



April 3, 2016

TESTIMONY: Written only

To: The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: **Hawaii Public Health Association**

Subject: **SUPPORT – HB1897 HD1 SD1, RELATING TO INSURANCE COVERAGE OF HEALTH SCREENINGS**

Hearing: April 4, 2016 at 2:00pm at State Capitol Room 211

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 HB1897 HD1 SD1, which ensures insurance coverage for sexually transmitted disease (STD) screenings, including screenings for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

The rates of testing for STDs in Hawaii are undesirably low even though STD testing is strongly suggested nationwide. Health effects caused by untreated STDs such as HIV/AIDS, syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia can lead to serious health conditions and complications, or even death. If STDs are left unrecognized and untreated, they could result in pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy, cervical cancer, and infertility in women.

According to the Hawai'i 2015 State Profile published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 87 adults and adolescents were diagnosed with HIV in Hawaii in 2013. The rate of primary and secondary (infectious) stages of syphilis was 2.5 per 100,000 in 2009 and 3.3 per 100,000 in 2013. Hawai'i was ranked 39th among 50 states in gonorrheal infections, 51.6 per 100,000 persons. The State is ranked 15th among 50 states in chlamydia diagnoses, infecting 476.9 per 100,000 persons. Reported rates of chlamydia among women were 2.4 times greater than those among men.

HPHA supports the encouragement of regular STD testing in the State of Hawaii for anyone that is sexually active. Covering such testing would increase diagnosis and treatment and potentially lead to a higher rate of self-initiated testing when needed. Not only will access to insurance-covered STD testing increase treatment, it will prevent the spread of sexually transmitted disease.

Thank you for considering our testimony concerning **HB1897 HD1 SD1**, which would provide insurance-covered sexually transmitted disease screenings.

Respectfully submitted,

Hoce Kalkas, MPH
HPHA Legislative and Government Relations Committee Chair