



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 0655 H.D.1
RELATING TO HEALTH

SENATOR BRIAN T. TANIGUCHI, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Hearing Date: 03/28/19

Room Number: 224

1 **Fiscal Implications: NONE**

2 **Department Testimony: The Department of Health supports H.B. 655 H.D 1 that amends**
3 SECTION 2, Chapter 8, Hawaii Revised Statutes by adding a new section to designate the month
4 of September as “Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month”.

5 In response to HCR66 passed by the 2016 Legislature, the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force,
6 (PSHTF) in collaboration with the Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System
7 Branch (EMSIPSB) developed and launched a strategic plan to reduce suicides in Hawaii by
8 25% by 2025.

9 From 2013 to 2017, 926 Hawaii residents died from suicide. The annual average was 185. It was
10 the leading cause of fatal injuries accounting for 25% of the 3,695 total deaths during this time
11 period. Suicides were the 9th leading cause of death among state residents over that time, but the
12 3rd leading cause among residents under 50 years of age.

13 A key goal of the plan is to establish a sustained media and communication strategy to raise
14 awareness around suicide prevention. Codifying September as Suicide Prevention and
15 Awareness Month in Hawaii is one of the strategies for achieving this objective since it provides
16 a yearly focus for coordinated statewide public awareness activities.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.