

## HCP Committee

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**From:** Tasha A. Kama  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 4, 2022 12:02 PM  
**To:** HCP Committee  
**Subject:** Letter to Testimony Received from Molokai General Hospital (HCP-1 (3))  
**Attachments:** County of Maui Letter.pdf

On behalf of HCP Chair Kama, please find attached a letter of testimony received by our office from the President of Molokai General Hospital, Janice Kalanihuia, regarding agenda item HCP-1 (3).

Senior Executive Assistant Evan Dust for  
Tasha Kama, Councilmember (Kahului Residency)

### COUNTY OF MAUI

**NOTE:** We are following Chair Lee's directive to work remotely during the current COVID-19 emergency. My County office is temporarily closed. The office phone is answered by voice mail. Email is monitored and responded to as quickly as possible. When possible, to facilitate no-contact communication, written communication will be by Adobe Acrobat (PDF) file attachments to email and no hard copy will follow in the mail; the cover email will advise when that is not the case. I thank you for your patience.

*This email is for the intended recipient only. If you have received this message in error or without the express direction of the original author, please show Aloha by letting us know of our mistake and then by deleting this email. Mahalo!*



## MOLOKA'I GENERAL HOSPITAL

P.O. Box 408 • Kaunakakai, Hawaii 96748 • Phone: (808) 553-5331 • FAX: (808) 553-3133

January 3, 2022

Chair Tasha Kama  
Human Concerns and Parks Committee  
Maui County Council  
200 S High Street  
Wailuku HI 96793-2155

**RE: CHALLENGES OF RECRUITING MEDICAL  
PERSONNEL (HCP 1(3))**

Dear Chair Kama:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the topic of challenges of recruiting medical personnel which is being discussed by the Human Concerns and Parks Committee at its meeting of January 6, 2022. Unfortunately, several prior commitments preclude my attendance at your meeting via BlueJeans. Please accept this letter as written testimony on behalf of Molokai General Hospital in my role as its President.

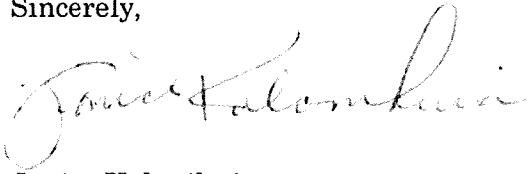
Molokai General Hospital is the only hospital in Maui County not within the Maui Health Systems organization. Our hospital is part of the Queen's Health System based on Oahu and that organizational structure has provided for a compensation system which is competitive with other medical facilities within Hawaii.

The challenges recruiting professional medical personnel (physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, lab and imaging tech) is almost solely based on how rural and isolated Molokai is. The kinds of jobs available for a partner are often not acceptable to the applicant. Educational and extra-curricular activities are extremely limited and for parents of school-age children present a huge challenge. I had one applicant think she would try to fly her daughter over to Maui twice a week for gymnastics – admirable, but not practical. When I am asked about piano lessons, ballet, gymnastics, martial arts and even soccer, I have to tell people those things are not available on Molokai and often that is a deal breaker. For single applicants, the lack of bars, clubs and restaurants limits their social interaction and is a major cause of dissatisfaction if they do decide to join us. The fact that there are no big-box stores, movie theaters, fast food is often shocking to applicants.

That said there is a lot of good here. The Queen's Health Systems is a great employer. Housings costs are reasonable, beaches are uncrowded, Amazon and Target can get you items not available here fast, and the community cares for one another and will look out for you and your children.

Considering what Maui County could do to help Molokai General Hospital attract the medical staff we need I would suggest that the County consider a program of grants or forgivable loans that would allow medical staff to pay off their considerable student loans. Many graduates of medical programs are drawn to locations with much higher rates of compensation and potentially lower costs of living out of the need to pay for student loan debt. Although there are some loan forgiveness programs for rural areas, not all applicants are eligible to receive them. If the County was able to assist these medical professionals, possibly in exchange for a commitment to stay working in Maui County for a fixed number of years, that may make it easier for Molokai General Hospitals and the other medical facilities in Maui County to attract and retain the medical professionals that our communities need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Janice Kalanihulia". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Janice Kalanihulia

President