

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 17, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 3324 – RELATING TO MEDICAID.**

Hearing: February 18, 2026, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the bill, offers comments, and requests an amendment. DHS respectfully requests that this program and appropriation not conflict with, reduce, or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

DHS agrees that Community Care Family Foster Home (CCFFH) and Expanded Adult Residential Care Home (E-ARCH) capacity remains limited despite the rate increase authorized by the Legislature in 2025 in alignment with the "low" rate scenario provided in the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Rate Study Report commissioned by DHS in December 2022. DHS supports the Legislature's intent to increase reimbursement for CCFFH and E-ARCH facilities to the "medium" rate scenario provided in the HCBS Rate Study Report. Based on updated utilization data, the appropriation request may be reduced to a general fund request of \$1,770,892.

Additionally, DHS respectfully requests that the bill language be amended to remove all references to a DHS contractor (Milliman), who performed the study under a DHS contract, and instead refer to the study as the "DHS Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Rate Study Report" to clarify that DHS is the "group author" of the study.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



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 18, 2026

The Honorable 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: SB3324 Relating to Medicaid

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities is in **SUPPORT of SB3324**, which appropriates moneys to the Department of Human Services to increase funding for certain Medicaid home- and community-based services, including residential services offered in community care foster family homes and expanded adult residential care homes, and requires the Department to obtain matching federal funds and to pursue additional funding sources

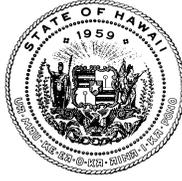
Sustaining and strengthening the caregiver workforce is critical to maintaining community-based options for individuals with disabilities and kupuna across Hawai'i. Workforce shortages remain a significant barrier to expanding access to home and community-based services, particularly on the neighbor islands, where shortages are most acute. Increasing monthly payments to caregivers helps retain direct care staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **supporting SB3324**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



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

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB3324
RELATING TO MEDICAID.**

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

Hearing Date and Time: WED., February 18, 2026 @ 1:00 pm

Room Number: 225

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** There is no cost to the Department of Health (Department).
- 2 **Department Position:** The Department submits testimony in strong support of SB3324
- 3 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health, Office of Health Care Assurance (OHCA)
- 4 licenses and oversees community care foster family homes and other long-term care settings
- 5 that serve many of Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents, including older adults and individuals
- 6 with disabilities. These providers play a critical role in supporting residents in community-based
- 7 settings and helping prevent unnecessary institutionalization.

8 Adequate Medicaid reimbursement is essential to sustaining this system of care. Many
9 licensed care homes operate on very narrow margins while facing rising costs for staffing, food,
10 utilities, insurance, training, and regulatory compliance. Without reimbursement rates that
11 reflect the true cost of care, providers face significant financial strain, which can lead to
12 workforce shortages, reduced capacity, or facility closures.

13 Increasing Medicaid reimbursement will:

- 14 • Help stabilize the existing network of licensed care homes.
- 15 • Support recruitment and retention of qualified caregivers.
- 16 • Improve quality of care and resident safety.

- 1 • Encourage providers to continue serving Medicaid beneficiaries.
- 2 • Help ensure access to community-based long-term care statewide.

3 As Hawai'i's population continues to age, demand for community-based long-term care
4 services will continue to grow. Strengthening reimbursement now is a proactive step to ensure
5 that safe, licensed care settings remain available for residents who depend on them.

6 For these reasons, OHCA respectfully urges the Committee to pass SB3324.

7 **Offered Amendments:** None.

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



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

Ka 'Oihana Ho'oka'a'ike no ka Po'e Kīnānā

1010 Richards Street, Rm. 118 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129 • (808) 204-2466 (VP)

February 18, 2026

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senate Bill 3324 – Relating to Medicaid

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 3324 – Relating to Medicaid. This bill appropriates moneys to the Department of Human Services to increase funding for certain Medicaid home- and community-based services, including residential services offered in community care foster family homes and expanded adult residential care homes. Requires the Department to obtain matching federal funds and to pursue additional funding sources.

Many Medicaid recipients prefer to receive in-home services and age in place. Hawaii has a shortage of community care foster family homes and expanded adult residential care homes. This bill addresses the shortage of care facilities and cost savings for Medicaid recipients from out of pocket expenses if placed in an institutionalized nursing facility. This bill would assist those who prefer to age in place and prevent placement in expensive nursing facilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

KRISTINE PAGANO
Acting Executive Director

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

KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., MGA, MPH
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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB3324
Relating to Medicaid

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: February 18, 2026, 1P.M. Room Number: 225

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health, supports the intent of this measure. EOA requests that this appropriation not conflict
3 with, reduce, or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

4 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates \$5,810,000 for SFY 2026-2027 to the
5 Department of Human Services (DHS) to increase funding for certain Medicaid home- and
6 community-based services, including residential services offered in community care foster
7 family homes (CCFFHs) and expanded adult residential care homes (E-ARCHs).

8 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this measure is to:

9 1) Appropriate monies to increase the funding of residential services offered in community
10 care foster family homes and expanded adult residential care homes to the "medium" rate
11 scenario published in Milliman's 2022 rate study; and

1 2) Require the DHS to obtain the maximum federal matching funds available for the
2 increased expenditure, which will result in a larger impact on reimbursements paid to
3 service providers.

4 Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) improve quality of life for older adults
5 and individuals with disabilities by supporting independence, allowing them to remain at home,
6 and avoiding costly institutional care. For those needing higher levels of care, CCFFHs and E-
7 ARCHs offer home-like alternatives to nursing homes. Despite these essential services,
8 reimbursement rates remain inadequate, leading to low wages, workforce shortages, and reduced
9 provider capacity. As Hawai‘i’s aging population grows, it is critical to strengthen the HCBS
10 workforce and expand CCFFH and E-ARCH availability to meet increasing demand.

11 The 2024 Genworth Cost of Care Survey reports that home health services in Hawai‘i
12 average \$97,240 annually, while nursing home care costs about \$181,000 per person for a semi-
13 private room. Medicaid HCBS, CCFFHs, and E-ARCHs are cost-effective, reducing state
14 healthcare expenditures while keeping individuals out of institutions. Increasing funding for
15 these services is an investment that improves quality of life for older adults, stabilizes the
16 workforce, and ensures access to care in the least restrictive setting.

17 **Recommendation:** EOA supports the intent of this measure and defers to the Department of
18 Human Services on its implementation.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 1:06:09 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

We support this Bill. While our main focus of course is on our clients who reside in care homes we very much value the efforts of the caregivers who operate those homes. Without them, we would not have the robust community based system of residential care that we do have. It is important that they be properly compensated. In particular, as the caregiver population ages, it is vital to ensure that the next generation is properly incentivized to carry forward with this work.



February 17, 2026

Good afternoon

Chair Senator Joy Buenaventura

Vice Chair Angus McKelvy

And Members of the Committees:

My name is Lemmy Mabut, President of the Community Home Care Association of Hawaii

STRONGLY IN SUPPORT – SB 3324

On behalf of our Caregiver members of the Community Home Care Association, strongly in support SB 3324

We humbly ask these committees to Support and Pass this measure.

We provide 24/7 care for a flat rate of 71.31 per day, with the work we provide for the elderly and disabled truly believed that we are NOT gone up a single cent.

The cost of providing care to our Kupuna's and disabled make it nearly impossible to operate.

It takes a great deal of commitment, dedication, patience, and love of the job to be able to keep working 24/7 in caring for our clients.

It's time for the State of Hawaii to do what's right – support us so we can continue to take care our the elderly and disabled.

Thank you for your kind consideration,

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:53:52 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Testifying for Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I fully support this bill and you should too!

-GOD



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facebook.com/AARPHawaii

The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Conference Room 225, 1:00 p.m.

TO: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
FROM: Kealii Lopez, AARP State Director
RE: Support for S.B.3324, Relating to Medicaid

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP Hawaii supports S.B. 3324 which appropriates funds to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for home and community-based services (HCBS), including residential care homes. This measure advances policies that allow kūpuna and people with disabilities to live safely in their homes and communities—where they overwhelmingly prefer to receive care.

S.B. 3324 strengthens Hawai'i's continuum of long-term care by directing additional resources to essential HCBS providers. These services enable older adults and individuals with disabilities to receive assistance with daily activities, manage chronic conditions, and maintain independence. Investing in HCBS helps prevent unnecessary institutionalization, reduces avoidable hospitalization, and improves overall health outcomes.

Equally important, the bill recognizes the critical role of direct care workers. Caregivers are the backbone of our long-term care system, yet many face low wages, limited support, and high turnover. Increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates helps stabilize this workforce, enhances care continuity, and ensures families can rely on a trained, reliable, and sustainable caregiving system.

AARP Hawai'i appreciates the Legislature's attention to strengthening home and community-based care options for our kūpuna and people with disabilities. We respectfully urge passage of S.B. 3324.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:22:09 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marianne M. Cacatain	Testifying for PH3	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi I am a proud CCFFH/ Business owner of my Foster home for 8 years and I approve this this bill. We take pride of what we do for others and we deserve what's fair for us.

Please help us By allowing us and new operators to continue providing help to our community

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:30:44 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Ellayn Ortal	Testifying for Providing Healthy Homecare for Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members,

My name is Mary Elayn Ortal and I am a caregiver and CCFFH provider. I respectfully ask for your support of SB3324.

I work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week caring for individuals who depend on me for everything — medication, meals, bathing, supervision, and comfort. My residents live in my home. They are like family to me.

The cost of running my home has increased greatly — food, utilities, insurance, medical supplies, and caregiver payroll. When I need rest, I must hire substitute caregivers who sometimes cost more than what I receive in reimbursement. Many of us do not take vacations because we cannot afford it.

We are tired, but we continue because our residents need stability and compassionate care.

SB3324 would increase rates to the medium level identified in the 2022 Milliman study. This is not excessive — it is necessary to keep our homes open.

Please help us continue caring for Hawai‘i’s most vulnerable. With respect and gratitude,

Mary Ellayn Ortal



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 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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

Date: February 18, 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 3324 RELATING TO MEDICAID. DHS; Medicaid; Med-QUEST; Home- and Community-Based Services; Residential Services; Community Care Foster Family Homes; Expanded Adult Residential Care Homes; Federal Matching Funds; Appropriation (\$)

Position: Support

This measure would appropriate moneys to the Department of Human Services to increase funding for certain Medicaid home- and community-based services, including residential services offered in community care foster family homes and expanded adult residential care homes and require the Department to obtain matching federal funds and to pursue additional funding sources.

Hawaii's care needs are growing, yet Hawaii has unmet demand and persistent waiting lists for home- and community-based supports - signals that access is not keeping pace with need. HMA supports this measure that may strengthen in-home and other home-like residential supports, reduce avoidable institutional placement, support smoother hospital-to-home transitions, and better match services to patient goals and functional needs. Additionally, the provision for available federal matching dollars while building capacity for patients' community-based services may rebalance long-term care systems toward care in the least restrictive setting.

Home-like, community-based residential options can strengthen continuity, relieve caregiver strain, and improve quality of life while preserving higher-acuity institutional resources for those who truly need them. Investing in Medicaid in-home and community-based care is one of the most practical ways to help kūpuna and people with disabilities stay safely in familiar settings, maintain independence, and remain connected to family and community.

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

Burns, Alice, Abby Wolk, and Molly O'Malley Watts. *A Look at Waiting Lists for Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services from 2016 to 2025*. Kaiser Family Foundation, 20 Nov. 2025, <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/a-look-at-waiting-lists-for-medicaid-home-and-community-based-services-from-2016-to-2025/>

"Home- and Community-Based Services." MACPAC, 2 Apr. 2024. <https://www.macpac.gov/subtopic/home-and-community-based-services/>. Accessed 15 Feb. 2026.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE).

"Rebalancing Long-Term Services and Supports for Medicaid Enrollees." ASPE, Jan. 2025. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad7cf66fb2a7ae1a0bd91b288363fc71/rebalancing-ltss-medicaid-enrolled-brief.pdf>. Accessed 15 Feb. 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

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:55:43 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shaina calizo	Testifying for CCFFH PH3	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members,

I am a caregiver and CCFFH provider. I respectfully ask for your support of SB3324. As the primary caregiver I work 24 hours day, 7 days a week caring for individuals who depend on me for their assisted daily living, medication, meals, bathing, supervision, and comfort. The cost of operating in my home has increased greatly, food, utilities, insurance, medical supplies, and caregiver payroll. When Im in need to rest, I seek for substitute caregivers who sometimes cost more than what I receive in reimbursement. We are tired, but we continue because our residents need stability and compassionate care. SB3324 would increase rates to the medium level identified in the 2022 Milliman study. This is not excessive it is necessary to keep our homes open. Please help us continue caring for Hawai'i's most vulnerable.

With respect and gratitude,

PH3

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:37:55 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Imee Gallardo	Testifying for PH3, Providing Healthy Home Care For Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Imee Gallardo, and I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Bill SB3324 on behalf of DDDH, E-ARCH, Care Homes, CCFFH caregivers, and our caregiver community.

I am a full-time mother of four and a full-time caregiver. I have dedicated 18 years of my life to caregiving and have served as a foster home provider for the past 8 years. Caring for others is not just my job it is my passion, especially caring for our kupuna who do not have family members available to support them with their daily needs.

Today, many caregivers and care home providers are struggling due to the rising cost of living. The increasing costs of housing, rent, groceries, gas, and medical insurance continue to place a heavy burden on our community. Operating a small care home does not mean financial stability, it often means working tirelessly just to make ends meet. Many of us struggle to afford our own health insurance and cannot find affordable substitute caregivers when we need rest or must attend to personal responsibilities. Without adequate support, it is becoming increasingly difficult to continue operating and providing quality care.

We are asking for your support in passing Bill SB3324 to help sustain our services and allow us to continue caring for those who depend on us. This bill will help ensure that care homes remain open and that vulnerable members of our community continue receiving the care they need.

As a member of the caregiver community and PH3 organization, I respectfully urge you to support SB3324.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and support.

Imee Gallardo, PH3



SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:14:17 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carina Ocampo	Testifying for United Community Healthcare of Hawaii (UCHH)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the comittee chair,

I'm in support of SB3324 to increase CCFFH and E-Arch rates. Due to the high cost of living in Hawaii, I request that this bill be granted.

Thank you,

Carina Ocampo

President, UCHH

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:38:06 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aga Antoinio	Testifying for Allianbce of Residential Care Administrators	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Joy San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the 180 hardworking caregivers of Alliance of Residential Care Administrators (ARCA) to express our strong support for SB3324. This measure represents a critical investment in the well-being, dignity, and stability of some our vulnerable residents.

Community Care Foster Family Homes and Expanded Adult Care Homes provide a compassionate, family-like setting for individuals who require daily assistance but do not need- or do not thrive in- institutional care. These homes offer personalized attention, family-centered care in safe residential settings. These homes serve individuals who need assistance with daily living but benefit greatly from remaining in smaller, community-integrated environments rather than institutional settings. The model promotes dignity, independence, cultural responsiveness, and meaningful relationships – elements that are essential to overall well-being. For many families, they are simply care settings; they are lifelines.

However, providers are facing increasing operational costs, workforce shortages, and increasing acuity levels among residents. Current reimbursement levels often do not reflect the true cost of delivering quality care. Without adequate funding, homes may struggle to recruit and retain qualified caregivers, maintain appropriate staffing levels, and continue offering the high standard of care the residents deserve.

Increasing funding through SB3324 will help:

- Strengthen and stabilizes the direct care workforce through more competitive compensation.
- Improve quality and oversight of services
- Prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and institutional placements
- Support aging in place within community settings
- Ensure continued access to affordable, personcentered care options

Investing in these homes is both fiscally responsible and compassionate. Community-based care models often reduce long-term, healthcare costs while improving outcomes and quality of life for residents and their family.

I respectfully urge you to support and pass SB3324 to ensure the sustainability and continued excellence of Community Care Foster Family Homes and Expanded Adult Care Homes.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Aga Antonio

President, Alliance of Residential Care Administrators

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:44:32 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Corazon E. Cariaga	Testifying for BIG ISLAND ADULT FOSTER HOME OPERATOR	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good afternoon sir/madam, on behalf of my association the Big Island Adult Foster Home Operator and the PH3 HAWAII , I strongly support this SB 3324 for the sake of the Medicaid recipients who are eligible and living in Community Care Foster Family Home and to all programs under the HCBS in the State of Hawaii for the reasons of higher commodities like expensive foods and other basic needs of the elderly. Thank you for allowing me to participate and submit my written testimony.

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:36:36 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosalina Mendoza	Testifying for Community Homecare Association of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: My name is Rosalina Mendoza and I am a licensed CCFFH provider here in Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of SB3324, sponsored by Senator Moriwaki. As a provider delivering 24-hour care to our most vulnerable kūpuna and individuals with disabilities, I see firsthand the growing challenges we face in sustaining quality services under current reimbursement rates. The proposed rate increase to the medium level identified in the 2022 Milliman study is not simply an adjustment—it is a necessary step to align reimbursement with the actual cost of care. Since 2022, operating expenses have continued to rise significantly. The cost of food, utilities (electricity, water, gas), medical and personal care supplies, insurance, transportation, and home maintenance have all increased. In addition, staffing remains one of our greatest challenges. To recruit and retain qualified caregivers who provide round-the-clock care, we must offer competitive wages. However, current rates do not adequately support fair compensation, which places strain on providers and affects workforce stability. CCFFH and E-ARCH providers open our homes and dedicate our lives to caring for residents who require assistance with daily living, medication management, supervision, and often complex medical needs. This is 24-hour responsibility—not a shift-based job—and it requires ongoing compliance with state regulations, training requirements, and safety standards. Without reimbursement that reflects these responsibilities and expenses, many providers are struggling to remain financially sustainable. If rates do not increase to a level that reflects the true cost of care, we risk more provider closures. When homes close, residents are displaced, families are disrupted, and the state may face even higher costs through institutional placements. Supporting SB3324 is an investment in maintaining community-based care, preserving small care homes, and ensuring that residents can continue to receive compassionate, culturally sensitive care in a home-like setting. I respectfully urge you to support SB3324 and help strengthen the foundation of long-term care services in Hawai‘i. Our providers, residents, and families are depending on your leadership. Mahalo for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Rosalina Mendoza Licensed CCFFH/E-ARCH Provider Hawai‘i

ADULT FOSTER HOMECARE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

P.O. Box 970092, Waipahu, Hawai'i 96797

Feb. 17, 2026

Maribel Tan
President

Testimony in Strong Support of SB3324 – HHS – 2/18/26, 1:00 p.m., Rm. 225

Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the Committees:

The Adult Foster Homecare Association of Hawaii (AFHA) **strongly supports SB3324**, which appropriates funds to increase the funding of Medicaid home and community based services including community care foster family homes (CCFFHs).

CCFFHs supplies over 2,000 beds statewide to elderly and disabled Hawai'i residents. A few years ago, the State of Hawaii commissioned the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Rate Study Report by Milliman. This report from an independent neutral party hired by the State concluded that "amongst all provider types examined in the Milliman study, the current median direct care wages paid to home and community-based services providers fell below the twenty-fifth percentile for those occupation codes and titles as determined by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

We thank the legislature for its appropriation in 2024, but more must be done. We remain unable to offer benefits, including health insurance, to our employees and continue to rely on substitute caregivers, sometimes unpaid, including our family members and friends. Additionally, high inflation has persisted, further increasing costs.

Perhaps more importantly, we as caregivers are mostly baby boomers. Soon, we will age out needing care for ourselves. Unless the State can continue to attract new caregivers, options for kupuna will remain limited and will ultimately result in a public health crisis. Please consider investing in our future as our population continues to age by prioritizing this funding request.

Please **SUPPORT SB 3324**. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Very truly yours,

Maribel Tan
President



About AFHA

The Adult Foster Home Association of Hawaii (AFHA) is the industry trade association of providers under the Community Care Foster Family Home program under the Department of Human Services and Department of Health, State of Hawaii. With a membership of almost 1,500 providers, AFHA's mission is to promote the interests of providers as well as resident clients. AFHA members provide 24-hour care to resident clients 7 days a week, 365 days a year

About AFHA

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SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:49:10 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Nakahashi	Testifying for PH3	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Due to inflation, i strongly support this bill as a primary caregiver , I respectfully seek support to ensure our voices are heard.



To: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

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

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 1:00pm, Conference Room 225

RE: **SB3324 Relating to Medicaid**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of the intent of SB3324**. This measure would (1) appropriate moneys to the Department of Human Services to increase funding for certain Medicaid home- and community-based services, including residential services offered in community care foster family homes and expanded adult residential care homes; and (2) require the Department to obtain matching federal funds and to pursue additional funding sources.

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, especially for our kūpuna, person with disabilities, and others needing home- and community-based services as an alternative to institutional care settings. For example, AlohaCare directly invests in these services through our GRACE (Geriatric Resources for Assessment and Care of Elders) program, which serves Medicaid members with complex medical, functional, and social needs. GRACE relies on in-home services to help members safely age in place, manage chronic conditions, and prevent avoidable emergency room visits and hospitalizations. However, the success of programs like GRACE depends on the availability and stability of in-home service providers. As such, we support the intent of this bill. We defer to the Department of Human Services Med-QUEST Division and the Legislature as to the appropriate level of funding.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of the intent of SB3324**.

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:59:11 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Filma Benigno	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Strong Support for SB3324

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members,

My name is Filma Benigno and I am a caregiver and CCFFH provider. I respectfully ask for your support of SB3324.

I work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week caring for individuals who depend on me for everything — medication, meals, bathing, supervision, and comfort. My residents live in my home. They are like family to me.

The cost of running my home has increased greatly — food, utilities, insurance, medical supplies, and caregiver payroll. When I need rest, I must hire substitute caregivers who sometimes cost more than what I receive in reimbursement. Many of us do not take vacations because we cannot afford it.

We are tired, but we continue because our residents need stability and compassionate care.

SB3324 would increase rates to the medium level identified in the 2022 Milliman study. This is not excessive, it is necessary to keep our homes open.

Please help us continue caring for Hawai'i's most vulnerable.

With respect and gratitude,

Filma Benigno

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:37:23 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Elaiza Salvador	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Maria Elaiza Salvador and I am a caregiver and a CCFFH provider. I respectfully ask for your support of SB3324

I work 24/7 a week caring for individuals who depend on me for everything, medications, meals, supervision activity of daily living. My residents live in my home and they we're like a family to us.

SB3324 would increase rates to the medium level identified in 2022 Milliman study. This is not excessive , it is necessary to keep our home and to continue taking care of our residents. With this increase it will help us Caregivers/providers a lot.

Please help us continue caring for Hawaii's most vulnerable.

With respect and gratitude,

Maria Elaiza Salvador

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:51:57 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rhonda Benigno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sample u guys can edit!!!

Subject: Strong Support for SB3324

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members,

My name is Rhonda and I am a secondary caregiver of a CCFFH provider. I respectfully ask for your support of SB3324.

I work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week caring for individuals who depend on me for everything medications, meals, bathing, supervision, and comfort. My residents live in my home. They are like family to me.

The cost of running my home has increased greatly, food, utilities, insurance, medical supplies, and caregiver payroll. When I need rest, I must hire substitute caregivers who sometimes cost more than what I receive in reimbursement. Many of us do not take vacations because we cannot afford it.

We are tired, but we continue because our residents need stability and compassionate care.

SB3324 would increase rates to the medium level identified in the 2022 Milliman study. This is not excessive it is necessary to keep our homes open.

Please help us continue caring for Hawai'i's most vulnerable.

With respect and gratitude,
Rhonda Benigno

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:19:07 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lilibeth Ramel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear chair, vice chair, and honorable members,

My name is Lilibeth and I am a caregiver and CCFH provider. I respectfully ask for your support of SB3324

i work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week caring for individuals who depend on me for everything. My residents live in my home. They are like family to me.

The cost of running my home has increased greatly. Food, utilities, insurance, medical supplies and caregiver payroll. When I need rest. I must hire substitute caregivers who sometimes cost more than what I receive in reimbursement. Many of us do not take vacations because we cannot afford it.

We are tired, but we continue because our residents need stability and compassionate care.

PLS Help us continue caring for Hawaii's most vulnerable.

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:37:55 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Imee Gallardo	Testifying for PH3, Providing Healthy Home Care For Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Imee Gallardo, and I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Bill SB3324 on behalf of DDDH, E-ARCH, Care Homes, CCFFH caregivers, and our caregiver community.

I am a full-time mother of four and a full-time caregiver. I have dedicated 18 years of my life to caregiving and have served as a foster home provider for the past 8 years. Caring for others is not just my job it is my passion, especially caring for our kupuna who do not have family members available to support them with their daily needs.

Today, many caregivers and care home providers are struggling due to the rising cost of living. The increasing costs of housing, rent, groceries, gas, and medical insurance continue to place a heavy burden on our community. Operating a small care home does not mean financial stability, it often means working tirelessly just to make ends meet. Many of us struggle to afford our own health insurance and cannot find affordable substitute caregivers when we need rest or must attend to personal responsibilities. Without adequate support, it is becoming increasingly difficult to continue operating and providing quality care.

We are asking for your support in passing Bill SB3324 to help sustain our services and allow us to continue caring for those who depend on us. This bill will help ensure that care homes remain open and that vulnerable members of our community continue receiving the care they need.

As a member of the caregiver community and PH3 organization, I respectfully urge you to support SB3324.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and support.

Imee Gallardo, PH3



SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:54:51 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Kailiawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

My name is Leilani Kailiawa. I am a parent and a community leader.

I am in Strong support of SB3324

With gratitude

Leilani Kailiawa

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:32:00 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daisy Bueno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Strong Support for SB3324

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members,

My name is Daisy Bueno, I am a primary caregiver, CCFFH provider and an RN.I respectfully ask for your support of SB3324.

I am running a business that operates 24/7 care for individuals that needs help with mostly everything to medication management, meals, bathing, supervision, other activities of daily living and comfort.

I make sure that they are well cared for, since they need help that their family/relative/caretaker cannot provide.

I am trained to care for people in a way that shows compassion and willingness to sacrifice time, that should be for my family but rather spending it to care for them.

The cost of running this home/business has increased greatly — food, utilities, insurance, medical supplies, and caregiver payroll.

When I need rest, I must hire substitute caregivers who sometimes cost more than what I receive in reimbursement. Many of us do not take breaks because we cannot afford it.

This is taking a toll on us, us being burnout and feeling helpless.

We are tired, but we need to keep going because our residents need stability and compassionate care.

SB3324 would increase rates to the medium level identified in the 2022 Milliman study. This is not excessive — it is necessary to keep our homes open and help this community.

In order to help the community for the increasing number of kupunas/ disabled patients needing help due to lack of facilities that can accommodate them.

Please help us continue caring for Hawai'i's most vulnerable.

Respectfully ,

Daisy Bueno

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:50:34 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Grace Jadulang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill, as everybody know that cost of living here in Hawaii is so high, everything you buy expensive, comparing prices the past year is really high, food, and other things that a client need. So I strongly support this bill.

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:28:42 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suerte Grace Agcaoili	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 17, 2026

Aloha Chair Senator Joy Buenaventura, Vice Chair Angus McKelvy. My name is Suerte Grace Agcaoili, I am a caregiver

STRONGLY IN SUPPORT -- SB 3324

I humbly ask these committees to **SUPPORT** and **PASS** this measure. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Suerte Grace Agcaoili, caregiver

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:31:13 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Quiabang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support of this bill. Thank you.

Feb. 17, 2026

Aloha Chair Senator Joy Buenaventura and
Vice Chair Angus McKelvey,

My name is Jocelyn L. Ramelb and I am a caregiver who is **strongly in support**
of **SB 3324**.

I humbly ask these committees to support and pass this measure.

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Jocelyn L. Ramelb

Caregiver



Alliance of Professional Primary Care Administrators
P.O. Box 572, Pearl City, Hawaii 96782

Re: SB3324– Testimony in Support Regarding Medicaid

Good morning chair, vice chair & the committees, my name is Elma Velasco Tierra, 1st VP of the Alliance of Professional Primary Care Administrators. I strongly support SB3324 regarding community care foster family homes and expanded adult residential care homes providing essential services to Hawaii’s kupuna. These caregivers, including myself, allow seniors to remain in their communities, maintain relationships with family, and continue receiving care in familiar settings. This show of care reflects both cultural values and practical necessity. Yet the current Medicaid pay rates do not reflect the true cost of delivering safe and sustainable care.

As noted in prior rate studies, direct care wages for home and community-based service providers fall below other pay benchmarks within the U.S. Providers continue to struggle with rising costs for food, utilities, insurance, supplies and compliance requirements. Many operators cannot offer basic employee benefits such as health insurance. As a result, caregivers are overextended and facilities face ongoing workforce shortages. Without meaningful pay rate adjustments, more homes may close, further limiting options for Hawaii’s aging population.

SB3324 takes a responsible and measured approach. It seeks to raise residential service rates toward the medium benchmark scenario identified in the 2022 rate study while requiring the Department of Human Services to obtain maximum federal matching funds and pursue additional funding sources. This approach strengthens financial accountability while directly supporting those who provide care every day.

Investing in caregivers is an investment in stability, dignity and public health. Adequate pay means continuity of care, reducing reliance on institutional settings and preserving community-based alternatives that families depend on. For these reasons, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of SB3324.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Thank you for the opportunity in **support of SB3324**.

Respectfully,

Elma Velasco Tierra

LATE

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:59:45 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cecilia Gancinia	Testifying for CCFFH	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I will be supporting the SB3324 for my testimony as foster care home operator over this legislations.

LATE

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 12:25:27 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Manilyn Balubar	Testifying for Provider Helping Hands of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members,

My name is Manilyn Balubar, and I am a caregiver and Certified Community Care Foster Family Home (CCFFH) provider. I respectfully urge you to support SB3324.

I provide care 24 hours a day, seven days a week to individuals who depend on me for their daily needs, including medication management, meals, bathing, supervision, and emotional support. My residents live in my extended family home, where they receive consistent, family-oriented care in a safe and loving environment.

The cost of operating my home has increased significantly, including food, utilities, insurance, medical supplies, and caregiver payroll. When I need time to rest, I must hire substitute caregivers, which often costs more than the reimbursement I receive. As a result, many of us rarely take time off because we simply cannot afford it.

We are tired, but we continue because our residents rely on us for stability, dignity, and compassionate care.

SB3324 would increase reimbursement rates to the medium level identified in the 2022 Milliman study. This increase is not excessive—it is necessary to sustain our homes and ensure we can continue providing quality care.

Please support SB3324 so providers like me can continue caring for Hawai‘i’s most vulnerable residents.

With respect and gratitude,
Manilyn Balubar
PH3
CCFFH Provider

LATE

SB-3324

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 11:02:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

3324 SB RELATING TO MEDICAID.