



**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL**  
**KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU**  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 24 - 31

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**RESOLUTION**

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REQUESTING THE HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FISCAL SERVICES TO UPDATE THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL ON THE TRANSFER AND BILLING OF AMBULANCE SERVICES FROM THE STATE.

WHEREAS, Act 208, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021 ("Act 208") contained provisions for the transfer of emergency ambulance services management on the island of O'ahu from the State of Hawai'i ("State") to the City and County of Honolulu ("City"); and

WHEREAS, Act 208 also contained a reimbursement fee schedule for the City to receive reimbursement payments for the transfer of the rights, powers, functions, and duties of the above emergency ambulance services; and

WHEREAS, for fiscal years 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024, the reimbursement fee schedule contained progressively decreasing amounts to be reimbursed to the City from the State emergency medical services special fund for the operation of an emergency medical service system in the City; and

WHEREAS, after fiscal year 2023-2024, the City is to retain all the amounts it receives from billing for its services, and bear any additional costs, and the City will not receive any additional funds from the State for the operation of the City's emergency medical services system; and

WHEREAS, effective January 1, 2024, fees for emergency ambulance services increased by 10 percent, as authorized by Title 11, Chapter 72 of the Hawaii Administrative Rules, as listed on the State Department of Health ("DOH") website; and

WHEREAS, recent news reports have published that from July 2022 through October 2022, after the transfer of emergency ambulance services management to the City, the Honolulu Emergency Services Department ("HESD") failed to bill certain ambulance rides until a year later in 2023; and

WHEREAS, according to the 911 response data posted by the HESD, there was an average of approximately 8,864 ambulance responses per month between September 2022 and September 2023; and



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WHEREAS, the media has reported that the City is unable to recover billing costs for approximately 46 percent of ambulance calls for those situations where a patient is taken to the hospital from the scene of an incident; and

WHEREAS, with respect to the remaining 54 percent of ambulance calls for which the City is able to recover billing costs, based on a purported cost of \$2,000 for an ambulance ride in 2022 and an average of 8,864 ambulance responses per month, it is estimated that the City lost approximately \$9,570,000 in billable ambulance rides per month between July 2022 through October 2022; and

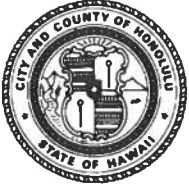
WHEREAS, in November 2021, Dr. James Ireland, the Director of the HESD, testified at a meeting of the Council's Committee on Public Safety on a possible option to bill for ambulance responses where a patient is not taken to the hospital; and

WHEREAS, there has been no update from the City regarding whether the HESD has in fact created a policy of billing for ambulance responses where the patient is not taken to the hospital; and

WHEREAS, in order for the City to accurately and responsibly prepare for the upcoming fiscal year's budget, the City must have an accurate understanding of the current status of the transitioning of ambulance services from the State to the City; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that the Honolulu Emergency Services Department and the Department of Budget and Fiscal Services are requested to brief the Council on the current status of the transition of services as set forth in Act 208, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Honolulu Emergency Services Department is further urged to complete all necessary steps to ensure that all billable ambulance rides are properly billed within a reasonable timeframe; and



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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, the Director of Budget and Fiscal Services, the Director of Emergency Services, and the State Director of Health.

INTRODUCED BY:

*Tony Watson*

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

**FEB 6 2024**

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU  
HONOLULU, HAWAII  
CERTIFICATE

RESOLUTION 24-31

Introduced: 02/06/24 By: TOMMY WATERS Committee: JOINT  
BUDGET (BUD)  
PUBLIC SAFETY (PS)

Title: REQUESTING THE HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FISCAL SERVICES TO UPDATE THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL ON THE TRANSFER AND BILLING OF AMBULANCE SERVICES FROM THE STATE.

Voting Legend: \* = Aye w/Reservations

02/06/24	INTRO	Introduced.
03/05/24	JOINT	Reported out for adoption.
		CR-68
		8 AYES: CORDERO, DOS SANTOS-TAM, KIA'ĀINA, OKIMOTO, SAY, TULBA, TUPOLA, WEYER
03/25/24	CCL	Committee report and Resolution were adopted.
		9 AYES: CORDERO, DOS SANTOS-TAM, KIA'ĀINA, OKIMOTO, SAY, TULBA, TUPOLA, WATERS, WEYER

I hereby certify that the above is a true record of action by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu on this RESOLUTION.

  
GLEN I. TAKAHASHI, CITY CLERK

  
TOMMY WATERS, CHAIR AND PRESIDING OFFICER