

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

143

Honolulu, Hawaii

Feb 7, 2007

RE: H.B. No. 229

H.D. 1

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2007
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health, to which was referred H.B. No. 229
entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO RURAL HEALTH CARE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to improve health care in
medically underserved areas of the state by establishing the
Hawaii Health Corps Program (Program) which will encourage health
care professionals to serve in areas of need by:

- (1) Identifying health professional shortage areas;
- (2) Establishing annual award amounts for eligible health
care professionals who will undertake a specified
service obligation in shortage areas of the state;
- (3) Granting loan and scholarship awards for eligible
student participants;
- (4) Soliciting and accepting grants and donations from
public and private sources to support the program; and
- (5) Developing criteria for a contract for service in lieu
of the required service obligations.

HB229 HD1 HSCR HLT HMS 2007-1613



The Hawaii Primary Care Association, Hawaii Medical Service Association, Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association, and a concerned individual supported this bill. The Department of Health supported the intent of this bill.

Your Committee finds that the health care professional shortage crisis in Hawaii is escalating especially in the rural areas of our state where providers currently in these areas retire or relocate at the same time as the residential population is increasing. It is important to establish a means, such as those provided by this bill, of attracting new talent in the field of health care to these areas. Past initiatives have also been adopted to assist in alleviating this health care professional crisis. Your Committee recommends that the Committee on Higher Education look further into how the Primary Health Care Incentive Program established pursuant to section 321-1.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, could be used in conjunction with this measure to provide a more comprehensive approach to solving this serious health care problem.

Your Committee has amended this bill by:

- (1) Adding two full-time equivalent positions to assist in the Program's administration; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive changes for clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 229, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 229, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Higher Education.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health,



JOSHUA B. GREEN, M.D., Chair



