

ACT 86

H.B. NO. 718

A Bill for an Act Relating to Positions at the John A. Burns School of Medicine.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the basic mission of the university of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine (JABSOM) is to teach and train high-quality physicians, biomedical scientists, and allied health workers for Hawaii and the Pacific. JABSOM's major purpose is to provide an opportunity for a medical education previously unavailable to residents of Hawaii and other Pacific nations. JABSOM is committed to educating current and future health care professionals and leaders, delivering high-quality health care, and conducting research and translating discoveries into practice in Hawaii and the Asia-Pacific region.

The legislature further finds that additional faculty positions in cardiovascular biology, tropical medicine, and quantitative health biostatistics will strengthen JABSOM's biomedical and health disparities translational "bench to bedside" research strategy. This directly benefits the Hawaii and Asia-Pacific regions' ecological and human health by addressing linkages between cardiovascular disease and treatments, environmental factors, and human health, and includes biostatistical data collection and health analytics focused on the people of Hawaii and the Asia-Pacific region.

The legislature also finds that advancement of JABSOM's research mission enables the health care community to understand better potential health disparities across a wide spectrum of conditions and diseases commonly experienced by many in Hawaii who are already at a higher risk for disease or suffer disproportionately. The basic science position in cardiovascular biology will help further foundational knowledge that can then be used by JABSOM's clinicians, researchers in the department of Native Hawaiian health, and community partners to develop better risk reduction strategies or new interventions that will reduce cardiovascular diseases among individuals of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island descent.

A senior faculty member in JABSOM's tropical medicine department will advance the department's education and research of globally significant infectious diseases of vital interest to Hawaii and the Asia-Pacific region. The department's importance in addressing diseases of far-reaching consequences became known during the COVID-19 pandemic when it was vital to develop diagnostics and vaccines to preserve the health of Hawaii's residents efficiently and effectively, given Hawaii's remote location and isolated communities.

Biostatisticians play a pivotal role in providing required education to medical students, residents, and other trainees, enriching the academic environment and facilitating student success. Biostatisticians are also critical members of research teams, especially in this era of big data sets and utilizing artificial intelligence tools to perform analyses more quickly, which means that the data can be used to drive policy, programs, or new strategies more quickly. Together, all three faculty positions enable JABSOM to further innovate and fulfill long-term goals to eliminate health disparities in Hawaii and the Asia-Pacific region.

The legislature additionally finds that the Kakaako health and wellness medical school buildings opened in 2005. Since opening, the Honolulu board of water supply (BWS) has provided JABSOM's chilled water service operations, equipment maintenance, and injection well testing, and fulfilled reporting requirements. BWS' twenty-year contract will end on September 15, 2025, and BWS has elected not to renew the contract. JABSOM must contract a chiller plant-cooling system servicer to maintain uninterrupted operations and emergency services twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week for most of the chiller plant deferred maintenance and data processing. Additionally, a new administrative, professional, and technical staff position, specifically an environmental health and safety officer, is needed to perform all the required daily, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual testing of the injection wells, and reporting duties.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the university of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine for:

- (1) Faculty positions in the fields of cardiovascular biology, tropical medicine, and quantitative health biostatistics; and
- (2) An environmental health and safety officer staff position.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$763,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the university of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine to fund:

- (1) Three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) faculty positions: one each in the fields of cardiovascular biology, tropical medicine, and quantitative health biostatistics; and
- (2) One full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) environmental health and safety officer staff position.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the university of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Approved May 27, 2025.)