



February 6, 2024

To: COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair

Re: SUPPORT of HB1774 - Relating to Missing Persons (Silver Alert Program)

Hrg: February 7, 2024, 2:00 PM

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.

HPHA supports HB 1774 as the bill aims to establish a silver alert program to help locate and safeguard missing persons who are sixty-five years of age or older, cognitively impaired, or developmentally disabled.

By next year, the number of people living with Alzheimer's disease is expected to rise to over 36,000. A person with dementia may not remember his or her name or address—and can become disoriented, even in familiar places. Six in ten people with dementia will wander at some point. When individuals with dementia are lost, they may show signs of anxiety, fear, or hostility—all of which can escalate to more aggressive behaviors. As the disease progresses and individuals with dementia forget family members and societal norms, there may be cases of false reports and victimization, indecent exposure, and shoplifting.

Hawaii is one of the few states in the nation that does not have a formalized silver alert. HPHA strongly supports HB 1774 and respectfully asks that you pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important public health issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director