

RESOLUTION NO. __

(2008)

HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Introduced by Stephen Kemble, M.D.

SUBJECT: SINGLE-PAYER HEALTH CARE FINANCING FOR HAWAII

- Whereas, every resident of Hawaii deserves access to affordable quality health care; and
- Whereas, the cost of health insurance is now rising at an unsustainable rate; and
- Whereas, competition among private health insurance plans has not made health care more affordable or more accessible to Hawaii residents; and
- Whereas, pressure to hold down health care costs has led to strong financial incentives for private health plans to use underwriting strategies to avoid or limit covering the sick; and
- Whereas, competition among private health insurance plans in Hawaii has resulted in reduced fees, increased managed care paperwork and bureaucratic requirements, increased administrative costs, and increased obstacles to payment of claims for physicians; and
- Whereas, the private practice of medicine is now being threatened by the increasing power of health plans to set fees and force physicians to accept onerous and unfunded managed care policies; and
- Whereas, economic analysis, such as the one done by the Lewin Group for the State of Hawaii, has repeatedly shown that the total cost for a single-payer health care financing system with universal coverage of all residents would be less than any proposal involving competing private health insurance plans; and
- Whereas, if all Hawaii residents were covered by a single-payer health plan, then removal of health care costs from litigation would result in large savings on medical malpractice, worker's compensation, and automobile insurance costs; and
- Whereas, Hawaii is in a better position than any other State to implement a single-payer health care financing system due to its geographic separation from the Mainland and its tradition of commitment for health insurance for as much of the population as possible under the Prepaid Health Care Act; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Hawaii Medical Association express its support for single-payer financing of the private and independent delivery of health care, and call upon the Hawaii State Legislature to work towards enactment of legislation to establish a single-payer health care financing system for Hawaii; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Hawaii Medical Association urge the Hawaii State Legislature to create a State Health Board, accountable to the public good and insulated from special interest influences, with expertise in health economics, representation from physicians, hospitals, and other providers of care, and representation from the public and recipients of health care. This State Health Board would be granted authority over establishment of a provider fee structure, allocating government funding for health care education and training, scope of practice issues, and quality improvement programs. It would also have influence on the public financing of the single-payer health care system, including health care taxes, to ensure that the funding of the system continues to reflect the realistic costs of providing quality health care, to ensure that public health care funds are spent in a cost-effective manner, and to ensure maintenance of quality health care for the residents of Hawaii in perpetuity.

Fiscal Note: \$0

(Adopted by Hawaii Medical Association Council, March 2009.)