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REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2010,
PURSUANT TO ACT 212, SLH 2008

This report is filed pursuant to Act 212, SLH 2008, which requires the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs ("DCCA") to report to the Legislature information on the use of the remote dispensing machines. The Board of Pharmacy ("Board") is responding to the Legislative request on behalf of the DCCA.

Statutory Provisions

Act 212 amended Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 461, Relating to Pharmacists and Pharmacies, to permit the operation of remote dispensing machines by a licensed pharmacy and pharmacist. The remote dispensing technology would allow a pharmacist to dispense prescription medications from a location away from the responsible pharmacy, via live computer, video and audio link with the responsible pharmacy and pharmacist-in-charge. This technology would still allow the pharmacist-in-charge to have immediate supervision and control over the dispensing of prescription medications from the remote dispensing pharmacy. Act 212 also made it clear that remote dispensing machines shall not be operated within a five-mile radius of any pharmacy and that remote dispensing pharmacies shall only provide medications to patients covered by QUEST. Prior notification to the Board to establish any remote dispensing pharmacy is required. Act 212 further required an annual report be filed to the Legislature through 2013.

Act 96, SLH 2009 amended Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 461, Relating to Pharmacists and Pharmacies, to allow health maintenance organizations ("HMO's") to utilize the remote dispensing technology for the exclusive use of patients served at the facility and to allow patients residing on an island without a pharmacy or in remote areas without an existing pharmacy within a five-mile radius, to obtain their medications via a remote dispensing pharmacy. Act 96 allowed the dispensing of controlled substances to be dispensed from a remote dispensing machine to residents on islands without a pharmacy or in remote areas without an existing pharmacy within a five-mile radius and in an HMO facility.

2009 Report

To date, only two entities have each applied for two (2) remote dispensing sites.

Ho'ola Lahui Hawaii Pharmacy reported that their remote dispensing machine at the Kapaa clinic is not in use because the responsible pharmacy has not stocked the machine and have not trained the personnel to man the remote dispensing pharmacy. They have not indicated a date for the Kapaa remote dispensing machine to be operational. The machine at their Waimea clinic, although working, has not seen much business.

Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center reported that the remote dispensing machine located at their Waianae clinic is on hold due to their operational budget and until logistics are straightened out. They have not indicated a date for the machine to be operational. Their Nanakuli site has been in operation for a little over six months. They reported that the stocking of the machine and maintaining a log of the drugs that are stocked and labeled is a little time consuming. However, they also reported that the patients find it convenient to obtain their drugs at the same place they see their physicians, and the physicians are assured that their patients are receiving the medication they need.