



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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**LATE**

**TESTIMONY COMMENTING ON SB 2401 SD1  
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

**SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Hearing Date and Time: Thursday, February 28, 2018 at 11 a.m. Room Number: 211

1 The Department of Health (DOH) applauds the intent of this bill to continue to administer  
2 homeless outreach, counseling, and diversion for unsheltered individuals experiencing substance  
3 abuse, and to continue to administer the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program,  
4 including professional case managers who employ basic core competencies for substance abuse  
5 treatment, but defers to the Governor's Supplemental Budget Request for appropriations  
6 priorities. Studies indicate that a significant proportion of the state's chronic homeless  
7 population have substance abuse and/or mental health issues and are frequently arrested for non-  
8 violent, non-felony offenses.

9 The DOH continues to follow the lead of the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness  
10 (Coordinator) to ensure that efforts are synchronized in support of the State's comprehensive  
11 framework to address homelessness across the system of care. The framework includes focus of  
12 efforts on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and  
13 public safety. The DOH, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) is especially grateful that  
14 one of the initiatives identified by the sponsors of SB 2401 SD1 and jointly supported by both

1 the DOH and the Coordinator is the LEAD program. Nationally, LEAD was evaluated to have  
2 significant positive impact in other jurisdictions where the program was deployed, including  
3 significant decreases in rates of re-arrest and increase in engagement of participants with needed  
4 treatments and other social services. It has also been successful at decreasing burdens on judicial  
5 and law enforcement systems by directing individuals, particularly the chronically homeless, to  
6 behavioral health care services in the community. The ADAD also commends the Legislature  
7 who in the 2017 Session approved \$200,000 to implement a LEAD pilot project, and for  
8 understanding that there is a need for LEAD in Hawaii and sees that there is community  
9 willingness to assist with its implementation.

10 The DOH acknowledges that homelessness is one of the State's most significant and  
11 challenging social concerns. The DOH and its Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) partner  
12 with other state agencies and with both AMHD contracted and non-AMHD contracted  
13 community programs to address the mental health needs of individuals experiencing  
14 homelessness. Key partners include the Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of  
15 Transportation (DOT), Department of Public Safety (PSD), the City and County of Honolulu,  
16 law enforcement, and community based health and human service programs.

17 The AMHD continues its commitment to increasing and strengthening linkages to  
18 housing and community based referrals that support recovery for adults with serious mental  
19 health challenges. The AMHD Homeless Outreach providers focus their outreach efforts on  
20 locating individuals who live with Serious Mental Illness (SMI), who are chronically homeless,  
21 and who meet AMHD's eligibility criteria for AMHD funded services.

1           In 2017, AMHD provided homeless outreach services to 2,817 consumers identified as  
2 homeless on the islands of Kauai, Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii. In addition to homeless outreach  
3 services, AMHD provides specialized treatment and group home housing for 808 individuals,  
4 including those who live in twenty-four hour, eight-to-sixteen hour, and semi-independent group  
5 homes. There are over 100 eligible individuals who receive supported housing/bridge subsidy  
6 through the AMHD. These individuals live with a serious mental illness and have the option to  
7 live independently in housing of their choice with services that support their movement towards  
8 assuming the role of a neighbor or tenant.

9           The DOH asks for the Legislature's support of the Governor's Executive Budget request.  
10 In the Governor's Executive Budget request, appropriations to ADAD to continue LEAD and  
11 homeless outreach to unsheltered persons experiencing substance abuse, and to DHS for the  
12 Rapid Rehousing program are included. The Rapid Rehousing program addresses both  
13 homelessness prevention and housing replacement. The AMHD defers to the State Procurement  
14 Office and the DHS with regard to contracting and implementation of homeless services.

15           Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**LATE**

**Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 11:00am**

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson  
Vice President & Government Relations

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 2401 SD 1, Relating to Homelessness**

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My name is Michael Robinson and I am Vice President and Government Relations of Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system with over 70 locations statewide including medical centers, clinics, physicians and other caregivers serving Hawai'i and the Pacific Region with high quality, compassionate care. Its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox – specialize in innovative programs in women's health, pediatric care, cardiovascular services, cancer care, bone and joint services and more. Hawai'i Pacific Health is recognized nationally for its excellence in patient care and the use of electronic health records to improve quality and patient safety.

I write in support of SB 2401 SD 1 which provides funding to continue multiple homelessness services programs such as Outreach, Housing First, and Rapid Rehousing; creates a pilot state rental assistance program that provides small subsidies to families that need just a slight economic boost to get out of homelessness; and appropriates funds to Hawai'i Public Housing Authority for public housing improvements and renovations statewide.

Hawai'i has the highest per capita rate of homelessness of any state in the United States and service providers have taken a multi-faceted approach using proven interventions that target particular characteristics of the population being served and that address the root causes of homelessness.

The Hawai'i Public Housing Authority currently manages hundreds of units that are vacant due to the need for major repairs. This measure would appropriate funds that could rapidly bring these units back into service and house families and individuals at thirty percent of their income. While Housing First programs are relatively costly, they are cost-effective. Providing housing and services is less costly than the alternative of incurring costs for emergency services necessary for unhoused persons who are chronically homeless.

The State Rent Supplement Program has proven to be effective in maintaining housing for working individuals and families. A large portion of homeless people have a stable source of income and only need modest financial help instead of full-scale subsidies and intensive, ongoing case management. This program provides a small, time-limited subsidy that wards off homelessness by providing time for families to close the affordability gap and achieve self-sufficiency.

Finally, the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program grants police officers the discretionary authority to redirect low-level offenders, typically drug-involved and homeless, to case managers as an alternative to incarceration.

As one of the State's largest health care providers, it is in Hawai'i Pacific Health's best interest to support this measure which appropriates funds to support and improve the well-being of the most vulnerable populations in our islands.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in support of SB 2401 SD 1.

**LATE**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2401 SD1, RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

HEARING: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 at 11:00 am, Conference Room 211

FROM: Eric Englin

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Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my strong support for SB 2401 SD1, which proposes making critical investments to address homelessness in Hawaii. I am disturbed by the number and sad condition of so many of our residents living on the streets. It is affecting our neighborhoods, beaches, and the future of our great state. I ask your support for the specific programs below, which provide real solutions for homelessness.

First, we need rentals units that are truly affordable for low-income people. \$35 million to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority for improvements and renovations of public housing units will bring rental units back into service.

Hawaii must increase its investment in proven programs that will reduce homelessness in our state. I ask for your support to increase the current funding by 25% to the Department of Human Services for Housing First, Rapid Rehousing, Homeless Outreach, including civil legal services and youth outreach. I also ask your support to also increase funding by 25% for Outreach and Counseling for homeless with substance abuse disorders, including the LEAD pilot project. We must divert this population away from the criminal justice system and into services.

The bill also will support the Oahu Family Assessment Center (FAC), which successfully housed 91% of the homeless families it served last year, in under 3 months. Finally, the bill will create a pilot program that will assist 100 homeless families with minor children or families imminently facing homelessness due to domestic violence. A rental subsidy (up to \$500/mo) along with financial case management can bring these families out of homelessness and stabilize them in a permanent rental unit.

These actions will have a lasting effect on our State and provide a future for our struggling families and individuals who so easily can fall into homelessness.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support for SB 2401 SD1.