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**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

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Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
House Committee on Intrastate Commerce
Tuesday, February 4, 2020
9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 430**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 2321, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS**

Chair Ohno and Members of the Committee:

My name is Charlene Tamanaha, and I am the Licensing Administrator of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division. The Department supports this administration bill.

The purposes of this bill are 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 videoconference.

The Department's Mental Health Counselor Program (Program) is the only jurisdiction that includes the practicum internship requirement as a separate, standalone requirement rather than include it with the course work in counseling requirement. As such, all applicants for a Hawaii mental health counselor license must provide 54 semester hours or 82 quarter hours of course work training, versus the national

licensing standard of 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours in course work in counseling.

This bill makes the practicum internship requirement a part of the course work in counseling requirement, thereby aligning the Program's licensing requirements with the national licensing standards of 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours in course work in counseling.

This bill also streamlines post-graduate experience requirements by allowing the supervision requirement to be fulfilled, in part or whole, through videoconference. Currently, HRS section 453D-7(a)(3) requires post-graduate experience of 3,000 hours, including 100 hours of face-to-face supervision. Due to the prevalence of online courses through accredited universities and colleges, allowing the face-to-face supervision requirement to be completed through videoconference allows applicants some flexibility in completing their post-graduate work experience with both the supervisor and clinic or facility of their choice. This also eases the applicants' burden of always needing a face-to-face, in-person meeting with the supervisor, particularly in the case of neighbor island candidates who work in clinics on the neighbor islands and who need to communicate with supervisors on Oahu.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and we respectfully ask the Committee to pass this administration bill.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Intrastate Commerce
Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 9:30 am, Conference Room 430

by
Bonnie D. Irwin
Chancellor
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

HB 2321 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Kobayashi and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2321. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) is writing in strong support of HB 2321. The proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to our graduates in the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology Program (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling), as they are trained to be eligible for this license. The current version of the law unintentionally placed the 6-credit fieldwork requirement ("Practicum Intern Experience" with a total of 300 direct client hours) as a separate requirement from the 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby changing the overall requirement to 54 credits. As the intent of the law was to require a 48-credit training, which is consistent with the licensing laws of other states, HB 2321 will fix this important flaw.

In addition, the bill will change the wording of the diagnostic manual from "DSM-IV" to "DSM." DSM-IV is an older version and the new edition is DSM-5. The editions will change in the future and hence the law should refer to the generic DSM and not a specific edition.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Tuesday, February 4, 2020

House Bill 2321
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and Members of the Committee on Intrastate Commerce

The Democratic Part of Hawai'i (The Party) **stands in support of HB2321** Relating to Mental Health Counselors, which clarifies that the practicum internship experience requirement shall be included with the course work in counseling requirement for mental health counselors. The bill clarifies 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.

Given the geography of the state of Hawai'i and the low number of qualified mental health professionals available in some of the more rural areas, this clarification to the licensure requirement, (allowing clinical supervision to take place via HIPAA compliant modes of technology), will in fact increase the amount of professional who can obtain licensure, thereby increasing access to behavioral health services to the residents of the state of Hawai'i.

There have been many studies conducted on the effectiveness of Tele-supervision, and it began being implemented in states with rural geography in 2016.

“Clinical supervision is integral to continuing professional development of health professionals. With advances in technology, clinical supervision too can be undertaken using mediums such as videoconference, email and teleconference. This mode of clinical supervision is termed as tele-supervision. While tele-supervision could be useful in any context, its value is amplified for health professionals working in rural and remote areas where access to supervisors within the local work environment is often diminished.”

Hawai'i already struggles with attracting and keeping mental health professionals for a myriad of reasons. Let's focus on removing the barriers, not creating them.

It is for these reasons that we encourage a favorable vote on this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Josh Frost
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Zahava Zaidoff
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214782917300131>

HB-2321

Submitted on: 1/31/2020 12:58:56 PM

Testimony for IAC on 2/4/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bryan Kim, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Takashi Ohno and members of the House Committee on Intrastate Commerce:

I'm writing in most strong support of HB2321. I am the Director of the Master of Arts Program in Counseling Psychology (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling) and Professor of Psychology at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. This proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to our graduates as they are trained to be eligible for this license. The previous version of the law had placed the fieldwork requirement ("practicum intern experience") as a separate requirement from the overall 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby accidentally changing the law to a 54-credit requirement. As I believe the original intent of the law was to require 48 credits training, which is consistent with the laws of other states, HB2321 will fix this important flaw in the way the original law was written. Please pass HB2321.

Thank you in advance for considering this request.

Sincerely,
Bryan S. K. Kim, Ph.D.

HB-2321

Submitted on: 1/31/2020 4:31:51 PM

Testimony for IAC on 2/4/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sherise-Charity Wingate	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To all those whom this testimony concerns:

I write to you today to state my support for the proposed change to the mental health counselor licensure law; labeled HB2321. I am a graduate of the Masters in Counseling Psychology Program offered at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. The changes being proposed would, not only, correct a potential flaw in the current law; which keeps our internships and practicum experience separate from the overall credit curriculum requirements, but would also help to stream line the licensure process and would help to make the current law consistent with the laws found in other states. I strongly urge the bodies reviewing this change to pass HB2321, as it would benefit all those involved in the licensure process.

Thank you for your time, efforts, and considerations.

Sincerely,

Sherise-Charity Wingate M.A.

HB-2321

Submitted on: 2/1/2020 10:32:56 AM

Testimony for IAC on 2/4/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Faith Gilley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Takashi Ohno and members of the House Committee on Intrastate Commerce:

I'm writing in most strong support of HB2321. I am a student at the University of Hawaii at Hilo in the Master of Arts Program in Counseling Psychology (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling). The proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to me as I am currently being trained to be eligible for licensure. The previous version of the law placed the fieldwork requirement ("practicum intern experience") as a separate requirement from the overall 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby accidentally changing the law to a 54-credit requirement. As I believe the original intent of the law was to require 48 credits training, which is consistent with the laws of other states, the passing of HB2321 would fix this important flaw in the way the original was law written. Please pass HB2321.

Thank you in advance for considering this request.

Faith Gilley

HB-2321

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 8:49:40 AM

Testimony for IAC on 2/4/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Emily A Low	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Takashi Ohno and members of the House Committee on Intrastate Commerce:

I'm writing in most strong support of HB2321. I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor with a Masters degree in Counseling Psychology. This proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to the students that will become graduates from the same UH Hilo Masters in Counseling Psychology program that I graduated from 6 years ago as they are trained to be eligible for the license that I obtained 3 years ago. The previous version of the law had placed the fieldwork requirement ("practicum intern experience") as a separate requirement from the overall 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby accidentally changing the law to a 54-credit requirement. As I believe the original intent of the law was to require 48 credits training, which is consistent with the laws of other states, HB2321 will fix this important flaw in the way the original law written.

I can attest to the fact that many of my colleagues who obtained licensure under the intended 48 credit requirement have gone on to become ethical practicing members of our Hawaii behavioral health community. We continue to need more practitioners to serve our community. In the past 2 years or so since this issue has come up, I have supported and convinced at least 4 excellent new practitioners not to give up and to continue to fight to get through the arduous process of becoming licensed. I do not believe the paperwork hurdles to become licensed should be a barrier when young professionals have already completed the rigorous and accredited curriculum, practicum and exam knowledge requirements demanded of them by their field.

Please pass HB2321.

Thank you in advance for considering this request.

Emily Low, M.A., LMHC

HB-2321

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 11:22:15 AM

Testimony for IAC on 2/4/2020 9:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christen Zulli	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of HB2321 as I am a graduate of the University of Hawaii, Hilo's Counseling Psychology Master's Degree Program. This bill, once passed, will have corrected mistakes making it confusing and difficult for individuals seeking licensure. The bill also benefits Hawai'i's counselors by allowing access to supervision that was once limited by location.

Mahalo in advance for passing this necessary bill,

Christen Zulli

University of Hawai'i Alumni

LATE

HB-2321

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 11:41:34 PM

Testimony for IAC on 2/4/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tara Myers	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Takashi Ohno and members of the House Committee on Intrastate Commerce:

I'm writing in support of HB2321. I am a graduate student in the Master of Arts Program in Counseling Psychology (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling) at the University of Hawaii at Hilo and will be graduating in May. This proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to my training and eligibility for this license. The previous version of the law had placed the fieldwork requirement ("practicum intern experience") as a separate requirement from the overall 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby accidentally changing the law to a 54-credit requirement. As I believe the original intent of the law was to require 48 credits training, which is consistent with the laws of other states, HB2321 will fix this important flaw in the way the original law was written. Please pass HB2321, thank you.

Sincerely,
Tara Myers