



**Testimony to the House Committees on Human Services and Health
Thursday, February 2, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1724 RELATING TO HEALTH

Chairs Mizuno and Yamane, Vice Chairs Jordan and Morikawa, and Members of the Committees:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber") supports HB 1724 relating to Health.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

This measure creates presumptive Medicaid eligibility for waitlisted patients. The bill repeals on June 31, 2017.

Patients who are waitlisted for long term care are occupying acute care beds in our hospitals. This increases uncompensated costs for hospitals, creates shortages of acute care beds, and decreases quality of life for patients who no longer need acute care services. We need to take a comprehensive approach to developing solutions throughout the health care delivery system, to create capacity for these patients, who do need care, by utilizing the most appropriate and cost effective setting. Public and private collaboration is essential to the success of this effort.

Therefore, The Chamber supports improvements to the quality of our health care system, which include legislation that will create presumptive Medicaid eligibility for waitlisted patients. This will help increase long term care capacity and access statewide.

In light of the above, The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii supports HB 1724. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.