



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 12, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Committee on Lower & Higher Education

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

SUBJECT: HB2707 HD1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Hearing: Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 2:10 p.m.
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact budget priorities.

The Coordinator appreciates the amendments by the House Committee on Human Services to include the option of completing the five years of required services at the Judiciary, Department of Health (DOH), and Department of Public Safety (PSD) in addition to the Department of Human Services (DHS).

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the behavioral health social worker scholarship program at the University of Hawaii, which requires recipients of the scholarship to commit to five years of service with DHS, DOH, PSD, and service providers contracted by these departments and branch for services in the areas of psychiatric and mental health or other behavioral health social work. The bill also appropriates funds for Fiscal Year 2021 for the behavioral health social worker scholarship program.

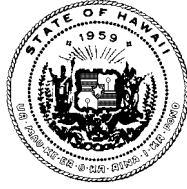
The Coordinator recognizes that multiple departments have a need for well-trained social workers to address the behavioral health needs of clients, including individuals directly experiencing homelessness. While this measure does not specifically address the needs of homeless individuals, there is a clear overlap between individuals experiencing severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders and individuals experiencing homelessness.

The Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), a 27-member advisory council chaired by the Coordinator, recently voted to prioritize support for behavioral health reforms and programs as part of its 2020 legislative priorities to address homelessness. In addition, HICH supports strengthening the capacity of the homeless services sector through the development of a professional workforce, including individuals that specialize in the field of behavioral health.

Over the past four years, the State has developed and implemented a range of new programs to divert homeless individuals experiencing severe mental illness or substance use disorders to appropriate treatment and support. These new programs include the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, intensive case management for homeless individuals, CARES, and the Assisted Community Treatment (ACT) program. A professional trained workforce is needed for implementation of this array of programs to be most effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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 10, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Committee on Lower & Higher Education

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2707 HD1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Hearing: February 12, 2020, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill to build capacity and develop the State's behavioral health workforce, and offers comments. DHS requests that any appropriation not supplant the current budget priorities identified in the executive budget. DHS appreciates amendments of the Committee on Human Services & Homelessness to include other executive departments, the Judiciary, and contract providers. DHS proposes an additional amendment.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill 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, DOH, PSD, Judiciary, and service providers. Appropriates funds. Takes effect on December 31, 2059. (HD1)

Given the behavioral health needs of Hawaii's multi-generational families and individuals, promoting, supporting, and increasing the behavioral health social work workforce is a necessary investment in the long-term health and well-being of Hawaii's residents.

The Legislature currently contributes general funds to the Hawaii Child Welfare Collaboration (HCWEC). This is a collaboration between the DHS and the University of Hawaii, Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, to recruit and train master's-level social work

students to work at DHS Child Welfare Services (CWS). From 1998 to 2008, 100 students completed the program and became employees of CWS. Unfortunately, during the great recession of 2009-2010, 21% of the CWS work force was reduced through a reduction and force; and in 2011 the program ended following changes in Title IV-E funding.

In 2016, the HCWEC program was refunded to rebuild the CWS work force. The program provides options to students, a two-year program or an advanced standing option for students who enter with a Bachelor's of Social Work. For students who continue to work full time, the program offers a three-year part-time option. Distance education technology allows neighbor island residents to participate from their home island. In 2017, 8 scholars graduated and another 8 in 2018. There are 10 scholars in the current class of 2019-2020.

While the priority of DHS is to increase and improve the skills of the workforce of child welfare social workers, behavioral health social workers are needed in other departments and subject matter areas, such as homelessness, assisting families with their aging relatives, assisting families involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, and in general, to assist when residents experience significant or chronic life stressors and traumas.

DHS suggests that the Legislature some flexibility and consider amending the second sentence of (c) as follows:

If the recipient fails to complete three years of the required five-year service commitment, the recipient shall reimburse the University of Hawaii for the full amount of the award received from the behavioral health social worker scholarship program. If the recipient ends employment with these departments, branch, or contracted service provider after three years and before the required five-year service commitment, the recipient shall reimburse the University of Hawaii a pro rata share based upon the months remaining in the five-year service commitment.

While the individual's commitment to complete the service is a priority, we also would like to make this program an attractive choice for students. The HCWEC program offers a 2-year or 3-year commitment depending upon the course of study. We further recognize

that demands and needs of families may interfere with both the ability to complete the 5-year commitment and pay back the entirety of the loan if something or life event requires them to leave government employment after 3 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the House Committee on Lower & Higher Education

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Representative Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 2:10 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

by
Jason M. Minami
Human Resources Director

Dwight Sakai
Probation Administrator
Adult Client Services Branch

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 2707, HD1, Relating to Mental Health.

Purpose: 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, DOH, PSD, Judiciary, and service providers. Appropriates funds. Takes effect on December 31, 2059.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports House Bill 2707, H.D. 1, Relating to Mental Health.

The Judiciary supports the establishment of the behavioral health social worker scholarship program which seeks to increase the number of mental health care professionals, not only to address the needs of the criminal justice system but also the general public at large.

The number of individuals with mental illness who are placed on court ordered supervision continues to increase. Often, due to their mental illness, these individuals find it difficult to adhere to the terms and conditions of supervision. This vulnerable population



House Bill No. 2707, HD1, Relating to Mental Health
House Committee on Lower & Higher Education
Wednesday, February 12, 2020
Page 2

requires extensive treatment and service needs that traditional supervision was not designed to address. The Judiciary recognized this need and established a Mental Health Court in the First Circuit Court. The Mental Health Court has proven successful as it takes a mental health approach to the supervision of those individuals with Severe Mental Illness (SMI). Supervision of individuals with mental illness involves understanding the mental health disorders, including severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI), treatment methods and levels of care, psychotropic medications, crisis intervention, knowledge of community resources, and risk and need levels of those with mental illness.

Social Worker positions that supervise individuals with mental health typically have minimal or no formal subject matter education, training or experience in behavioral health. Having social workers with the requisite education, knowledge, understanding, and experience in behavioral health would save tax dollars by diverting clients away from prisons and hospitals, as they would be better skilled to help clients effectuate change and live a pro-social lifestyle, thereby reducing recidivism and improving public safety.

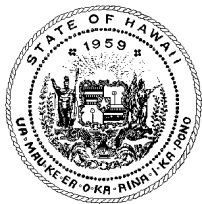
Mental health services are critical in serving our juvenile population as evidenced in the wrap around services that are necessary in treating this population. Social workers skilled in mental health would be effective in formulating a case plan specific to this population's need.

Our recent experience shows that Social Worker positions are becoming increasingly difficult to recruit for and fill. We believe that a scholarship program, such as the one provided for in this bill, may entice students to pursue a course of study in the area of social work and, in turn, greatly assist the criminal justice system and the general public by building the workforce in the area of mental health.

In consideration of the information presented above, the Judiciary supports the passage of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2707, H.D.1.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2707, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

by

Nolan P. Espinda, Director
Department of Public Safety

House Committee on Lower and Higher Education
Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Representative Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 12, 2020; 2:10 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Quinlan, and Members of the
Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports House Bill (HB) 2707, House Draft (HD) 1, which seeks to establish and fund the behavioral health social worker scholarship program at the University of Hawaii. HB 2707, HD 1 would require the recipients of the scholarship to commit to five years of service with the Department of Human Services, as well as, the Department of Health, Department of Public Safety, the Judiciary, and service providers contracted by these departments and branch. The Department respectfully offers the following comments.

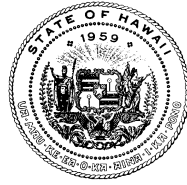
The September 2019 Brazelon Center for Mental Health Law publication identified several evidenced-based community mental health services that have been implemented on a national level for purposes of diversion from incarceration, such as Assertive Community Treatment, Supported Housing, Mobile Crisis Services, and Supported Employment. As stated in the proposed measure, there is clearly a pressing need for educated, trained, and licensed social workers who are committed

to employing specialized and evidenced-based mental health services for this challenging, underserved population in our community and correctional system.

HB 2707, HD 1, provides a means to address one missing component in our higher educational system at the University of Hawaii and largely serves to invest in the future of Hawaii. Social Work is not an eligible discipline for the Scholarship Program of the National Health Service Corps, which administers the program through the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. While the Licensed Clinical Social Worker is an eligible discipline for the Loan Repayment Program of the National Health Service Corps, the complexity of the scoring process of the Health Professional Shortage Area does not always reflect Hawaii's needs.

As specified in the proposed measure, educated and trained social workers are needed in all mental health service areas for justice-involved individuals. The Department respectfully requests your Committee's passage of HB 2707, HD 1, to allow for recipients of the social worker scholarship program to meet service commitment requirements at the Department of Human Services, Judiciary, Department of Health, and the Department of Public Safety, with the desired outcome of an increased pool of well-trained social workers to serve the ongoing and future needs of the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2707, HD 1.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 2707 H.D. 1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN H. WOODSON, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOWER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Hearing Date and Time: Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 2:10 p.m.

Room: 309

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) strongly supports this
2 measure and offers comments.

3 **Department Testimony:** The subject matter of this measure intersects with the scope of the
4 Department’s Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) whose statutory mandate is to assure a
5 comprehensive statewide behavioral health care system by leveraging and coordinating public,
6 private and community resources. Through the BHA, the Department is committed to carrying
7 out this mandate by reducing silos, ensuring behavioral health care is readily accessible, and
8 person-centered. The BHA’s Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) provides the following
9 testimony on behalf of the Department.

10 The Department strongly supports initiatives introduced by the legislature that address
11 the need for increasing the number of trained mental health care professionals in Hawaii.
12 Through the creation of a behavioral health social worker scholarship program at the University
13 of Hawaii (UH), students will have the opportunity to receive tuition assistance in exchange for
14 a service commitment with the Department of Human Services (DHS) in the areas of psychiatric
15 and mental health, or other behavioral health social work.

16 The Department acknowledges that coordination across departments is required in
17 order to implement a comprehensive continuum of care and looks forward to continued

1 collaboration with other departments including the DHS, Department of Public Safety (PSD) and
2 Judiciary, and service providers who provide psychiatric and behavioral health services.

3 We support the amendments proposed and comments offered by the DHS in their
4 testimony.

5 The Department thanks the Legislature for its support of programs that increase the
6 behavioral health workforce in Hawaii.

7 **Offered Amendments:** None.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

9 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department respectfully requests that any appropriations made
10 available through this measure do not supplant budget priorities identified in the Governor's
11 executive budget.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Lower & Higher Education
February 12, 2020 at 2:10 p.m.

By
Donald O. Straney
Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy
University of Hawai'i System

HB 2707 HD1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i (University) strongly supports the intent of HB 2707 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health. Providing scholarship funds for students pursuing a degree in social work would serve the State by increasing the number of qualified social workers to meet mental health needs.

Mental illness a major social and public health concern in the U.S. Mental illness is a leading cause of disability in the U.S. accounting for 25% of all years of life lost to disability and premature mortality. One in five adults in the U.S. experience mental illness, and one-half of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14; three-quarters by the age of 24. In Hawai'i, mental illness is a critical issue and indicates the presence of a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder.

The University would welcome financial support to assist students in social work who are effectively trained to provide mental health services to the people of Hawai'i. Professional social workers are the nation's largest group of mental health services providers. In particular, clinical social workers have a master's degree, two years of post-master's experience and must be licensed in the state in which they practice. In high-cost Hawai'i, these scholarships are critical to many social work students who might not be able to pursue higher education degrees without some financial support, and are often forced to take loans to finance their education. A preference ranking for Hawai'i residents would be considered. National statistics show that social work students with loans have a higher debt to earnings ratio than other professions.

The strong value of financial support for students is viewed within implementation considerations. There would be some mechanical problems issues with administering such a program. For example, providing aid as a scholarship that ends up having to be repaid when students do not complete the program or do not spend five years working for the Department of Human Services will create administrative and logistical issues. These conditions effectively turn the scholarship into a loan program. While the University is willing to find ways to undertake and overcome such challenges for the benefit of having this program, these are processes that must be adequately resourced.

Managing such a program would place an administrative burden on the University to collect monies to reimburse the scholarship for students who do not finish their program or work for the Department of Human Services for five years. It is also possible that students who benefit from the proposed scholarship program could also meet state needs by working in other state departments that employ social workers such as the Department of Health and the Department of Education.

Identifying the appropriate agency to administer this loan collection program and providing for adequately funding those efforts may be necessary in the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2707 HD1: RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

TO: Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair, Representative Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Lower & Higher Education

FROM: Rob Van Tassel, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Hearing: **Wednesday, February 12, 2020; 2:10 PM; CR 309**

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Hashem, and Members, Committee on Lower & Higher Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in support** of HB 2707, HD1, which would establish the behavioral health social worker scholarship program at the UH. **We strongly support this HD1, which includes that students receiving this scholarship can fulfill their 5 year work commitment by working for “service providers contracted by these departments”** in the areas of psychiatric and mental health or other behavioral health social work. I am Rob Van Tassel, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are also a member of Partners in Care.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 70 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of working in the areas of affordable housing and homelessness.

There is a great need in Hawaii for trained behavioral health workers. However, it is not only State “difficult-to-fill” positions that need an expansion of trained social workers. Non-profit organizations that contract with the Department of Humans Services (DHS) for behavioral health services also are challenged to find adequate trained staff for critical programs. Non-profits also have the challenge of competing with health care organizations for this specialized workforce.

With Housing First and other community behavioral health services providing critical interventions, we need more well-trained staff. This bill is an important step to increase trained staff needed to end homelessness as well as to meet the growing needs in the overall community for mental health and behavioral health services.

Trained mental health professionals are a state-wide concern for public safety, ending homelessness, and the overall health of the public at large. We urge you to pass HB 2707, HD 1 as an important step forward to increase trained workers that are urgently needed.

If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 373-0356, or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org.





HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

HB2707 HD1 Social Worker Scholarship

COMMITTEE ON LOWER & HIGHER EDUCATION:

- Rep. Justin Woodson, Chair; Rep. Mark Hashem/Rep. Sean Quinlan, Vice Chairs
- Wednesday, Feb. 12th, 2020: 2:10 pm
- Conference Room 309

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB2707 HD1:

GOOD MORNING CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization of over 30 non-profit alcohol and drug treatment and prevention agencies.

The demand for social work services are on the rise but resources getting smaller. The shortage of experienced and qualified social workers, along with other healthcare professionals, means that the social care system in Hawai'i is under strain.

In the past few years, the combined impact of the aging population and severe shortages in social care has led to critical situations because the role of social workers in society is now more important than ever before. And the worst part – it seems that the most vulnerable in society are the ones who are the most affected by the situation.

Agencies in Hawai'i are recording unusually high vacancy rates with some agencies, such as substance use disorder agencies, reporting 20-25% vacancy rates. The shortage of social workers has led to social workers juggling far more cases than they should be, which can then in turn lead to even larger vacancies. Moreover, social workers' compensation lags far behind other healthcare positions. Recruitment for agencies are most difficult.

Scholarships are a creative way to make a difference.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.



Wednesday, February 12, 2020

House Bill 2707 HD1
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan, and Members of the Committee on Lower and Higher Education,

The Democratic Part of Hawaii (The Party) stands in **support of HB2707 HD1** Relating to Mental Health, which 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 and appropriates funds.

According to the Hawaii State Department of Health website, The Uniform Application FY 2020/2021 Community Mental Health Services Block Grant shares much useful and pertinent information.

“Step 2. ANALYSIS OF UNMET SERVICE NEEDS AND CRITICAL GAPS WITHIN THE CURRENT SYSTEM

Hawaii faces significant shortages and distribution challenges in its healthcare workforce which impacts access to care, the delivery of care, and ultimately health outcomes. Currently, the top challenges to healthcare in Hawaii is the challenge in recruiting and retaining professionals, such as physicians and nurses. In 2018, Hawaii was short more than 750 physicians across the medical fields according to University of Hawaii professor, Kelley Withy, who conducts an annual survey. This calculation accounts for a critical workforce shortage of physicians on the neighbor islands and the unique demands for medical specialties like psychiatry.

The shortage of psychiatrists across the state is especially seen on the island of Molokai where there is no psychiatrists, and Hawaii Island is so short on mental health resources that several Honolulu psychiatrists routinely fly there in an attempt to close the gap in access to treatment. In Honolulu, where most of the state’s psychiatry offices are concentrated, patient need at times outpaces practitioner availability.”

The Party supports creating a scholarship fund to increase the amount of behavioral health social workers that will be employed with DHS for a period of five years in our local communities. This program has the ability to help to address the shortage that Hawaii has as well as encourage others to enter the behavioral healthcare field.

It is for these reasons that the Party encourages a positive vote on this measure.

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://health.hawaii.gov/amhd/files/2019/09/FY2020-2021-Community-Mental-Health-Services-Block-Grant-Plan.pdf>

HB-2707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 12:46:50 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/12/2020 2:10:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Erika Vargas | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Highly support.

Chair Justin H. Woodson
House Committee on Lower & Higher Education

LATE

Maria Raiza Morales
91-292 Makalauna Place
Ewa Beach, HI 96706
(808)391-1056

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

In Support of HB2707 HD1

My name is Maria Raiza Morales, and I am currently working as a social worker in a non-profit agency providing services for older adults. I am also completing my master's degree in social work at Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work at University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Thank you for the opportunity to testify my support of HB2707.

I support the bill's intent to address Hawai'i's need for trained behavioral health workers. After completing my bachelor's degree and working as a professional for two years, I realized that I needed further training and education – especially on the area of behavioral mental health. Knowledge in this area is needed among workers providing services to older adults who live with conditions such as dementia, depression, delirium, anxiety, and others. Workers can also better support family caregivers providing care to older adults and, at times, also live with their own physical and mental health conditions as a result of the caregiving role. Pursuing a master's degree in social work with a behavioral mental health concentration gave me the opportunity to better the quality of service provided to family caregivers and older adults. Understanding mental health conditions allowed me to better educate family caregivers and create strategies they use in supporting their loved ones.

HB2707 will be of great assistance to other social workers in practice to return to school and further their training and education, while also welcoming others who have interest in addressing our community's mental health needs.