

JAN 22 2021

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 individuals with
2 pre-existing mental health conditions may be particularly
3 vulnerable in an emergency. Social isolation and loneliness are
4 intimately linked to poor health, with data from March 2020
5 showing that significantly higher shares of people who are
6 sheltering-in-place reported negative mental health effects
7 resulting from worry or stress compared to those not sheltering-
8 in-place. In particular, the legislature finds that physical
9 isolation and loneliness during the coronavirus disease 2019
10 (COVID-19) pandemic may present specific health risks for
11 households with adolescents and older adults.

12 The legislature further finds that rural health clinics
13 address inadequate supplies of physicians serving medicare
14 beneficiaries in rural areas and increase availability of
15 medically necessary, face-to-face primary health services and
16 qualified preventative health services furnished by a rural
17 health clinic practitioner, including physicians, nurse



1 practitioners, physical assistants, certified nurse-midwives,
2 clinical psychologists, and social workers. In rural areas
3 where there is little privacy in small, tight-knit communities,
4 residents are dissuaded from seeking mental health service in
5 fear of community condemnation that influences and further
6 prejudices. The legislature finds that rural health clinics
7 serve an essential role in underserved communities such as Ka'u,
8 Hawai'i island, enabling greater appointment availability for
9 medicaid patients.

10 The purpose of the Act is to appropriate funding to the
11 Hawaii Health Systems Corporation to provide support for the
12 expansion of the Ka'u rural health clinic to improve access to
13 urgent care and outpatient behavior health services, thereby
14 reducing the need for emergency services.

15 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$700,000 or so much
17 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2021-2022 and the
18 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
19 2022-2023 to provide support for the expansion of the Kau rural
20 health clinic to improve access to urgent care and outpatient



1 behavior health services, thereby reducing the need for
2 emergency services.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii
4 health systems corporation for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.

6

INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DK' followed by a stylized flourish, is written over a horizontal line.

S.B. NO. 857

Report Title:

Kau Hospital; Rural Health Clinic; Hawaii Health Systems Corporation; Urgent Care; Behavioral Health Services; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation to expand the Kau Rural Health Clinic to improve access to urgent care and outpatient behavioral health services.

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