HIPHI Board

May Okihiro, MD, MS
Chair
John A. Burns School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics

Jennifer José Lo, MD
Vice Chair
Hawai'i Health Partners

Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD
Secretary
Taase Law Office

Jonathan Ching
Kaiser Permanente

Tammy Ho
The Queen's Medical Center

Carissa Holley, MEd
Hale Makua Health Services

Joyce Lee-Ibarra, MS
JLI Consulting

Misty Pacheco, DrPH
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Dina Shek, JD
Medical-Legal Partnership For Children in Hawai'i

JoAnn Tsark, MPH
John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native Hawaiian Research Office

Danette Wong Tomiyasu, MBA
Retired, Hawai'i State Department of Health

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research & Evaluation

Community Health Worker Initiatives

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging & Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: 2/15/26

To: Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

RE: Support for HB 2310, Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services

Hrg: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 9:30 AM, Conference Room 329

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)[1] and the Healthy Eating, Active Living[2] (HEAL) Coalition **supports HB 2310**, which makes an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to provide emergency assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Support in Uncertain Times
During the government shutdown in 2025, where federal SNAP benefits were paused, Hawai'i stood strong with our SNAP community, providing $250 per person. This essential support was a lifeline to the more than 140,000 residents enrolled in this program.

Ensuring the Department of Human Services (DHS) receives funds to compensate for this program is important to ensure DHS or any other agency has the green light to support our communities when the time comes.

SNAP Necessity
With over 140,000 Hawai'i residents participating in SNAP, receiving on average $370 per month, this program is incredibly important for the livelihoods of not just those enrolled in SNAP but also our state as a whole. $600 million annually flows into our state via federal SNAP benefits, helping families eat and circulating throughout our economy.

---

[1] Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships , and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.
[2] The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

The state's commitment to this program is needed now and into the future, especially given the unpredictable support that the federal government will provide.

Thank you for your strong commitment to our families in need and your continued support for the departments that serve them.

Mahalo,



Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy