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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TELEPSYCHIATRY.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that lack of access to  
2 specialty medical care is a major problem in part of the island  
3 of Oahu and on all the neighbor islands. Telehealth has  
4 steadily played a larger role in health care in recent years.  
5 Treatment of depression via telepsychiatry compares well with  
6 in-person treatment in terms of outcomes, patient adherence,  
7 patient satisfaction, and costs. Psychiatric assessments via  
8 telepsychiatry are reliable and, in fact, based on feedback of  
9 child telepsychiatry services provided in Molokai by Dr. Daniel  
10 Alicata, patients actually preferred the interactions over the  
11 video-link versus on-site visits. Patients also have difficulty  
12 in accessing psychiatric services for other reasons such as:

- 13           (1) The refusal of private psychiatrists to accept  
14            medicaid or QUEST patients;
- 15           (2) The lack of adequate insurance (not qualifying for or  
16            temporarily losing insurance or having medicare  
17            insurance only);



- 1           (3) The lack of psychiatrists in the service area
- 2                 (Molokai);
- 3           (4) The inadequate number of psychiatrists in the service
- 4                 area (Kauai, Big Island); and
- 5           (5) Patient ineligibility for adult mental health
- 6                 services, including the vast majority of patients with
- 7                 psychiatric or substance abuse problems.

8           The purpose of this Act is to establish a one-year pilot

9 telepsychiatry project to demonstrate the efficacy of

10 telepsychiatry. The project shall involve faculty from the

11 University of Hawaii's department of psychiatry supervising

12 advanced graduate psychiatric residents in telepsychiatry

13 services that will serve residents, especially the uninsured and

14 the poor, on the neighbor islands.

15           SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the University

16 of Hawaii a temporary one-year pilot telepsychiatry project that

17 shall be sited at the following locations:

- 18           (1) Bay Clinic of Hilo;
- 19           (2) West Hawaii community health center;
- 20           (3) Community clinic of Maui;
- 21           (4) Molokai General Hospital; and
- 22           (5) Ho'ola Lahui Health Center, Kauai.



1 (b) Telepsychiatry services shall be provided by advanced  
2 graduate psychiatry residents supervised by faculty of the  
3 department of psychiatry of the University of Hawaii. On-site  
4 visits shall also be provided interspersed among off-site  
5 telepsychiatry encounters. Telepsychiatry encounters shall be  
6 transmitted between the receiving site in subsection (a) and the  
7 department of psychiatry of the University of Hawaii using video  
8 teleconferencing equipment and ISDN lines.

9 (c) The temporary one-year pilot project shall begin on  
10 July 1, 2006, and terminate on June 30, 2007.

11 (d) The University of Hawaii shall submit a written report  
12 evaluating the success or failure of the project using  
13 measurable criteria to the legislature no later than thirty days  
14 after the termination of the project.

15 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$250,000, or so much  
17 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2006-2007, for a  
18 temporary one-year pilot telepsychiatry project at the  
19 University of Hawaii pursuant to section 2 this Act.

20 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of  
21 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.



1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2006.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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**Report Title:**

UH Telepsychiatry Pilot Project

**Description:**

Establishes temporary 1-year UH telepsychiatry pilot project serving Hilo, Kahului, Molokai, and Kauai. Requires evaluation report to legislature. Appropriates \$250,000 to UH for FY 2006-2007.

