



February 1, 2024

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Re: SUPPORT of SB2783 - Relating to Medicaid

Hrg: Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 1:00 PM, Conference room 225

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 SB2783 as the bill aims to appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services for Medicaid coverage under the Children's Health Insurance Program for income-qualified pregnant persons and children, regardless of immigration status. Access to high-quality healthcare is a fundamental right. Approximately five hundred pregnant persons and four thousand income-qualified children in our state face the harsh reality of being denied affordable healthcare simply due to their immigration status. This is an unacceptable injustice that demands immediate correction.

The evidence-based studies presented in the bill paint a distressing picture of the consequences of limited access to healthcare for pregnant persons and children. Pregnant immigrants without prenatal care face significantly higher risks of premature birth and neonatal death. These risks are not just statistics; they represent real lives, real families, and real communities.

HPHA strongly supports SB2783 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