



**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

1177 Alakea Street, #402, Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone: 587-0788 Fax: 587-0783 www.shpda.org

February 4, 2026

TO: 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: **SB 2271 -- Relating to Hospital Licensing**

HEARING: Friday, February 6, 2026 @ 01:00 pm; Conference Room 225

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

TESTIMONY:

SHPDA supports this bill which requires the Department of Health to adopt rules to allow hospitals to demonstrate compliance with all licensing inspections required by the State through accreditation or certification by any accreditation organization recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This is a long-overdue means of administrative simplification for the state without adversely impacting patient safety or quality.

Thank you for hearing SB 2271

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator



**STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA**

PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

February 6, 2026

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: SB2271 RELATING TO HOSPITAL LICENSING.

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DDC) submits testimony **in SUPPORT of SB2271** which, requires the Department of Health to adopt rules to allow hospitals to demonstrate compliance with all licensing inspections required by the State through accreditation or certification by any accreditation or certification organization recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities supports this measure because individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities rely heavily on hospital systems for acute care, behavioral health stabilization, and complex discharge coordination. Allowing hospitals to demonstrate compliance through any CMS-recognized accreditation organization reduces administrative burden while maintaining federal quality and safety standards. This alignment helps sustain hospital capacity, particularly in rural and neighbor island communities, which is essential for ensuring access to care for people with disabilities.

The Council also supports the continued authority of the Department of Health to investigate complaints and conduct validation surveys to protect patient safety and rights.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **supports SB2271.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Daintry Bartoldus, Executive Administrator



February 6, 2026 at 1:00 pm
Conference Room 225

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**
SB 2271, Relating to Hospital Licensing

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 healthcare 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 submit testimony in **support** of this measure, which seeks to modernize how hospitals are licensed in Hawaii by allowing facilities to use any accrediting organization recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to meet state licensure standards.

Currently, Hawaii law allows the Department of Health (DOH) to only accept accreditation by The Joint Commission to demonstrate compliance with state licensing inspections. This bill would update Hawaii statute to allow DOH to recognize any accrediting organization approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to meet state licensure standards.

As background—hospitals must be licensed and certified by both CMS and the state licensing entity—in this case, the Office of Healthcare Assurance (OHCA), which is housed under DOH. It is very important for hospitals to receive these accreditations and certifications so that they can participate in the Medicaid and Medicare programs. On the federal level, CMS uses accrediting organizations to survey and certify hospitals on their behalf. If a hospital passes a survey by an accrediting organization, they are “deemed” to be in compliance with federal Medicare Conditions of Participation (CoPs) and can participate in the program.

States, including Hawaii, often use a hospital's “deemed status” by CMS as evidence of compliance with state licensing standards. In practice, this means that if a hospital receives

approval by an accrediting organization and thus deemed to meet Medicare CoPs, Hawaii will accept that accreditation in lieu of a separate state inspection. This practice avoids duplicative surveys while still ensuring hospitals meet stringent quality and safety requirements under both federal and state law.

There are only a handful of accrediting organizations that CMS has approved to carry out this task, and they undergo thorough vetting and scrutiny at least every six years to continue this important task. For many decades, the only accrediting organization approved by CMS to certify hospitals was The Joint Commission (TJC). However, there are now several options that hospitals can choose from to achieve certification and participation in crucial federal programs.

Unfortunately, Hawaii state law was written many decades ago and it has not been revised to reflect the broader range of accreditation options that hospitals enjoy today. Updating Hawaii law to recognize any CMS-approved hospital accrediting organization is a common-sense modernization that maintains high standards, strengthens alignment with federal oversight, and uses state resources more effectively while preserving OHCA's ability to respond to complaints and patient safety concerns.

Thank you for your consideration of this important measure.

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Head of Government Relations

Before:
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

February 6, 2026
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225
Via Videoconference

Re: SB 2271, Relating to Hospital Licensing

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 271, which requires the Hawai'i Department of Health to adopt rules to allow hospitals to demonstrate compliance with all licensing inspections required by the State through accreditation or certification by any accreditation or certification organization recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

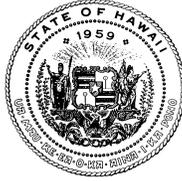
Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS SB 2271.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i is one of the nation's largest not-for-profit health plans, serving 12.6 million members nationwide and more than 271,000 members in Hawai'i. In Hawai'i, more than 4,600 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group physicians and advance practice providers, including over 80 physician assistants, work in our integrated health system to provide our members coordinated care and coverage. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i has more than 20+ medical facilities, including our award-winning Moanalua Medical Center. We continue to provide high-quality coordinated care for our members and deliver on our commitment to improve the health of our members and the people living in the communities we serve.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports SB 2271 because it provides the Department of Health the flexibility to recognize other accrediting bodies in addition to The Joint Commission to demonstrate a hospital's compliance with all licensing inspections required by the State of Hawai'i.

We respectfully request the committee PASS SB 2271. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE



**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2271
RELATED TO HOSPITAL LICENSING.**

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date and Time: FRI, February 6, 2026, @ 1:00PM

Room Number: 225

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** No impact to the Department of Health (Department).
- 2 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure and offers comments and
- 3 proposed amendments.
- 4 **Department Testimony:** The Office of Health Care Assurance (OHCA) provides the following
- 5 testimony on behalf of the Department. OHCA supports this measure which would allow
- 6 hospitals to demonstrate compliance with all licensing inspections required by the State
- 7 through accreditation or certification by any accreditation or certification organization
- 8 approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).
- 9 **Offered Amendments:**
- 10 Page 2, lines 7-8:
- 11 **SECTION 2. (c)** certification organization ~~recognized~~ **approved** by the Centers for
- 12 Medicare and Medicaid Services demonstrates a hospital's...
- 13 and page 3, lines 9-10:

1 **SECTION 2. (e)** certification organization ~~recognized~~ **approved** by the Centers for
2 Medicare and Medicaid Services that are used in determining...

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