
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 the neighbor islands
2 and parts of Oahu lack access to specialty medical care. In
3 particular, patients have difficulty accessing psychiatric
4 services for various reasons, including the lack of providers
5 willing to accept medicaid or QUEST patients, lack of adequate
6 insurance coverage, ineligibility for patient services under the
7 department of health's mental health division, and the lack of
8 psychiatry employment positions in rural areas. As a result,
9 telehealth has played a more significant role in the delivery of
10 health care in recent years.

11 Psychiatric assessments via telepsychiatry are reliable
12 and, based on feedback regarding telepsychiatry services
13 provided in Molokai by Dr. Daniel Alicata and Dr. Chad Koyanagi,
14 patients actually preferred the interactions over video-link to
15 on-site visits. Also, the use of telepsychiatry in the
16 treatment of depression compares well with the outcomes, patient



1 adherence, patient satisfaction, and costs of in-patient
2 treatment.

3 The department of psychiatry at the University of Hawaii
4 currently has a telepsychiatry project underway on Molokai and
5 Maui. Other underserved areas are requesting similar
6 telepsychiatry services in their communities. An important
7 component of the project is the learning segment. Participating
8 residents will work within the modality for a period of one to
9 two years. The goal is to eventually increase the number of
10 telepsychiatry providers in the private sector and to broaden
11 the use of telepsychiatry, generally, to better serve patients
12 statewide.

13 The purpose of this Act is to expand the telepsychiatry
14 project to other underserved areas, involve advanced graduate
15 psychiatric residents in the provision of the expanded
16 telepsychiatry services, and appropriate funds for this purpose.

17 SECTION 2. (a) The University of Hawaii shall expand its
18 existing telepsychiatry project, which is currently sited at the
19 community clinic of Maui and Molokai general hospital, to:

20 (1) Include other underserved areas, including rural
21 Kauai, Hawaii, and rural Oahu; and



1 (2) Enable advanced graduate psychiatry residents to
2 provide telepsychiatry services under the supervision
3 of faculty of the department of psychiatry.

4 (b) In addition, the University of Hawaii shall:

5 (1) Intersperse on-site visits with the provision of the
6 telepsychiatry services; and

7 (2) Transmit the telepsychiatry services between the
8 receiving sites and the department of psychiatry using
9 video teleconferencing equipment and ISDN lines.

10 (c) The University of Hawaii shall submit an interim
11 report evaluating the expanded telepsychiatry project using
12 measurable criteria to the legislature no later than twenty days
13 prior to the convening of the 2008 regular session, and shall
14 submit a final report evaluating the expanded telepsychiatry
15 project using measurable criteria, including any proposed
16 legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior
17 to the convening of the 2009 regular session.

18 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$, or so
20 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008, and
21 the same sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal



1 year 2008-2009, for the University of Hawaii to expand its
2 existing telepsychiatry project.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the University
4 of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007, and
6 shall be repealed on June 30, 2009.

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INTRODUCED BY: Josh Muen MD
JAN 18 2007



Report Title:

Health; Telepsychiatry

Description:

Appropriates funds to expand the telepsychiatry project at the University of Hawaii; appropriates funds for that purpose.

