

## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair, Members, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Trisha Kajimura, Executive Director

### Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1494 SD1 RELATING TO HEALTH**

**Hearing: February 19, 2019, 9:30 am, CR 211**

Thank you for hearing **Senate Bill 1494 SD1**, which establishes a working group to evaluate current system gaps and determine steps that may be taken by the State to promote effective integration of behavioral health care and related systems to address the negative impacts of substance abuse, mental health conditions, and homelessness.

Mental Health America of Hawaii (MHAH) is a 501(c)3 organization founded in Hawai'i 77 years ago, that serves the community by promoting mental health through advocacy, education and service. We have been a leader in improving the care and treatment of people with mental illness in Hawaii through policy change. In the 1940s and 1950s our emphasis was on improving the care of patients at the State Hospital in Kaneohe. We helped pass Hawaii's progressive Civil commitment Law in 1976, the Patient Rights Law (Act 272) and Residential Treatment Program Law in 1980, and Hawaii's first Mental Health and Substance Abuse System Act in 1984. In the 1990s we helped get a Psychiatric Advance Directive law passed and helped obtain parity in health insurance coverage for mental health treatment.

As evidenced through our state's homelessness crisis as well as the inquiries for help we receive daily at our office, we have substantial gaps in behavioral health care and supportive services access. The 2018 Commonwealth Fund Scorecard reported that 64% of adults with mental illness in Hawaii did not receive treatment.<sup>1</sup> We appreciate the willingness of the major stakeholders named in this bill to work together on the issue and are available to assist as well.

Thank you for considering my **testimony in support of SB 1494 SD1**. Please contact me at [trisha.kajimura@mentalhealthhawaii.org](mailto:trisha.kajimura@mentalhealthhawaii.org) or (808)521-1846 if you have any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> D. C. Radley, D. McCarthy and S. L. Hayes, 2018 Scorecard on State Health System Performance, The Commonwealth Fund, May 2018.

**SB-1494-SD-1**

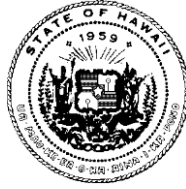
Submitted on: 2/18/2019 8:18:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2019 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT  
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 18, 2019

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1494 SD 1 – RELATING TO HEALTH**

Hearing: February 19, 2019, 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the creation of a working group to study and make recommendations to the legislature on strategies to improve the continuum of care for individuals experiencing substance use disorder (SUD), mental health treatment needs, homelessness, and other chronic conditions; and to promote behavioral health integration more broadly in the state's healthcare system. DHS appreciates the amendments of the Committees on Commerce, Consumer Protection & Health, and Human Services.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to establish a working group to evaluate current system gaps and determine steps that may be taken by the State to promote effective integration of behavioral health care and related systems to address the negative impacts of SUD, mental health conditions, and homelessness.

The Med-QUEST Division (MQD) has identified behavioral health integration, greater access to behavioral health services, and the provision of housing support services to individuals experiencing homelessness as top priorities. The priorities are reflected in the Hawai'i 'Ohana Nui Project Expansion (HOPE) initiative and the overall strategic vision of MQD.

The working group will provide DHS and its inter-agency partners the opportunity to collaborate with each other and external stakeholders to create a shared set of goals and strategies around these top priorities. The working group process will help the State to make improvements to the continuum of care for individuals with behavioral health needs and to help advance behavioral health integration overall.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



**EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS**  
HONOLULU

**DAVID Y. IGE**  
GOVERNOR

February 19, 2019

**TO:** The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**FROM:** Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

**SUBJECT: SB 1494 SD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 19, 2019, 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

**POSITION:** The Governor's Coordinator supports this measure, and appreciates the amendment of the Committees on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health and Human Services to include a representative of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness as a working group member.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to establish a working group to evaluate current behavioral health care and related systems gaps related to the continuum of care for persons experiencing substance abuse, mental health conditions, and homelessness.

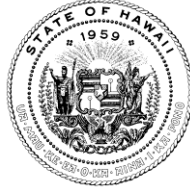
Homelessness remains one of the most pressing challenges facing Hawaii, and the State has adopted a comprehensive framework to address homelessness that focuses on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety. The Coordinator works closely with multiple state agencies and homeless service providers to implement this framework through the delivery of housing-focused services like Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing, as well as outreach and treatment services for unsheltered homeless individuals experiencing severe mental illness and/or addiction. The coordinated efforts to implement the State's framework to address homelessness have made progress in reducing the number of homeless individuals statewide. Between 2017 and 2018, the number of homeless individuals in Hawaii decreased by 690 individuals (9.6%). The decrease was one of the largest

numeric decreases in homelessness in the country, only exceeded by decreases in California, Florida and Michigan.

According to the 2018 statewide homeless point in time count, there are an estimated 1,612 homeless individuals with severe mental illness, representing 25% of the total homeless population. In addition, the 2018 statewide homeless point in time count identified 1,264 homeless individuals who reported chronic substance abuse, representing 19% of the total homeless population.

In 2012, the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) adopted a ten-year strategic plan to address homelessness. The strategic plan includes a number of goals and objectives, including Goal 4, Objective 9, which is to improve health and stability by integrating primary and behavioral health care services with homeless assistance programs and housing. Over the past four years, the HICH has worked to implement the ten-year strategic plan by scaling effective programs such as Housing First and establishing new programs to address mental health and addiction, such as an intensive case management pilot program, the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, and the recently approved 1115 Medicaid waiver amendment for tenancy supports. The Coordinator notes that the purpose of the proposed working group is similar to the goals and objectives of the HICH ten-year strategic plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN  
LT. GOVERNOR

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**Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Tuesday, February 19, 2019  
9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**On the following measure:  
S.B. 1494, S.D. 1, RELATING TO HEALTH**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Colin Hayashida, and I am the Insurance Commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Insurance Division. The Department supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to establish a working group to evaluate current behavioral health care and related systems to promote effective integration of services and improve response and coordination of care for persons experiencing substance abuse, mental health conditions, and homelessness. The Department supports this measure, as it will promote stabilization of the health insurance marketplace and help decrease the systematic overuse of healthcare services that can harm patients and generate excess costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.