



February 4, 2016

TESTIMONY: Written only

To: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

From: **Hawaii Public Health Association**

Subject: **SUPPORT – HB1896 RELATING TO CONTRACEPTIVE SUPPLIES**

Hearing: February 05, 2016 at 8:30am at State Capitol Room 329

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 also serves as a voice for public health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

HPHA supports the passage of **HB1896** which authorizes pharmacists to prescribe and dispense contraceptive supplies to persons eighteen years of age or older.

In 2010, 56% of all 16,000 pregnancies in Hawaii were unplanned. The unintended pregnancy rate was reported 61 per 1,000 women ages 15–44. Publicly supported family- planning centers aided 19,800 female contraceptive clients in 2013. These locations met 28% of women’s need for contraceptive services and helped avert 4,800 unintended pregnancies in 2013. This program was projected to have prevented 2,400 unplanned births and 1,600 abortions. However, many women do not seek care for unintended pregnancy, due to scheduling issues, costs of care, or not wanting to go through an embarrassing GYN examination to obtain a doctor’s prescription.

Over-The-Counter (OTC) contraceptives would expedite the process for women to receive a fitting birth control method and prevent pregnancy.

Birth control methods including pills, patches, and rings will still require prescriptions after taking a brief health questionnaire, but will be more easily accessible as OTC. Pharmacists who complete a specific training program can give prescriptions directly, and can determine which hormonal methods might be appropriate and safe. Women will still be highly encouraged to attend annual exams to test for cervical cancer, sexually transmitted infections, and other critical health concerns. This legislation will support more women through safe birth control

methods and will reduce rates of unintended pregnancy, as well as pregnancy termination. Ensuring that these OTC prescriptions are covered by health insurance is an important aspect of the access to care process.

HPHA supports the encouragement of safe and accessible birth control methods for women in Hawaii. OTC contraceptives are an attainable way to prevent unintended or unwanted pregnancies. This bill will deter the overuse of emergency contraception, pregnancy termination, and other methods of pregnancy prevention that can be considered unsafe if over-used or used improperly.

Thank you for considering our testimony concerning **HB1896**, which would allow pharmacists to administer OTC birth control methods to women in Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,

Hoce Kalkas, MPH
HPHA Legislative and Government Relations Committee Chair