH School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene

and

Alexander N. Ortega, PhD.

UH Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

and

Rae Matsumoto, PhD.

Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy

University of Hawai'i at Hilo

and

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD

Interim Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

and

Bonnie Irwin

Chancellor

University of Hawai'i at Hilo

HB 2159 HD2 – RELATING TO HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of HB 2159 HD2 which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to support health care workforce development in the State. The University of Hawai'i Health Science/Health Professions units train the next generation of healthcare providers and human health scientists to address a myriad of chronic diseases with a high burden and disproportionate impact on various populations and communities in Hawai'i. The

coordinated interdisciplinary initiative outlined in HB 2159 HD2 will enhance the health care workforce through a team-based system, increase access to care for our communities and capitalize on partnerships with other public and private organizations.

Severe shortages exist in practically all health profession disciplines and most medical specialties, limiting access to care. The risk burden and low access are more pronounced in rural and underserved areas, as well as in certain minority and vulnerable populations. **This coordinated hiring request encompasses three areas that address critical workforce shortage needs in high-priority concerns for the state: (1) cancer, (2) neurology & dementia, and (3) behavioral health-primary care integration/addiction medicine.**

FUNDING & POSITIONS REQUESTED:

The proposal involves UHM John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), UH Cancer Center (UHCC), UHM School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene (SONDH), UHM Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health (TSSWPH), and the UH Hilo Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP). The requested faculty positions support training, clinical care and research across UH. This multidisciplinary request leverages strengths across UH, in partnership with our major health system partners, several state agencies (DOH, DHS, DOE, DOC), and utilizes community-based and/or community-advised approaches to team-science research, curriculum development, and interprofessional education. Positions requested in hematology-oncology (cancer) fellowship and the neurology residency programs slightly exceed the minimum accreditation requirements to ensure strong program leadership and enhance research and other scholarly activities that lead to the provision of high-quality, safe, and competent patient care. Additional nursing, social work, and pharmacy positions, as well as two APTs for simulation-based physician and nursing education, also address core requirements in all health professions for interprofessional education, competency-based education, and robust assessment of medical and nursing learners to ensure safe patient care.

Total Request Amount (for the three areas identified above combined):

FY27-29 Budget (personnel only) \$3,724,600 annually

Personnel FTE 18.5 FTE (2.0 are APT)

	Cancer		Neurology / Dementia		Behavioral / Addiction Med		Total by unit
	FTE Fac APT	Salary Faculty APT	FTE Fac APT	Salary Faculty APT	FTE Fac	Salary Faculty	FTE Salary
JABSOM (UOH 110/PP)	0.6	\$119,400	2.4 1	\$439,200 75,000	1.75	\$333,000	FTE 5.75 \$966,600

	Cancer		Neurology / Dementia		Behavioral / Addiction Med		Total by unit
	FTE Fac APT	Salary Faculty APT	FTE Fac APT	Salary Faculty APT	FTE Fac	Salary Faculty	FTE Salary
UHCC (UOH 115)	2.75	\$1,000,000					FTE 2.75 \$1,000,000
SONDH (UOH 100)	1 0	\$200,000	1 1	\$200,000 \$93,000	1	\$200,000	FTE 4.0 \$693,000
TSSWPH (UOH 100)	1 0	\$160,000	1	\$160,000	1	\$160,000	FTE 3.0 \$480,000
DKICP (UOH 210)	1 0	\$195,000	1	\$195,000	1	\$195,000	FTE 3.0 \$585,000

This coordinated request for faculty positions will have the following impacts:

- **Workforce Pipeline:** Expanding training for physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and behavioral health providers in cancer, neurology & dementia, behavioral health, addiction medicine, and primary care improves access to care across all islands. These positions support the growth of team-based training.
- **Access to Care:** Additional faculty providing direct clinical services will reduce shortages in underserved communities. The positions requested in dementia and behavioral health-primary care integration will create and provide continuing education training to numerous disciplines across the state and are aligned with legislative and DOH mandates for UH.
- **Leveraging Partnerships:** These positions build on existing collaborations with the Department of Health (addiction medicine/behavioral health), Queen’s and HPH (neurology residency program, oncology fellowship programs, family medicine rural track in North Hawai’i), and the Department of Education (Hawai’i Keiki). They also align with the anticipated role of UH in the state’s Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) starting in January 2026 and continuing for the next five years. Collectively these efforts will help support and expand the State’s many proposed workforce development initiatives and some of the telehealth initiatives focused on behavioral health.

The appropriation and establishment of positions at UH contained in this measure will support statewide community assets, and is in the best interests of our community. We request that the Act take effective as of July 1, 2026. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

March 25, 2026

To: Chair Mercado Kim, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the House Committees on Education (EDU) and Health and Human Services (HHS)

From: Hawaii Association of Health Plans Public Policy Committee

Date/Location: March 25, 2026; 1:10 p.m./Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Re: Support of HB 2159 HD2– Relating to Health Care Workforce Development

The Hawaii Association of Health Plans (HAHP) supports HB 2159 HD2. HAHP is a statewide partnership that unifies Hawaii’s health plans to improve the health of Hawaii’s communities together. A majority of Hawaii residents receive their health coverage through a plan associated with one of our organizations.

Hawaii continues to face significant health care workforce shortages, especially in rural and underserved communities and in areas with high concentrations of minority and vulnerable populations. We appreciate the Legislature’s efforts to strengthen education, training, and clinical translational research roles, as these investments are essential to addressing the state’s workforce crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer **support** for HB 2159 HD2.

Sincerely,

HAHP Public Policy Committee

cc: HAHP Board Members



Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2159 HD2
presented before the
Senate Committees on Education and Health and Human Services
Wednesday, March 25, 2026

Dr. Corrie L. Sanders on behalf of
The Hawai'i Pharmacists Association (HPhA)

To the Honorable Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawai'i Pharmacists Association (HPhA) **strongly supports HB2159 HD2** and its commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's healthcare workforce through targeted investments in education and training. As our state continues to face significant provider shortages, particularly in rural and underserved communities, this measure represents a forward-thinking approach to preparing the workforce to meet the unique needs of our state. Pharmacists are among the most accessible healthcare providers in Hawai'i, and ensuring a well-trained, specialized workforce is essential to improving outcomes, expanding access to care, and reducing overall healthcare expenditure.

HPhA is especially appreciative of the inclusion of funding for 3.0 full-time equivalent faculty positions at the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP). These positions, focused on oncology, geriatrics, and mental health, address critical gaps in the current academic and clinical training environment. At present, the DKICP lacks board-certified or specialized pharmacist faculty in these high-need areas, limiting both curriculum depth and experiential learning opportunities for student pharmacists. Establishing dedicated faculty in these specialties will strengthen the academic program, enhance clinical training, and expose students to a broader range of career pathways within the profession.

Beyond education, this investment will help build a robust framework for pharmacists to contribute meaningfully to interdisciplinary, team-based care models in oncology, geriatrics, and behavioral health. By equipping future pharmacists with specialized training and mentorship, HB2159 HD2 will support the integration of pharmacists into care teams, improve medication management for complex patient populations, and ultimately advance health equity across the state. HPhA respectfully urges passage of this measure and thanks the Legislature for its continued commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's healthcare workforce.

On behalf of The Hawai'i Pharmacists Association, mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Very Respectfully,

Corrie L. Sanders, PharmD., BCACP, CPGx
Executive Director, Hawai'i Pharmacists Association



The Senate Committees on Education and Health and Human Services
March 25, 2026
Room 225
1:10 PM

RE: **HB 2159 HD2, Relating to Healthcare Workforce Development**

Attention: Chairs Donna Mercado Kim and Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Michelle N. Kidani and Angus L.K. McKelvey, Members of the Committees

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), the exclusive bargaining representative for all University of Hawai'i faculty members across Hawai'i's statewide 10-campus system, **supports HB 2159 HD2.**

UHPA supports the appropriation of state funds to establish additional full-time equivalent positions within the University of Hawai'i system to address the State's critical health care workforce shortages. By funding new educational, training, and clinical-translational research roles, this measure directly supports the University's responsibility to train the next generation of doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, and public health workers.

Establishing new clinical faculty positions across vital institutions—including the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the Cancer Center, the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, the Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health, and the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy—will significantly strengthen the University's capacity to serve our communities. As the exclusive representative for UH faculty, UHPA recognizes that expanding these roles not only supports our membership, but is essential to ensuring that all residents, particularly those in rural and underserved areas, have access to high-quality care

UHPA supports the passage of HB 2159 HD2.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Fern'.

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly



March 25, 2026 at 1:10 pm
Conference Room 225

Senate Committee on Education

To: Chair Donna Mercado Kim
Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

To: Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura
Vice Chair Angus L.K. McKelvey

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy
Vice President, Government Affairs
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: Testimony in Support
HB 2159 HD 2, Relating to Health Care

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the health care continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 30,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to **support** this measure, which supports requests for additional positions to strengthen Hawaii's healthcare workforce. There are material and ongoing needs for healthcare providers in the state. The Association's 2024 Healthcare Workforce Initiative Report identified over 4,000 job openings in healthcare across Hawai'i. These vacancies span nursing, behavioral health, pharmacy, social work, specialty medicine, and other high-demand roles, and they directly impact patient access—particularly in rural and neighbor island communities.

Expanding capacity and efforts to align workforce development efforts will be key to meeting the needs of patients now and in the future, especially as the state's population ages. Strong coordination between the University of Hawaii and healthcare employers is essential so that investments translate directly into providers entering the workforce where they are most needed.

We believe this measure is important to build upon the efforts our members are already undertaking and appreciate the opportunity to support this effort.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Wednesday, March 25, 2026; 1:10 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2159, HOUSE DRAFT 2, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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. 2159, House Draft 2, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

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 unspecified amounts of general funds for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the University of Hawaii System to establish an unspecified number of positions to support health care workforce development in Hawaii.

The bill would take effect on July 1, 3000.

The State of Hawaii is experiencing a severe shortage of health care professionals in the workforce, especially in rural areas. Recent studies note that the current shortage of physicians is at 20% of the total full-time equivalent positions throughout the State. The shortage is especially severe in the fields of primary care, infectious diseases, colorectal surgery, pathology, general surgery, pulmonology, neurology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, family medicine, cardiothoracic surgery, rheumatology, cardiology, hematology/oncology, and pediatric subspecialties of endocrinology, cardiology, neurology, hematology/oncology, and gastroenterology.

Testimony on House Bill No. 2159, House Draft 2
Wednesday, March 25, 2026; 1:10 p.m.
Page 2

The same can be said for registered and practical nurses, community health workers, social workers, pharmacists, and other disciplines in the field of health care.

The HPCA believes this bill would provide a needed resources to our community by preparing students for meaningful employment, diversifying their learning opportunities, and promoting responsible citizenship. In addition, this bill would help students receive practical experience that will enable them to be productive members of our labor force. This is critical for the field of health care, especially in rural communities.

Accordingly, the HPCA respectfully urges 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.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Education

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

From: Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: March 25, 2026

Re: Support of HB2159 HD2 - Relating to Health Care Workforce Development.

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 HB2159 HD2, which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i to support health care workforce development in the State. Hawai'i continues to experience a shortage of healthcare workers, with a 2025 JABSOM Hawai'i Physician Workforce Report revealing a deficit of over 833 full time equivalent doctors; and while the nursing workforce appears to be stabilized according to the Hawaii State Center for Nursing's 2025 Workforce Supply Report, there continues to be a need for broader workforce development and investment on our neighbor islands. This measure correctly attempts to address this challenge by further investing in our educational workforce pipeline.

Challenges facing healthcare delivery include expanding costs and shrinking budgets, aging workforce, shifts to new technology solutions and AI adoption. The industry is in flux and the transition is daunting but, also ripe for innovation and opportunity in our state. QHS is committed to this effort through fellowships, residencies, and research – including ongoing funding of the 'Imi Ho'ola Program at JABSOM that ensures the next generation of providers in Hawai'i are from Hawai'i. We look forward to continued partnership with the University of Hawai'i system in expanding and training the next generation of Hawai'i healthcare professionals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB2159 HD2.

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.



Hawaii Medical Association

1360 South Beretania Street, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Phone: 808.536.7702 • Fax: 808.528.2376 • hawaiimedicalassociation.org

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A, San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

Date: March 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 2159 HD2 - RELATING TO HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT- University of Hawai'i; Health Care Workforce Development; Appropriation
Position: Support

This measure would establish positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i to support health care workforce development in the State.

According to the UH JABSOM *2026 Annual Report on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment*, the Hawaii physician shortage continues with unmet need of 833 FTE physicians. The ongoing workforce crisis is most critical in the neighbor islands.

	Hawai'i County	Honolulu County	Kauai County	Maui County	Statewide
Shortage	224 (201)	379 (328)	50 (43)	179 (174)	833 (768)
Percent	43% (40%)	15% (13)	28% (24)	41% (41)	23% (21)

Physician Shortage by County (Prior year numbers in parentheses)
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa John A. Burns School of Medicine Area Health Education Center. Annual Report on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project. Dec. 2025.

Establishing university clinical faculty positions supports rural workforce needs when those positions expand supervised training, residency slots, and community-based rotations in underserved areas, as physicians are far more likely to practice where they train and build professional ties. HMA supports this measure that may address critical healthcare workforce shortages by filling key educational, training, and clinical-translational research roles.

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

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa John A. Burns School of Medicine Area Health Education Center. Annual Report on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project. Dec. 2025. University of Hawai'i Government Relations. https://www.hawaii.edu/govrel/docs/reports/2026/act18-sslh2009_2026_physician-workforce_annual-report_508.pdf Accessed Jan 25, 2026.

Hay, Jeremy. "Need A Doctor? Hawai'i's Physician Shortage Keeps Getting Worse." *Honolulu Civil Beat*, 8 Jan. 2026, www.civilbeat.org/2026/01/hawaii-physician-shortage-getting-worse/. Accessed Jan 25, 2026.

Yip C. Hawaii faces shortage of 800 physicians, with neighbor islands hit hardest. KITV.com. [May 20 2024](http://KITV.com). Accessed Feb 1, 2026.

Lu A. Factors Exacerbating the Physician Shortage in Hawaii: What is Hawaii Doing to Stem the Tide? Brown University School of Public Health. [April 3 2024](http://Brown University School of Public Health). Accessed Feb 1, 2026.

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

March 23, 2026

Senate Committee on Education
Chair Donna Mercado Kim
Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani
Members of the Committee

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura
Vice Chair Angus L.K. McKelvey
Members of the Committee

Re: HB 2159 HD 2 – Relating to Health Care Workforce Development – SUPPORT

Aloha kākou!

LeadingAge Pacific West is pleased to support House Bill 2159 HD 2 which would establish and fund positions at the University of Hawai‘i to support health care workforce development throughout the State.

LeadingAge Pacific West is a leading advocate for quality, mission-driven housing, care and services for older adults. Our nonprofit members include providers of affordable senior housing, residential care facilities for the elderly (assisted living), life plan communities, skilled nursing care, home and community-based services, home health and hospice care.

Currently, Hawaii is experiencing significant shortages in most health professions, with heightened shortages in rural and underserved areas and in specialties serving older adults, including neurology and dementia. HB 2159 HD 2 provides the University of Hawaii with critical staff and funding to grow the health care workforce and in turn increase access to care.

HB 2159 HD 2 is an important step toward increasing the supply of Hawaii’s health care workforce and filling much needed gaps. For these reasons, LeadingAge Pacific West is pleased to support HB 2159 HD 2 and urges your support on this important measure.

Sincerely,
Amber King
Vice President, Legislative Affairs

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 1:10 PM
Via Video Conference; Conference Room 225

Senate Committee on Education

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2159, HD2
Relating to HealthCare Workforce Development**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

HPH writes in SUPPORT HB 2159, HD2 which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to support healthcare workforce development in the State. The University of Hawai'i Health Science/Health Professions units train the next generation of healthcare providers and human health scientists to address a myriad of chronic diseases with a high burden and disproportionate impact on various populations and communities in Hawai'i. The coordinated interdisciplinary initiative outlined in HB 2159, HD2 will enhance the healthcare workforce through a team-based system, increase access to care for our communities and capitalize on partnerships with other public and private organizations.

The Healthcare Association of Hawai'i's 2024 Healthcare Workforce Initiative Report identified over 4,000 job openings in healthcare across Hawai'i. These vacancies span nursing, behavioral health, pharmacy, social work, specialty medicine, and other high-demand roles, and they directly impact patient access—particularly in rural and neighbor island communities. Expanding capacity and efforts to align workforce development efforts will be key to meeting the needs of patients now and in the future, especially as the state's population ages. Strong coordination between the University of Hawaii and

healthcare employers is essential so that investments translate directly into providers entering the workforce where they are most needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



March 25, 2026

**Senate Committee on Education
Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, Chair**

**Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Sen. Joy San Buenaventura, Chair**

RE: HB2159 HD2, Relating to Healthcare Workforce Development

Chair Kim, Chair San Buenaventura, and members of the committees –

Navian Hawaii is a nonprofit organization supporting the needs of Hawai'i's aging population, including through hospice, palliative care, and integrated support services. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of** HB2159 HD2, Relating to Healthcare Workforce Development. This bill would establish positions and appropriate funds to the University of Hawaii to support health care workforce development in the State.

The ongoing shortage of healthcare workers in Hawai'i has significant implications for access to care. As Hawai'i's population of individuals 65 and over increases, many of whom require specialized services for illnesses such as cancer and dementia, the impacts of this shortage will only become more acute.

By establishing new positions and appropriating funds for workforce development, this bill helps address a critical barrier to expanding and sustaining high-quality care. Enhanced workforce development efforts can help ensure that future healthcare providers are prepared to serve in diverse settings, including home- and community-based care that is vital for kupuna.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-2159-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 7:22:32 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/25/2026 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yu Erh Lin Chen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Senate REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

Committee on Education and Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing on March 25, 2026

Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2159 HD2

To the honorable Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 2159-HD2, which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to support health care workforce development in the State. HB 2159 HD2 includes three new faculty positions for DKICP which specialize in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health. The DKICP currently has no faculty with PGY2 residencies or board certifications in these areas.

As a pharmacy student at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP), I believe that these faculty positions will be critical for enhancing the delivery of quality health professional education and health care services in high need areas in the state. I would welcome and greatly benefit from the opportunity to interact with faculty in areas that are personally of high interest to me. Being able to interact in the classroom and clinics with pharmacy faculty who specialize in oncology, geriatrics, and psychiatry will provide needed role models which will be critical for helping me and my classmates prepare ourselves for future careers in these fields.

I recognize the concerns related to the costs associated with this bill, but I also recognize the amplifying value and impact of investing in clinical faculty. It would demonstrate a commitment toward strategic investments in the training of future health professionals in the state who are committed to helping to improve access to quality health care for the people of Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2159-HD2 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Yu Erh Lin Chen

The Senate REGULAR SESSION OF 2026
Committee on Education and Committee on Health and Human Services
Hearing on March 25, 2026
Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2159 HD2

To the honorable **Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,**

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 2159-HD2, which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to support health care workforce development in the State. HB 2159 HD2 includes three new faculty positions for DKICP which specialize in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health. The DKICP currently has no faculty with PGY2 residencies or board certifications in these areas.

As a pharmacy student at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP), I believe that these faculty positions will be critical for enhancing the delivery of quality health professional education and health care services in high need areas in the state. I would welcome and greatly benefit from the opportunity to interact with faculty in areas that are personally of high interest to me. Being able to interact in the classroom and clinics with pharmacy faculty who specialize in oncology, geriatrics, and psychiatry will provide needed role models which will be critical for helping me and my classmates prepare ourselves for future careers in these fields.

I recognize the concerns related to the costs associated with this bill, but I also recognize the amplifying value and impact of investing in clinical faculty. It would demonstrate a commitment toward strategic investments in the training of future health professionals in the state who are committed to helping to improve access to quality health care for the people of Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2159-HD2 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gemmy Alegre

Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy Student

Class of 2026

The Senate REGULAR SESSION OF 2026
Committee on Education and Committee on Health and Human Services
Hearing on March 25, 2026
Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2159 HD2

To the honorable **Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,**

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 2159-HD2, which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to support health care workforce development in the State. HB 2159 HD2 includes three new faculty positions for DKICP which specialize in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health. The DKICP currently has no faculty with PGY2 residencies or board certifications in these areas.

As a pharmacy student at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP), I believe that these faculty positions will be critical for enhancing the delivery of quality health professional education and health care services in high need areas in the state. I would welcome and greatly benefit from the opportunity to interact with faculty in areas that are personally of high interest to me. Being able to interact in the classroom and clinics with pharmacy faculty who specialize in oncology, geriatrics, and psychiatry will provide needed role models which will be critical for helping me and my classmates prepare ourselves for future careers in these fields.

I recognize the concerns related to the costs associated with this bill, but I also recognize the amplifying value and impact of investing in clinical faculty. It would demonstrate a commitment toward strategic investments in the training of future health professionals in the state who are committed to helping to improve access to quality health care for the people of Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2159-HD2 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Shaun-Marie Aquino

HB-2159-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:41:16 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/25/2026 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lara Gomez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Senate REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

Committee on Education and Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing on March 25, 2026

Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2159 HD2

To the honorable **Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,**

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 2159-HD2, which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to support health care workforce development in the State. As a faculty member at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP), I believe that the faculty positions are timely and important for addressing critical issues facing our healthcare system.

HB 2159-HD2 includes three new faculty positions for DKICP which specialize in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health. These are high need areas in the state, and the DKICP currently has no faculty with PGY2 residencies or board certifications in these areas. These faculty would provide valuable and needed expertise in teaching, research, and service in high need clinical areas. It's hard for students to picture themselves practicing in these specialties if they don't have opportunities for regular interactions. Therefore, these positions will be critical for inspiring future pharmacists to engage in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health clinical practices to provide medication-related expertise as part of health care teams.

Although there is a financial cost to the state, it would be a strategic investment that is anticipated to generate a favorable ROI. The faculty hires would immediately provide clinical services to patients in high need specialty areas for the state. The faculty would train students in the clinic and classroom, which would inspire future generations of practitioners to enter these needed specialty areas. The faculty would also engage in scholarship to advance pharmacy practice in their respective fields, which could translate into improved access and outcomes in our state.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2159-HD2 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lara Gomez

The Senate REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

Committee on Education and Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing on March 25, 2026

Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2159 HD2

To the honorable **Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,**

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 2159-HD2, which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to support health care workforce development in the State. As a staff member at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP), I believe that the faculty positions are timely and important for addressing critical issues facing our healthcare system.

HB 2159-HD2 includes three new faculty positions for DKICP which specialize in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health. These are high need areas in the state, and the DKICP currently has no faculty with PGY2 residencies or board certifications in these areas. These faculty would provide valuable and needed expertise in teaching, research, and service in high need clinical areas. It's hard for students to picture themselves practicing in these specialties if they don't have opportunities for regular interactions. Therefore, these positions will be critical for inspiring future pharmacists to engage in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health clinical practices to provide medication-related expertise as part of health care teams.

Although there is a financial cost to the state, it would be a strategic investment that is anticipated to generate a favorable ROI. The faculty hires would immediately provide clinical services to patients in high need specialty areas for the state. The faculty would train students in the clinic and classroom, which would inspire future generations of practitioners to enter these needed specialty areas. The faculty would also engage in scholarship to advance pharmacy practice in their respective fields, which could translate into improved access and outcomes in our state.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2159-HD2 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina Requelman
Christina Requelman

HB-2159-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 1:37:04 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/25/2026 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Senate REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

Committee on Education and Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing on March 25, 2026

Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2159 HD2

To the honorable Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing to express my **strong support** for House Bill 2159-HD2, which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to support health care workforce development in the State. As a faculty member at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP), I believe that the faculty positions are timely and important for addressing critical issues facing our healthcare system.

HB 2159 HD2 includes three new faculty positions for DKICP which specialize in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health. These are high need areas in the state, and the DKICP currently has no faculty with PGY2 residencies or board certifications in these areas. These faculty would provide valuable and needed expertise in teaching, research, and service in high need clinical areas. It's hard for students to picture themselves practicing in these specialties if they don't have opportunities for regular interactions. Therefore, these positions will be critical for inspiring future pharmacists to engage in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health clinical practices to provide medication-related expertise as part of health care teams.

Although there is a financial cost to the state, it would be a strategic investment that is anticipated to generate a favorable ROI. The faculty hires would immediately provide clinical services to patients in high need specialty areas for the state. The faculty would train students in the clinic and classroom, which would inspire future generations of practitioners to enter these needed specialty areas. The faculty would also engage in scholarship to advance pharmacy practice in their respective fields, which could translate into improved access and outcomes in our state.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2159-HD2 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole Young

THE SENATE REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

Committee on Education and Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing on March 25, 2026

Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2159 HD2

To the honorable **Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,**

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 2159-HD2, which establishes positions and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to support health care workforce development in the State. As a pharmacist faculty member at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP), I believe that the faculty positions are timely and important for addressing critical issues facing our healthcare system.

HB 2159-HD2 includes three new faculty positions for DKICP with specialties in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health. These are high need areas in the state, and the DKICP currently has no faculty with post-graduate training or board certifications in these specialized areas. These faculty would provide valuable and needed expertise in teaching, research, and service in high-need clinical areas. These positions will be critical for inspiring future pharmacists to engage in cancer, geriatrics, and mental health clinical practices to provide medication-related expertise as part of interprofessional healthcare teams.

Although there is a financial cost to the state, it would be a strategic investment that is anticipated to generate a favorable ROI back to the community. The faculty hires would have clinical practice sites where they can immediately provide clinical services to patients in these high-need specialty areas for the state. The faculty would train students in the clinical sites and classroom, which would inspire future generations of practitioners to enter these needed specialty areas. The faculty would also engage in scholarship to advance pharmacy practice in their respective fields, which would also help to improve access and patient healthcare outcomes in our state.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2159-HD2 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jarred Prudencio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jarred Prudencio, PharmD, FCCP, BCACP, BC-ADM

The Senate REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

Committee on Education and Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing on March 25, 2026

Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2159 HD2

To the honorable **Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,**

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Although there is a financial cost to the state, it would be a strategic investment that is anticipated to generate a favorable ROI. The faculty hires would immediately provide clinical services to patients in high need specialty areas for the state. The faculty would train students in the clinic and classroom, which would inspire future generations of practitioners to enter these needed specialty areas. The faculty would also engage in scholarship to advance pharmacy practice in their respective fields, which could translate into improved access and outcomes in our state.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2159-HD2 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dianqing Sun".

Dianqing Sun, PhD

Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences
Director of Distance Education

HB-2159-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 10:57:38 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/25/2026 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alina Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Senate REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

Committee on Education and Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing on March 25, 2026

Testimony in SUPPORT for **HB2159 HD2**

To the honorable Chairs Kim and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kidani and McKelvey, and Members of the Committees,

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I recognize the concerns related to the costs associated with this bill, but I also recognize the amplifying value and impact of investing in clinical faculty. It would demonstrate a commitment toward strategic investments in the training of future health professionals in the state who are committed to helping to improve access to quality health care for the people of Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2159-HD2 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alina Ramos

LATE

HB-2159-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 6:25:58 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/25/2026 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laeton J Pang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing in support of this bill to support UH health workforce expansion.

Thank you for your consideration,

Laeton J Pang, MD, MPH, FACR, FACRO, FASTRO, FACCC