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# Hawaii officials postive about Supreme Court health-care ruling

Pacific Business News by Vanessa Van Voorhis, Reporter

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See correction at end of article.

Hawaii officials and health-care insurers had a positive public reaction to the **U.S. Supreme Court's** [majority decision to uphold](#) the federal health-care law.

"I think this is a great day," Gov. [Neil Abercrombie](#) said during a news conference Thursday. "This increases access to health care for all Americans."

While reports indicate that the new law could increase the cost of health care for employees initially, that is unlikely to be the case in Hawaii because of the state's prepaid health-care law, [Beth Giesting](#), the state's healthcare transformation coordinator, told PBN.

But there was also some uncertainty as to exactly how the new federal health insurance law will impact Hawaii's pre-paid health-care law passed in 1974, which requires employers to provide health insurance coverage to employees who work 20 or more hours per week.

U.S. Census statistics for 2010 show 94,500 of Hawaii residents are uninsured, or 8 percent. Nearly 50 million, or 16 percent, of Americans are uninsured.

Abercrombie described Hawaii's system as a template for health care and said required services will likely come under cost controls with the law.

[Jim Tollefson](#), president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, told PBN he also believes the federal law could be a plus for business by slowing and reducing the increases in health-care insurance rates that businesses pay.

Hawaii's health insurers, including the Hawaii Medical Services Association, Kaiser Permanente, AlohaCare, the **Hawaii Medical Assurance Association** and UnitedHealth Group, issued statements saying they have been working to implement provisions required by the federal health-care law

Statistics provided by the Governor's Office show health care insurance costs have increased an average of 8.2 percent per year between 2007 and 2011.

[George Greene](#), president and CEO of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii, said he expects the law to improve reimbursements that hospitals and other medical facilities receive.

"This is a good day for patients," Greene said.

Reporter Mark Abramson and Intern Casey Tong contributed to this report.

### **Correction**

This story has been corrected to show that health care insurance costs have increased an average of 8.2 percent per year between 2007 and 2011.

Vanessa Van Voorhis covers tourism, hospitality, health care, law and advertising for Pacific Business News.