

## **STATEMENT OF SENATOR INOUYE**

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the status of Indian Health Care has significantly improved over the years. However it is interesting that when compared to the general United States population American Indians and Alaska Natives still rank lowest on practically every health indicator. This demonstrates the need for programs and expansion to services provided by the Indian Health Service and the Department of Health and Human Services.**

**Access to these services may still serve some as a problem due to lack of transportation, or economic resources which in turn will cause a delay in treatment. Others do not understand benefit programs such as Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program because of the lack of outreach to the Native communities.**

**Facilities that provide these services to the Native communities have run into problems especially when it comes to overcrowding. Today there are over 600 Indian health care facilities that provide care to 1.8 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.**

**Accordingly, I would hope that as this measure is addressed, that we take into consideration the critical health needs of the American Indians and Alaska Natives so that they may continue to improve the health status of their people.**

