

Christian Science Committee on Publication – Hawaii

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Testimony for Health Care Task Force Meeting Tuesday, May 16, 2006 **Presented by Nancy Walden**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

I was raised in upstate New York where traditional allopathic medical treatment was a part of our family life. And for the most part it met our needs. However when Christian Science treatment was brought to my attention about 30 years ago, I gradually learned from experience that I could safely rely on this prayer-based system to meet both the curative and preventative aspects of my healthcare needs. And why do I feel I could rely on this system? Because it works. Not only does Christian Science heal me, but it also has proven to be a method of preventing illness as well. So when I have a health issue that I have not been able to heal through my own prayer, I use the services of a professional Christian Science practitioner for Christian Science treatment through prayer. I'm grateful to say that my health care needs have been met through Christian Science healing.

The only downside is that while my Christian Science treatment bills are dramatically lower than the medical bills I used to receive, I, as well as others, including many who are not Christian Scientists, have been paying these bills *out of pocket* because we do not have access to an insurance program that covers Christian Science treatment.

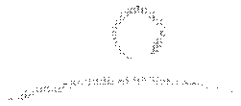
While we all talk about *universal* health care, there are thousands of us out here who prefer other systems of health care and/or do not use the health care systems covered by our insurance companies. The "universal", single payer system that has been presented in the Lewin Group draft appears will not meet the needs of these citizens.

On the bright side, there *are* comprehensive and integrative health care programs providing coverage of other systems popping up all over the country. At the Federal level, there is the Mail Handlers Benefit Plan which lists Christian Science practitioners and nurses as covered providers. There is a plan in Colorado called Sloans Lake Insurance. Until it was recently purchased by another company, Sloans Lake had an extensive Spirituality component, which, when utilized, was found to reduce the amount of medical services the patient needed. I have spoken with Dr. Robert Faraci of Denver who, along with the company's CEO, developed the Sloans Lake spirituality component. Dr. Faraci spoke to me about the money saving as well as advantages to patients which this component provided.

Ladies and gentlemen, I applaud your efforts to design a system that is truly inclusive, progressive and cost effective, a system that embraces and reflects the directions so many people in Hawaii have already turned to and continue to do so in increasing numbers for their health care. Again, shouldn't a *universal* system strive to leave no one out and include everybody?

According to a recent study by the John Templeton Foundation, "55% of Americans say they would choose a health plan that included spirituality and religious healing practices." In Hawaii, you now have the opportunity to provide that choice.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



Hawaii State Consortium for Integrative Healthcare

May 16, 2006

Testimony before The Hawaii Health Care Taskforce

Presented by: Laura Crites, Executive Director of the Hawaii State Consortium for Integrative Healthcare

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony before the Hawaii Health Care Taskforce on behalf of the Hawaii State Consortium for Integrative Healthcare. We are a consortium consisting of stakeholders of the major hospitals, insurance companies, and medical and complementary/alternative healthcare associations. We are not an advocacy organization but are committed to advancing integrative healthcare on the basis of research and scientific findings supporting its efficacy. The movement toward integrative healthcare is accelerating as a result of these findings which support not only the effectiveness of complementary alternative treatments in a wide variety of areas but also the growing evidence of its cost effectiveness. I am here to request that this task force incorporate into its work a commitment to explore evidence of the cost effectiveness and treatment effectiveness of integrative healthcare. This is not medicine of the future but is happening all across the country as we discover the ways that combining the best of conventional and complementary medicine serves the best interests of patients, consumers and providers.