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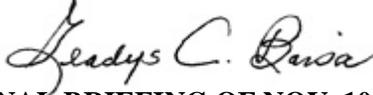


Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.us

November 7, 2014

TO: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health

FROM: Gladys C. Baisa
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING OF NOV. 10, 2014; COMMENTS RELATING TO THE HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS CORPORATION**

Thank you for scheduling an informational briefing on the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, its Regional Boards, and their plans to streamline operations and address anticipated budget shortfalls.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this subject. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the council.

I support long-term solutions to address the financial condition of Maui County's state hospital facilities for the following reasons:

1. Maui County regional facilities include the Maui Memorial Medical Center, Kula Hospital, and Lanai Community Hospital. These facilities serve the healthcare needs of more than 11,000 inpatients and more than 45,000 emergency room patients per year.
2. The demand for healthcare services is outpacing hospital operating budgets. Decreases in State subsidies and health insurance reimbursements threaten the reliability of our medical facilities and job security for more than 1,500 employees. There is only so much streamlining that can be done without having a negative impact on public health and the local economy. I respectfully urge the Legislature to carefully consider these consequences.
3. Strengthening healthcare services is a core value for Maui County's residents, as reflected in the 2030 General Plan. For example, the Countywide Policy Plan states the following goals for the County of Maui: (a) cooperate with the State and Federal governments and nonprofit organizations to broaden access to healthcare services; (b) encourage the State and Federal governments and private sector to improve the quality and delivery of healthcare services; (c) encourage the expansion and improvement of local hospitals; and (d) support broadened access to affordable health care and recognize the economic challenges posed to families when healthcare services are only available off-island. I respectfully urge you to acknowledge these principles.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.