



March 9, 2016

TESTIMONY: Written only

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: **Hawaii Public Health Association**

Subject: **SUPPORT – HB 1700** Relating to the State Budget

Hearing: March 9, 2016 at 11:00 am at State Capitol Room 308

The Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA) is an association of over 600 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. HPHA serves as a voice for public health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific. Additionally, the HPHA serves as the co-chair for the Hawaii Climate Change and Health Working Group.

Dengue has been a persistent issue for the Big Island over several months; additional vector control support is crucial in order to bring this outbreak under control and to monitor for future potential outbreaks. The DOH has been pro-active in its response to the dengue issue and has mobilized state, local and CDC resources in its efforts to combat dengue, despite the challenges it has faced. Providing more resources to DOH to combat dengue is warranted and as the lead public health agency in Hawaii, DOH is the logical entity to determine epidemic status and initiate use of the disease outbreak response fund.

Approval of 36.0 FTE and \$2.6M in General Funds would revitalize vector control services statewide. The dengue fever outbreak of 2015 and the threat of a Zika virus pandemic require a coordinated and comprehensive vector control system to assure public health and economic resilience. Prevention is the most cost-effective and efficacious public health strategy and a strong vector control system is key.

Thank you for the opportunity to request appropriations for re-establishment of vector control services within **HB 1700**, which would address the dengue fever outbreak and threat of Zika virus within Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,

Hoce Kalkas, MPH
HPHA Legislative and Government Relations Committee Chair