

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 27 2020

RE: S.B. No. 2877  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirtieth State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2020  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health,  
to which was referred S.B. No. 2877 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Clarify that the practicum internship experience requirement shall be included with the course work in counseling requirement for mental health counselors; and
- (2) Clarify the supervision requirements of licensure for mental health counselors by permitting applicants to fulfill all or part of their face-to-face clinical supervision requirement by a videoconference service.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; University of Hawai'i System, University of Hawai'i at Hilo; Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition; Democratic Party of Hawai'i, and eleven individuals.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii is facing a shortage of qualified mental health professionals, especially in rural areas. Further, for applicants seeking licensure as a mental health counselor in Hawaii, we are the only state that includes the



practicum internship requirement as a separate, stand-alone requirement, rather than including it with course work requirements. Additionally, it can be difficult to find an appropriate, licensed individual to provide in-person supervision for the duration of required post-graduate experience. This measure aligns Hawaii with national licensing standards and allows supervision via face-to-face telecommunication to help decrease the barriers to licensure and increase access to behavioral health services for Hawaii residents.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying course areas to include assessment and diagnosis of disorders with an emphasis on DSM categories, rather than DSM-IV categories, to ensure Hawaii's law remains current with each Diagnostic and Statistic Manual edition that may be released; and
- (2) Clarifying the supervised mental health practicum intern experience requirement to be a total of three hundred hours of supervised client contact across two semesters.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2877, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2877, S.D. 1, and be placed on the calendar for Third Reading.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Commerce, Consumer  
Protection, and Health,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ROSALYN H. BAKER, Chair



