

# ***ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS***

## ***A RESOLUTION***

NO. 2020 - 42

### **URGING MEMBERS OF THE HAWAI‘I CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION AND THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I TO INCREASE TELEHEALTH ACCESS ESPECIALLY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS, “[t]he enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, **economic or social condition**” (World Health Organization Constitution; emphasis added); and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Hawai‘i had a shortage of 889 physicians and primary care was the specialty with the greatest shortage, especially on the neighbor islands with most physicians practicing in urban O‘ahu, forcing residents to travel from rural areas or from the neighbor islands to O‘ahu to obtain care (Office of Hawaiian Affairs Native Hawaiian Health Fact Sheet 2015); and

WHEREAS, the SARS-CoV-2 virus (which causes COVID-19 *a.k.a.* Coronavirus Disease 2019) pandemic has highlighted some of the limitations of our health care infrastructure, especially on our neighbor islands and in our rural communities; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 public health best practices require us to socially distance and not meet in person when possible; and

WHEREAS, telehealth allows patients to receive care from rural or isolated areas while social distancing; and

WHEREAS, despite favorable telehealth policies bolstered by Act 159, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2014 and Act 226 of 2016, telehealth use remained low in Hawai‘i previous to COVID-19 and has seemingly only marginally increased during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, low telehealth use may be caused by the lack of incentives provided to healthcare providers, patient familiarity with new technology, health care workforce training, coordination and standardization among health care systems, and broadband infrastructure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs at its 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention held online, in the malama of Makali‘i and the rising of ‘Olekūkolu, this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of November 2020, urging members of the Hawai‘i congressional

delegation and the State of Hawai‘i to increase telehealth access especially for rural communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs urges the members of the Hawai‘i congressional delegation, members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature, and the executive branch of the State of Hawai‘i identify existing federal and state incentives provided to healthcare providers to promote telehealth, expand awareness campaigns for patient familiarity with new technology that support telehealth, identify resources for health care workforce training, coordination and standardization among health care systems, and secure funding for capital improvements to extend broadband infrastructure and to provide financial support for those patients who are unable to afford devices to access telehealth services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to Papa Ola Lōkahi and Ke Ola Mamo, members of the Hawai‘i congressional delegation, the Hawai‘i State Department of Health, as well as the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, President of the State Senate, Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Chair of the State Senate subject matter committees on Hawaiian Affairs and Health, Chair of the State House subject matter committees on Hawaiian Affairs and Health, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and all County Mayors.



The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted in the malama of Makali‘i and the rising of ‘Olekūkolu on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of November 2020, at the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs held online.

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Hailama V.K.K. Farden, President