



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

Senate Committee on Health
Senate Committee on Human Services
SB 2449, Relating to Project Kealahou

Testimony of Gary L. Gill
Acting Director of Health

Monday, February 03, 2014, 1:20 p.m., Rm. 229

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health Supports this Bill.

2 **Fiscal Implications:** \$166,701

3 **Purpose and Justification:** We support SB 2449, Relating to Project Kealahou, provided that its
4 passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget.

5 The purpose of this measure is to ensure the continuation of Project Kealahou (“new pathways”
6 in Hawaiian), a six-year federally-funded grant. The funding will allow the project to continue its
7 mission to provide girls with a community-based, individualized, culturally and linguistically competent,
8 family-driven, youth-guided, and evidence based services as federal funding incrementally steps down.

9 Project Kealahou emphasizes gender-responsive and trauma-informed care when serving its
10 target audience of adolescent females age eleven through twenty-one who have experienced significant
11 trauma in their lives. Project Kealahou offers a relatively low-cost array of community—based services
12 and supports that provide cost-effective deterrents and alternatives to more expensive and disruptive out-

1 of- home placements for youth and a range of cultural and recreational community-based group
2 activities to help youth and their families.

3 Project Kealahou was developed by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the
4 Department of Health in response to broad recognition among leaders and workers in Hawaii's public
5 child-serving system that established treatment programs do not adequately address challenges
6 encountered by adolescent girls.

7 Over the past 3 years, 150 girls have been served. Data collected to date indicate that the
8 program is effective at engaging youth, improving girls' functioning and at reducing the strain felt by
9 their parents. Without additional funding, some of the clinical services will be reduced. Continuing the
10 full program will mean continuing to serve all the families and obtaining more information about what is
11 effective with girls in the targeted population.

12 Currently Project Kealahou is funded through a federal grant. As we near the end of the grant,
13 the amount of the grant has been incrementally reduced and will fully expire in 2016. To continue
14 working with the target population of traumatized girls, we are requesting that Project Kealahou
15 maintain its full staffing complement in the next year. Without additional funds, we will need to let go of
16 three experienced Intensive Support Workers. The personnel costs for maintaining the three positions
17 are \$216,701 (base salary of \$45,000 each, 42.04% fringe, and 13.01% indirect cost). The Executive
18 Budget Request to the 2014 Legislature for the Department of Health requests a \$50,000 appropriation
19 to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (HTH 460) for Project Kealahou. With the
20 Governor's \$50,000 budget request, \$166,707 is necessary to keep the three Intensive Support Workers
21 in our communities working with girls with trauma.

22 We appreciate and thank the Women's Caucus for championing this important program. We
23 thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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January 31, 2014

Honorable Josh Green
Chair, Committee on Health

Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker
Vice Chair, Committee on Health

Re: SB2449 – Relating to Project Kealahou – Support
Senate Committee on Health – February 3, 2014 – Conference Room 229

Aloha Chair Green, Vice Chair Baker and members of the committee:

My name is Noriko Namiki, Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA of O'ahu, testifying in support for SB2449, to appropriate \$50,000 in funding for Project Kealahou.

Project Kealahou is a federally funded initiative that bridges juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health, and education systems to bring life skills and build support for girls between ages 11 to 18 who have experienced significant trauma in their lives. The program helps adolescent girls reconnect with their land, themselves, and their families through activities such as Girls Circle, individual support and mentoring and other group activities.

We firmly believe this legislative appropriation is much needed to preserve this safety net and to connect gaps in funding that provides service to girls connected with Project Kealahou. For these reasons, we humbly urge members of this committee to pass SB2449.

Since its founding in 1900, the YWCA of O'ahu exists to cultivate opportunities for women's and girls' growth and leadership, to help them create fulfilling lives for themselves and their families, and facilitating social change with positive economic impact for their communities.

Sincerely,



Noriko Namiki
CEO
YWCA of O'ahu