



Hawaii Chapter

March, 1, 2010

Early Intervention Services
1350 S. King St. Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96814

RE: DOH Family Health Services Division, proposed changes to the Hawaii Early Intervention Service State Plan: redefinition of Developmental Delay

The Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is opposed to the proposed revision of the Early Intervention Service State Plan. It is clear that this revision's sole purpose is to service fewer children in order to balance the DOH's budget.

Access to early intervention services requires testing and certifying an infant or toddler as being developmentally delayed. Redefining developmental delay to 25 – 33% below the norm will mean eliminating access to needed services for many children aged 0 – 3 years.

We pediatricians understand that it is this period of time, ages 0 to 3 years, when intervention is the most effective; therefore we spend a good deal of time and energy in trying to identifying these younger children with delays and referring them for comprehensive evaluations and treatment. Services in the private community are difficult to find and affordable only to a select few. Under this new definition, the majority of Hawaii's families that do not meet the proposed criteria, will not be able to afford, therefore will not have access to help for their developmentally delayed child.

No child or family should be forced to struggle with developmental delays in the absence of services.

Developmental delays are often compounded without intervention and become more difficult to address as the child ages. This proposal would likely create more hardship for families and possibly more burden on the Department of Education when these children reach three years of age.

This proposal also threatens to irreversibly dismantle the infrastructure that services our young children and thereby threaten generations of Hawaii's youth.

We have had many opportunities to demonstrate our commitment to working with the Department of Health on child health issues and will continue to do so; however we are opposed to the Department's proposal to eliminate needed services for developmentally delayed children.

Respectfully:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Galen YK Chock" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Galen YK Chock, President

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Hawaii Chapter Board

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