



January 23, 2018

To: The Honorable John Mizuno, Chair  
The Honorable Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: **Strong Support for HB1711**

Hrg: January 24, 2018 at 10:00am at Conference Room 329

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.

HPHA strongly supports HB1711, which promotes healthy meal options by making the default beverage offered in restaurants with children's meals a healthy drink.

Sugary drinks are the single largest source of added sugars in our kids' diets, making up half of all sugars consumed. Soda and fruit punch are already too high in sugar for kids, yet it is usually the default beverage served with children's meals. Consuming just one sugary drink a day significantly increases a child's risk to type 2 diabetes, becoming overweight, and developing tooth decay. Each additional sugary drink consumed daily increases a child's risk of becoming obese by 60%. With restaurants and fast-food establishments becoming a convenient and popular option for many families, dining out options can affect a child's diet, making this policy particularly effective in improving children's health.

This measure will help support families by offering a healthy beverage as part of the kids' meal. Instead of getting a sugary drink without asking for one, parents will be given water or milk. It is never too early for children to practice healthy eating habits such as eating well and exercising regularly. Food establishments are an ideal venue for children to practice these healthy habits and to make it easy for families to make the healthy choice.

Passage of HB1711 will make Hawaii the first healthy by default state. Several cities and counties in California have already passed healthy default ordinances with many more considering similar legislation. Our keiki are sweet enough. This is a step in the right direction to support parents' efforts to protect their children's health.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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

Holly Kessler, Executive Director  
Hawai'i Public Health Association