



DATE: 31 January 2023

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

Re: Testimony in Support of HB664, Relating to Health

Hrg: 1 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 HB664**, which seeks to expand the class of health care providers under whom respiratory therapists may practice respiratory care **to include physician assistants (PAs) and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs)**. We strongly support HB 664, which will expand access to care. PAs and APRNs are licensed medical providers who are qualified to provide medical direction to respiratory therapists for the provision of respiratory services for appropriate patients. PAs and APRNs are skilled medical providers and authorized by the Affordable Care Act, along with physicians, to serve as primary care provider (PCP). In practice, PAs and APRNs routinely take medical histories, perform physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose illnesses, develop and manage treatment plans, and prescribe medications. HB664 is consistent with the education, training, and scope of practice of PAs and APRNs, and it ensures greater access to respiratory health care services in Hawaii.

In summary, we strongly support HB664 which aligns with PA and APRN scope of practice by including respiratory therapists as providers who can take medical direction from PAs and APRNs. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important public health topic that relates to healthcare access as it ensures greater access to respiratory health care services in Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director