



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony COMMENTING on HB2498 HD1
RELATING TO CARE HOMES.**

REPRESENTATIVE LISA MARTEN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date and Time: TUE, February 17, 2026 @ 9:30 am

Room Number: 329

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** No impact to the Department of Health (Department).
- 2 **Department Position:** The Department appreciates the intent of this measure and offers
- 3 comments and proposed amendments.
- 4 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health, Office of Health Care Assurance (OHCA)
- 5 establishes regulatory requirements to protect patients and licenses health care facilities,
- 6 including care homes. We defer to the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA)
- 7 regarding enhancements to physical structures beyond regulatory requirements for emergency
- 8 preparedness purposes.
- 9 We have concerns regarding the appearance of conflict of interest if the Department is directly
- 10 involved in implementing or administering this measure. While licensed care home
- 11 participation in the pilot may be optional, OHCA's regulations are not. OHCA's direct
- 12 involvement could potentially create confusion of requirements, feel coercive, or reduce
- 13 participation in the pilot from those seeking to avoid closer scrutiny from the regulator.
- 14 Should this measure be enacted, OHCA will commit to providing technical assistance to HIEMA
- 15 in interpreting the relevant sections of Hawaii Revised Statute (HRS) and Hawaii Administrative

1 Rules (HAR) that relate to the physical environment of licensed facilities to help ensure its
2 activities through this pilot do not conflict with regulatory requirements.

3 **Offered amendments:**

4 Page 2, lines 1-4:

5 **SECTION 2. (a)** The Hawaii emergency management agency, ~~in coordination with the~~
6 ~~office of health care assurance of the department of health,~~ shall establish the central Oahu
7 care home community resilient pilot program

8 and page 4, lines 11-13:

9 **SECTION 2. (g)** The Hawaii emergency management agency, ~~in collaboration with the~~
10 ~~office of health care assurance of the department of health,~~ shall submit a report to the
11 legislature

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STEPHEN F. LOGAN
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
KAHU HO'OMALU PŪLIA

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
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STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2498 HD1,
RELATING TO CARE HOMES

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 17, 2026

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice-Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) respectfully submits testimony in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 2498 HD1, which establishes the Central O'ahu Care Home Community Resilience Pilot Program. This legislation addresses a critical need to protect our most vulnerable kūpuna residing in licensed care homes within the 96797- zip code, particularly given the increasing risks from natural disasters, climate-related hazards, and prolonged utility outages.

We acknowledge and appreciate the Department of Health's (DOH) thoughtful comments regarding the regulatory role of their Office of Health Care Assurance (OHCA) and the concerns about potential conflicts of interest if DOH were directly involved in implementing or administering this pilot program.

HIEMA supports the DOH's position that their involvement as a regulatory authority could create confusion for care homes, potentially deter participation, or blur the lines between voluntary pilot activities and mandatory licensing requirements.

To address these concerns and ensure a clear, efficient, and collaborative approach, HIEMA advocates for the removal of DOH as an implementing or administering agency in this bill. Instead, HIEMA proposes to lead the pilot program with a coordination role for DOH limited to providing technical assistance and guidance. This adjustment will enhance program effectiveness while respecting the regulatory responsibilities of DOH and maintaining trust with care home operators.

HIEMA supports this measure provided it does not adversely impact on the priorities of the Governor's executive budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2498, HD1.

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TESTIMONY OF LESLIE DOOR

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS
Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
9:30 a.m.

HB 2498, HD1

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the Committee on Human Services & Homelessness, my name is Leslie Door, Director of Product, Risk & Regulatory Compliance for Zephyr Insurance Company and Property Chair for Hawaii Insurers Council. The Hawaii Insurers Council is a non-profit trade association of property and casualty insurance companies licensed to do business in Hawaii. Member companies underwrite approximately forty percent of all property and casualty insurance premiums in the state.

Hawaii Insurers Council **supports** this bill, which establishes the Central Oahu Care Home Community Resilience Pilot Program.

This measure addresses a critical and increasingly urgent gap in Hawai'i's disaster preparedness framework: the resilience of licensed care homes serving kupuna, individuals with disabilities, and medically fragile residents. Many of these facilities operate in aging structures, have limited financial capacity, and serve residents who cannot safely evacuate or endure prolonged power outages without significant risk to life and health.

This bill takes a practical, targeted, and fiscally responsible approach by establishing a pilot program in a defined geographic area, allowing the State to evaluate effectiveness before considering broader expansion. Importantly, it emphasizes mitigation and preparedness rather than post-disaster response alone, which is both more humane and more cost-effective.

Coordination between the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency and the Office of Health Care Assurance will be key to aligning emergency preparedness with licensing and resident safety

oversight. The inclusion of evacuation planning requirements and a clear reporting obligation to the Legislature reinforces accountability while allowing flexibility in implementation.

Finally, the bill's rulemaking authority allows the administering agency to adapt technical standards as hazards, building practices, and mitigation technologies evolve, without the need for repeated statutory changes.

HIC believes that investing in care home resilience is not only a moral obligation to protect our most vulnerable residents, but also a sound public policy decision that can reduce emergency response costs, minimize displacement, and support faster community recovery.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important legislation.



February 17, 2026

House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

RE: HB2498 HD1, Relating to Care Homes

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the committee –

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 HB2498 HD1, Relating to Care Homes. This bill would enhance the resilience of care home settings in Central Oahu against natural disasters, climate-related risks, and extended utility disruptions.

Navian Hawaii currently works with a number of care homes and patients throughout Oahu, including in the 96797 postal zip code, to provide hospice and palliative care. We are acutely aware of the operational and structural difficulties many of these facilities face.

Care homes often serve individuals with complex medical and social needs, making them particularly vulnerable during natural disasters or other emergencies. Many of these facilities are also decades old, which poses a significant risk particularly as the frequency and severity of natural disasters increase.

The proposed Central Oahu Care Home Community Resilience Pilot Program emphasizes both physical infrastructure improvements and operational preparedness. This would reduce risks, maintain continuity of care, and ensure that kupuna can remain safely housed and supported even in adverse conditions.

The pilot program's focus on Central Oahu is a prudent initial step in making care home settings more sustainable, offering a model to inform statewide efforts in the long term.

Navian Hawaii is a nonprofit organization supporting the needs of Hawai'i's aging population, including through hospice, palliative care, and integrated support services. The name "Navian" blends "Navigator" and "Guardian," reflecting our mission to guide individuals and their families through the physical and emotional challenges that often accompany aging and serious illness.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.