

Testimony in Support of the Intent of HB3116 HD2 SD1, Children's Health Care Program

HB3116 HD2 SD1 establishes a program to provide health insurance for children whose families can not afford private insurance and yet are not eligible for state or federal health care coverage. The text of the bill states the economic and health benefits which will result from implementation of such a program.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes the need to provide health insurance for the uninsured in low income families. However HB3116 does not begin coverage until 31 days of age. Prevention and early intervention services come into play immediately following birth. Identification of children with special health care needs, newborn hearing screening and newborn screening for metabolic and genetic disorders are examples of such services. Early intervention has been shown to cut down the need for crisis care and added hospital costs.

A quality insurance plan should cover the first month of life. Unless other provisions are made, omission of coverage for the first month is a serious defect in the bill.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Health Care Financing, has published *Scope of Health Care Benefits for Infants, Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults Through Age 21 Years*. This publication provides a standard against which proposed insurance programs can be evaluated.

In the long run, the Children's Health Care Program should provide the services identified in the *Scope of Health Care Benefits* publication.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaiian Chapter, supports the intent of HB3116 HD2 SD1. We ask that the bill be amended so that the coverage starts at birth. The Chapter looks forward to working with agencies and individuals to develop a quality Children's Health Care Program.