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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that an urgent need  
2 exists for greater access to mental health services at the  
3 University of Hawaii. Nationally, the percentage of teenagers  
4 and young adults who report mental distress, depression, and  
5 suicidal ideations has increased significantly over the past  
6 decade among those aged twenty-six and younger. As anxiety and  
7 depression swells among students across the nation, student  
8 counseling centers in Hawaii, like their mainland counterparts,  
9 are unable to keep up with demand.

10           Mental health counselors in Hawaii have also noticed that  
11 the issues students exhibit are becoming more serious. At the  
12 University of Hawaii at Manoa, for instance, anxiety diagnoses  
13 have surpassed depression diagnoses, and suicidal ideations have  
14 increased in number, according to officials. Despite this  
15 situation, students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa are  
16 required to wait an average of twenty-three days from their  
17 initial call for help to the time that they meet with a licensed



1 counselor. Furthermore, Leeward community college, whose  
2 enrollment is 6,568 students--the highest of any University of  
3 Hawaii community college--does not have any psychologists on  
4 staff and must refer students to other University of Hawaii  
5 campuses.

6 The International Association of Counseling Services  
7 recommends a ratio of one mental health professional for every  
8 one thousand to one thousand five hundred students. Only two  
9 University of Hawaii campuses--the University of Hawaii at Hilo  
10 and Kauai community college--meet this recommended ratio. Most  
11 other campuses would require between one and four additional  
12 counselors per campus to meet this recommended ratio. The  
13 University of Hawaii at Manoa and Leeward community college  
14 would each require at least five additional counselors per  
15 campus to meet this recommended ratio.

16 The purpose of this Act is to increase students' access to  
17 mental health services across the University of Hawaii system by  
18 appropriating funds for additional psychiatrist, psychologist,  
19 and counselor positions at all campuses.

20 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so



1 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for  
2 additional psychiatrist, psychologist, and counselor positions  
3 at all campuses of the University of Hawaii system.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of  
5 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.

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INTRODUCED BY:

<u>Val</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>Amy</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
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JAN 17 2020



# H.B. NO. 2089

**Report Title:**

UH; Mental Health Services; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to increase access to mental health services across the University of Hawaii system.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

