



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 2597**  
**RELATING TO THE HAWAII STATE HOSPITAL**

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

Hearing Date and Time: Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 9:30a.m. Room: 229

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

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 recognizes the need for services within our care continuum that are  
11 tailored to rehabilitate individuals living with co-occurring disorders, especially those with  
12 severe substance use disorders and serious mental illness. Oftentimes, individuals with these  
13 unique clinical needs are placed in facilities without the appropriate level of care making them  
14 more likely to be readmitted into the hospital or violate their terms of conditional release.  
15 Nationally, 8.2 million adults are diagnosed with a co-occurring mental health and substance  
16 use disorder per year. Only 6.9 percent of those adults received appropriate specialty co-  
17 occurring services. It has become increasingly apparent that poorer outcomes result from

1 separate and contradictory systems of care for individuals living with co-occurring disorders  
2 who receive exclusively mental health treatment or exclusively substance use treatment. In  
3 Hawaii, 75 percent of individuals admitted to the Hawaii State Hospital (HSH) have co-occurring  
4 disorders; of which 85 percent have severe substance use issues causing frequent  
5 re-hospitalization. Also, among those identified as having need for intensive case management  
6 due to multiple HSH admissions, 95 percent have been identified as having co-occurring  
7 conditions with substance use relapse being a common factor in readmissions. Furthermore,  
8 methamphetamine related co-occurring disorders are especially common in Hawaii and  
9 requires specialized long-term treatment.

10           Repurposing the Guensberg facility on the HSH campus would provide a secure location  
11 for individuals to simultaneously receive comprehensive, clinically appropriate, and  
12 rehabilitative therapy focused on both serious mental illnesses (SMI) and substance use  
13 treatment. Additionally, utilizing the Guensberg facility on the HSH campus would, preserve  
14 vital psychiatric beds in addition to the building of the new psychiatric facility, allow individuals  
15 diagnosed with a co-occurring disorder to access to other HSH programs, and would support  
16 statewide jail diversion efforts. Having a co-occurring treatment program on the HSH campus  
17 will increase opportunities for continuity of care when patients transition out of acute  
18 psychiatric inpatient care and are stepping down to a lower level of care.

19           Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

20           **Offered Amendments:** None.

21           **Fiscal Implications:** There are other measures being heard by the legislature that allow the  
22 Department to use the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Special Fund for the purposes  
23 described in this measure including H.B. 0035\_HD1, H.B. 2022, H.B. 2349, S.B. 2506, and S.B.  
24 2905. The Department respectfully requests that beyond legislative approval of use of the

- 1 special fund for these purposes that any additional appropriations made available through this
- 2 measure do not supplant budget priorities identified in the Governor's executive budget.



## **SB2597 Remodel Guensberg for Secure Methamphetamine Treatment**

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH:

- Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Chair; Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
- Friday, Feb. 7th, 2020: ~~9:30~~ 8:30 am
- Conference Room 229

### **Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB2597:**

*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.*

**HSAC recommends that private non-profits could operate state facilities for non-forensic beds and could supplement state funding, including fund raising to remodel as well as accessing non-state funds to support operations.**

**There is a clear need for more co-occurring disorder (COD) treatment beds to treat methamphetamine addiction. While there are residential COD beds, they are not secure.**

*There are COD residential treatment facilities for patients leaving the hospital but no substance use disorder COD treatment for those entering HSH.*

States are encouraged to adopt comprehensive approaches to substance abuse treatment for mentally disordered patients:

- **Hawai'i could foster a partnership between HSH staff and the treatment community to create programs in secure settings** that help forensic patients overcome their substance abuse problems. Treatment can also help patients for reentry into society. COD programs are structured to deal effectively with substance abuse problems so patients may focus on their recovery, and provide staff and resources to address all aspects of substance abuse and mental health.
- **Improved treatment for substance abuse in forensic psychiatric patients could help reduce and manage risk.** This may improve the increasing opportunity and likelihood of successful re-integration into the community and better life prospects; protect the public by reducing risk of re-offending and offering real time monitoring and potential intervention when risk is heightened; and help forensic psychiatrists strike a balance

between patient care and public protection, potentially alleviating some of the difficulty and anxiety that decisions to grant leave or discharge can create.<sup>1</sup>

- **Hawaii Department of Health reports that patients at the Hawai'i State Hospital deal with going cold turkey off the drug:** the sudden mood swings, paranoia and hallucinations caused by a swift and severe dopamine deficiency. Further complicating treatment, it can be [difficult to distinguish between mental health issues and the effects of methamphetamine](#). Mental illnesses may be amplified by meth use. It can be difficult to determine whether or not a patient's paranoia and delusion is mental illness or substance abuse or both. [Quality] treatment for mental illness using medications includes having to address their substance abuse too.<sup>2</sup>
- **Many heavy methamphetamine users experience drug induced psychosis called Amphetamine Induced Psychosis (AIP).** Patients with AIP demonstrate hallucination, delusions, anhedonia, as well as disorganized language use and illogical thinking. Amphetamine administration causes an overflow of dopamine in the striatum, which leads to excessive glutamate release into the cortex. Excess glutamate in the cortex may, over time, cause damage to cortical interneurons. The increase of dopamine in the striatum and the increase of glutamate in the cortex explain the AIP symptoms that can accompany the excessive use of amphetamines.<sup>3</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Biotechnology Information: PMC National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine: Substance abuse as a risk factor for violence in mental illness: some implications for forensic psychiatric practice and clinical ethics (2014), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3907744/>

<sup>2</sup> Honolulu Civil Beat by Eleni Gill (2019): 63% of Hawaii State Hospital Patients Have Used Meth: Methamphetamine also was a factor in repeat hospitalizations: <https://www.civilbeat.org/2019/12/63-of-hawaii-state-hospital-patients-have-used-meth/>

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Biotechnology Information: PMC National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine: Drug Abuse and Psychosis: New Insights into Drug-induced Psychosis, (2017) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5326711/>

**SB-2597**

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 6:43:11 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/7/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-2597**

Submitted on: 1/31/2020 8:13:27 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/7/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Support	No

Comments: