



March 16, 2021

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

Re: Strong Support of SB 1258 SD 1

Hrg: Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 10:00 am.

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 400 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is advocating for equity in all policies.

The purpose of this bill is to allow for the use of standard telephone contact for telehealth purposes. The use of standard telephone contacts for telehealth benefits underserved and low-income communities where cellular data plans and broadband services needed for video calls are not feasible options for many residents.

Telehealth is an important care delivery method to improve access to healthcare for underserved communities. Telehealth services should be available in an equitable fashion through easily available technologies that are accessible to everyone, especially for those with limited English proficiency and limited access to technology. Audio-only communication is especially important for those in rural and low-income populations that lack internet access.¹

HPHA supports standard telephone contact for telehealth delivery of services to ensure access to healthcare for all of our communities and to achieve health equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for SB 1258 SD 1.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Holly Kessler'.

Holly Kessler
Executive Director
Hawaii Public Health Association