

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 409 -06

Honolulu, Hawaii

Feb 16, 2006

RE: H.B. No. 2589

H.D. 1

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2006
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health, to which was referred H.B. No. 2589
entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO PSYCHOLOGISTS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is increase and improve the
provision of mental health care by authorizing the Board of
Psychology (Board) to allow psychologists to prescribe
psychotropic medication who qualify for a:

- (1) Conditional prescription certificate that restricts the
psychologists practice to federally qualified health
centers (FQHC), licensed health clinics located in
federally designated medically underserved areas, or in
mental health professional shortage areas; or
- (2) Prescription certificate.

The Hawaii Medical Service Association, Hawaii Nurses
Association, Waikiki Health Center, American Psychological
Association, Hawaii Psychological Association, Papa Ola Lokahi,
Hawaii Primary Care Association, Waianae Coast Comprehensive
Health Center, Molokai Community Health Center, Waimanalo Health
Center, Health Psychology Association, Inc., Louisiana Academy of
Medical Psychologists, and numerous concerned individuals
supported this bill. The Department of Health, Hawaii Psychiatric
Medical Association, Hawaii Medical Association, National Alliance

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on Mental Illness Oahu, American Association of Applied and Preventive Psychology, and several concerned individuals opposed this measure. The Board raised concerns regarding this bill.

Your Committee finds that there is a severe shortage of psychiatric care in our FQHCs statewide. While statistics show there are actually more psychiatrists in our state than psychologists, FQHCs currently have easier access to psychologists who are highly trained, competent, and capable individuals. Upon receiving proper training, these mental health professionals could aid our psychiatric shortage in health clinics located in federally designated medically underserved areas, FQHCs, and mental health professional shortage areas by prescribing psychotropic medications for the treatment of mental illness to those who are in such desperate need of help.

This issue, however, must be further evaluated as it moves through the legislative process, especially in areas such as:

- (1) Whether the Board is able to comply with requirements of this bill and whether another body may be more appropriate for such a task; and
- (2) The need for an appropriate and agreed-upon training formulary to place greater focus on the use, effects, and responsibilities entailed in prescribing psychotropic medications to ensure the safety and quality of treatments provided by psychologists with prescriptive authority to mental health consumers.

Your Committee has amended this bill by:

- (1) Changing the sunset date to July 1, 2010;
- (2) Changing the reporting requirements of the Board of Psychology to a single report to the Legislature at least 20 days prior to the Regular Session of 2010;
- (3) Clarifying that a "prescribing mental health professional" means a medically trained and licensed physician, or psychiatrist; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive changes for clarity, consistency, and style.



As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2589, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2589, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health,



DENNIS A. ARAKAKI, Chair



