
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the National
2 Institute for Mental Health reports that one in five adults in
3 the United States has a mental health condition. In Hawaii, a
4 significant number of persons with mental illness end up in the
5 criminal justice system. Often times, a trained mental health
6 care professionals can significantly help individuals with
7 mental health issues avoid the criminal justice system.

8 In addition, for those already in the criminal justice
9 system, there is a long wait for mental health treatment.
10 During 2017 and 2018, the department of public safety held two
11 hundred seventy-five pretrial detainees who were awaiting
12 treatment. This category of detainees spent a cumulative twelve
13 thousand days occupying the department's bed space before they
14 were transferred to the Hawaii state hospital.

15 The legislature recognizes that, as a matter of statewide
16 concern, action must be taken to increase the number of mental
17 health care professionals in Hawaii, not only to address the



1 needs of the criminal justice system, but also the general
2 public at large.

3 The purpose of this Act is to establish a behavioral health
4 social worker scholarship program to be administered by the
5 University of Hawaii.

6 SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended by adding a new section to subpart B of part II to be
8 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

9 "§304A- Behavioral health social worker scholarship
10 program; service commitment. (a) There is established the
11 behavioral health social worker scholarship program to be
12 administered by the University of Hawaii. The behavioral health
13 social worker scholarship program shall assist students with
14 school tuition in return for a service commitment of five years
15 with the department of human services in the areas of
16 psychiatric and mental health, or other behavioral health social
17 work.

18 (b) The behavioral health social worker scholarship
19 program shall cover the cost of tuition and fees for a complete
20 course of study that qualifies an individual for licensure under
21 chapter 467E; provided that a recipient who fails to maintain



1 satisfactory academic progress shall be terminated from the
2 behavioral health social worker scholarship program and shall be
3 required to repay the portion of the scholarship already
4 dispensed on the recipient's behalf.

5 (c) Recipients shall be required to complete five years of
6 service with the department of human services. If the recipient
7 fails to complete the required five-year service commitment, the
8 recipient shall reimburse the University of Hawaii for the full
9 amount of the award received from the behavioral health social
10 worker scholarship program.

11 (d) The number of scholarships awarded annually shall be
12 determined by the University of Hawaii, in collaboration with
13 the department of human services, and shall be subject to the
14 availability of funds.

15 (e) The University of Hawaii, in collaboration with the
16 department of human services, shall establish necessary policies
17 and procedures to implement and sustain the behavioral health
18 social worker scholarship program, including application
19 procedures, eligibility requirements, and standards to determine
20 which applicants are awarded scholarships.



H.B. NO. 2707

Report Title:

Behavioral Health Social Worker Scholarship Program; UH; DHS;
Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the behavioral health social worker scholarship program at UH, which requires recipients of the scholarship to commit to five years of service with DHS. Appropriates funds.

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