



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P.O. Box 3378  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

**House Committee on Finance**

**H.B. 1708, HD2, Relating to Mental Health**

**Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.  
Director of Health**

**Tuesday, February 28, 2012**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports this bill.

2 **Purpose and Justification:** The department supports this bill.

3 Telemedicine is a growing area of mental health. The proposed legislation would create another  
4 area of use for telemedicine, in the emergency examination of an individual delivered for an emergency  
5 examination and treatment pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes 334-59. This expansion would allow  
6 rural and underserved areas to provide for timely assessments of individuals who may require  
7 emergency psychiatric hospitalization to be examined by telemedicine, with the provision that a licensed  
8 health care professional be physically present with the patient. This safeguard allows a live person to be  
9 present to assist and render services should that be necessary during the procedure.

10 The department notes the bill has been modified in HD1 to limit the bill to geographically remote  
11 areas. The department was supportive of the original language, which allowed the use of telemedicine  
12 in areas that are underserved, as well as those that are geographically remote.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.