



February 12, 2023

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 1449 Relating to Lung Cancer

Hrg: 15 Feb 2023, 8:30AM, House Conference room 329 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Additionally, HPHA aims to call attention to issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), which can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is also advocating for equity in all policies.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **supportive testimony for House Bill 1449, relating to lung cancer**. This bill extends the work of the early lung cancer screening task force, which brings the community together to determine what steps are needed to increase Hawai'i's very low rate of early lung cancer screening.

Lung cancer is the number one cancer killer for men and women in the state. The American Lung Association's State of Lung Cancer Report in Hawai'i for 2022 places Hawai'i dead last in early diagnosis of lung cancer. Early diagnosis gives lung cancer patients a better chance of survival and more affordable and effective treatment options. According to the American Cancer Society, in 2023, more people will die of lung cancer in Hawai'i than breast, liver, or prostate cancer combined.

The task force proposed in this bill will take on the important duty of researching and recommending the steps and resources necessary to increase early lung cancer screening in Hawai'i, conducting any additional research that is needed, and providing a report to the legislature with possible policies the state can adopt. This task force will also create a public awareness campaign to inform people lung cancer screening. It is particularly important to extend the timeline and funding of this task force because it was not able to meet in 2022.

The burden of lung cancer is too high to bear. We must do all we can to make sure that all people at high risk of lung cancer are screened early so that they are allowed all the treatment options available. **We strongly support HB 1449** and respectfully ask that you pass this measure to ensure we are doing all we can to help people with lung cancer get an early diagnosis and another chance at life.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director