

February 20, 2019

Honorable Representatives of the House Committee on Finance  
Hawai'i State Senate

Aloha,

My name is John Lauris Wade MD and I am the Legislative Liaison for the Hawai'i Radiologic Society and Hawai'i Physician Shortage Crisis Task Force. I am a physician practicing in Hilo with Hawai'i Radiologic Associates. I have been working with a number of concerned citizens and physicians on the critical and growing Patient Care Access Issue driven by severe Physician and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Shortages.

Mahalo for your support and introduction of a number of measures that seek to address Access Issues. As you very likely know, House Bill 2228 and companion Senate Bill 2542 both relate to a General Excise Tax Exemption for Physicians and APRNs. These two bills have passed through first committee review, making First Lateral to House Finance and Senate Ways and Means respectively. Senate Bill 2542 was heard by the Senate Committee on Ways and Means on February 19th and passed with amendment. 22 of 25 Senators have introduced or have now indicated support for measures providing such exemption.

Last week I had the opportunity to sit with House Finance Chair Sylvia Luke. Chair Luke asked for a summary of why to support the bills and underlying documentation. I forwarded this to Chair Luke on February 13. I would like to share the case that was made and you will find that attached to this note. My apologies if you have already received this information

In brief summary, I think the cost of providing this Exemption is exceeded by the economic benefits that will accrue to Hawai'i if the State is able to solve the critical and growing Patient Care Access Issue driven by severe Physician and APRN Shortages. Your ongoing support will be critical in moving these measures forward.

As a longterm solution is also dependent on changes in Medicare Reimbursement at the Federal Level, please note I have shared the attached information with Senator Brian Schatz (at his request), as well as Senator Mazie Hirono, Congressman Ed Case, and Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard. On Tuesday the 25th I will be sitting down with Governor Ige and then with Senior Advisor Wes Machida in the office of Speaker Saiki.

In light of the information provided, I humbly request the Committee on Finance proceed to a hearing on HB 2228.

Mahalo.

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