



## Hawaii Dental Association

Time/Date: 10:17 a.m., March 3, 2026  
Location: State Capitol Room 211  
Committee: House Committee on Health  
Re: SB 2261, SD1, Relating to Health

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee,

The Hawaii Dental Association is submitting testimony in support of SB 2261, SD1.

Geographic isolation, a small and dispersed population, limited housing availability, workforce shortages, and financial sustainability are recognized challenges in recruiting and retaining physicians and the healthcare workforce, including dentists and dental team members on a long-term basis.

A focused study led by Huli Au Ola is an appropriate approach. The study can help assess factors such as compensation structures, loan repayment opportunities, housing support, professional development pathways, telehealth integration, and community-based training pipelines. Most importantly, it can provide data-driven recommendations tailored specifically to Molokai's needs rather than relying on one-size-fits-all statewide strategies.

HDA is a statewide membership organization representing dentists practicing in Hawai'i and licensed by the State of Hawaii's Board of Dentistry. HDA members are committed to protecting the oral health and well-being of the people of Hawai'i, from keiki to kupuna and everyone in between. Our organization is a key stakeholder, representing providers of oral health services on every island. HDA's top priority is the care of our patients and the health of Hawai'i residents. We wish to contribute positively to the dialog on this measure as it advances.



To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President  
Mike Nguyen, Director of Public Policy  
Maria Rallojay, Public Policy Specialist

Hearing: Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 10:17am, Conference Room 211

RE: **SB2261 SD1 Relating to Health**

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AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB2261 SD1**. This measure would require Huli Au Ola to conduct a study on physician and dentist recruitment and retention to serve the island of Molokai.

AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan founded by Hawai'i's Community Health Centers and the Queen Emma Clinics. We serve over 66,000 Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dual-eligible residents on all islands. Since 1994, AlohaCare has partnered with providers, government entities, and community-based organizations to meet the evolving needs of our safety net community as Hawai'i's only health plan focused solely on Medicaid-eligible individuals. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for equitable access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare is committed to improving access to care. We serve over 2,200 residents on Molokai, and we continue to be very engaged in bolstering access to care despite provider shortages and travel challenges. We support a multi-faceted approach to improving access to care. This measure to conduct a study toward developing a long-term strategy and plan for services on Molokai would be a good step forward.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of SB2261 SD1**.



## Hawaii Medical Association

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Date: March 3, 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 SB 2261 SD1** RELATING TO HEALTH. Huli Au Ola; Physician and Dentist Retention; Molokai; Study; Grant; Appropriation.

#### **Position: Support**

This measure would require Huli Au Ola to conduct a study on physician and dentist recruitment and retention to serve the island of Molokai, appropriate funds, effective 7/1/2026.

HMA supports this measure. Molokai's limited transportation options and high cost of travel compound patient access challenges, leading to delayed care and poorer health outcomes for Molokai families. A structured assessment of the barriers to recruiting and keeping physicians and dentists on Molokai covering workforce, housing, transportation, and support systems will equip policymakers with the information needed to design effective incentives, partnerships, and long-term strategies to improve access to continuous medical care for Molokai.

HMA supports this comprehensive study on recruitment and retention of physicians and dentists to serve the island of Molokai. Systematic root cause analyses for our rural and underserved communities are essential to achieving health equity across our islands.

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

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## REFERENCES

MacDougall, H., et al. "Recruitment and Retention of Rural Health Professionals in Underserved Settings." *Health Services Research*, 2025.

Fritsma, T. "Factors Associated With Health Care Professionals' Choice to Serve in Underserved Areas: A Systematic Review." *JAMA Network Open*, 2023.

Arredondo, K., et al. "Addressing the Rural-Urban Imbalance in Health Care: Recruitment and Retention Workforce Development Policies." *JAMA Network Open*, 2024.

Juarez R, Phankitnirundorn K, Ozorio Dutra SV, Bond-Smith D, Lee AG, Maunakea AK. Health and Social Support in the Aftermath of the Maui Wildfires. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2025 Aug 1;8(8):e2525430. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.25430. PMID: 40768146; PMCID: PMC12329611.

Maunakea, Alike, et al. "Invisible Battles: Maui Survivors Struggle With Mental Health Two Years Post-Fire." *Hawaii Public Radio*, 5 Aug. 2025.

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Beth England, MD, Chair  
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

**SB-2261-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:00:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2026 10:17:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2261 SB RELATING TO HEALTH.