



March 10, 2019

To: Chair Rosalyn Baker
Vice Chair Stanley Chang
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

Re: COMMENTS ON HB 467, HD1, RELATING TO THE KUPUNA CAREGIVERS PROGRAM

Hrg: March 13, 2019 9:00AM in conference room 229

The Hawaii Public Health Association is a group of over 600 community members, public health professionals and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. HPHA also serves as a voice for public health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

Regarding House Bill 467, HD1, relating to the Kupuna Caregivers program, this bill continues the needed funding for the Kupuna Caregivers program, a critical part of the infrastructure to help our kupuna and their caregivers, and it also mandates that the Executive Office on Aging create a report on the outcomes of the program and a plan as to how to reach more people.

HPHA is supportive of the program, but not supportive of capping services to once per week. This defeats the intent of the original program to help caregivers who are working outside the home to stay employed. By now we know that the need is for the program is there. The Executive Office on Aging reported that thousands of new calls came into its lines when the program was first launched. And we know why they are calling.

The Kupuna Caregivers program is a prevention program, helping people before crisis has struck. It also helps reduce costs to the state by possibly delaying the time that a family may become eligible for Medicaid. Studies have also shown that people that age at home with family are more likely to have better health outcomes, reducing hospitalization and ER visits, which ends up saving our state of expensive medical procedures that could have been prevented with adequate care.

Each year the Hawaii Legislature has shown leadership on this issue by creating and continuing to fund the program. We hope this year you will once again step up and continue to fund this critical program without a cap on days of service.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on important health issues affecting people in Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'Holly Kessler' in a cursive, flowing script.

Holly Kessler
Executive Director
Hawaii Public Health Association