
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS TO
CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP LEGISLATION GRANTING
PRESCRIPTIVE AUTHORITY TO QUALIFIED PSYCHOLOGISTS
PRACTICING IN THE STATE OF HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, there is a significant shortage of prescribing
2 mental health care providers available to serve the needs of the
3 State's residents in rural or medically underserved communities,
4 especially in Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i counties; and
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6 WHEREAS, the lack of access to appropriate mental health
7 treatment has serious and irrevocable consequences; and
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9 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health, death by
10 suicide is the number one injury-related cause of death among
11 Hawai'i residents; and
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13 WHEREAS, studies have shown that people who attempt or die
14 by suicide often received inadequate or no mental health
15 treatment due to a shortage of mental health providers; and
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17 WHEREAS, while the causes for suicide can be complex, the
18 most commonly reported contributing factors are mental health
19 conditions that, when identified and treated, respond favorably
20 to therapy and psychotropic medication; and
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22 WHEREAS, clinical psychologists are licensed health
23 professionals with an average of seven years of post-
24 baccalaureate study and three thousand hours of post-graduate
25 supervised practice in diagnosis and treatment of mental
26 illness; and
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28 WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association has
29 developed a model curriculum for a Master's Degree in
30 psychopharmacology for the education and training of prescribing



1 psychologists; however, the existing scope of clinical
2 psychologists' practice in Hawai'i does not include prescribing
3 medications; and

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5 WHEREAS, Hawai'i has previously authorized prescription
6 privileges for a number of other health care professionals, and
7 federal facilities have long allowed licensed clinical
8 psychologists with specialized education and training to
9 prescribe psychotropic medications in certain circumstances; and

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11 WHEREAS, residents living on the neighbor islands are
12 especially disproportionately affected by the State's physician
13 shortage, which is attributed to factors such as residing in
14 rural or geographically challenged locations, high costs of
15 living, heavy tax burdens, and low reimbursements; and

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17 WHEREAS, these factors were further exacerbated by the
18 effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic; and

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20 WHEREAS, authorizing qualified clinical psychologists with
21 appropriate advanced training to prescribe from a limited
22 formulary of psychotropic medication will benefit Hawai'i
23 residents; and

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25 WHEREAS, granting prescriptive authority to qualified
26 psychologists will help meet the demands for psychological
27 services in vulnerable populations and provide greater access to
28 permanent mental health services provided by clinical
29 psychologists, especially to those who live in rural or
30 medically underserved communities; and

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32 WHEREAS, a number of other states have adopted legislation
33 authorizing prescriptive authority for advanced trained
34 psychologists as a means of addressing the shortage of adequate
35 evaluation and treatment for their mental health patients and
36 have had success with this practice; now, therefore,

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38 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
39 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022, the
40 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
41 Commerce and Consumer Affairs' Division of Professional and
42 Vocational Licensing, with the assistance of the Board of

1 Psychology, is requested to convene a task force to develop
2 legislation granting prescriptive authority to qualified
3 psychologists practicing in the State of Hawai'i; and
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include members
6 representing other prescribing professions who are amenable to
7 the possibility of prescriptive authority for appropriately
8 trained psychologists and psychologists licensed in the State;
9 and
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to:
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- 13 (1) Review and evaluate laws from other states where
14 psychologists have been granted prescriptive
15 authority, including their subsequent experiences and
16 patient outcomes;
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- 18 (2) Consider any additional conditions or necessary
19 training that would be required to grant prescriptive
20 authority to psychologists practicing in Hawai'i;
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- 22 (3) Determine whether the University of Hawai'i currently
23 has the personnel to provide the advanced training
24 necessary for psychologists to be granted prescriptive
25 authority; and
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- 27 (4) Develop appropriate legislation that would grant
28 prescriptive authority to appropriately trained
29 psychologists in Hawai'i; and
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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force, with the
32 assistance of the Board of Psychology, is requested to submit a
33 report of its findings and recommendations, including any
34 proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty
35 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and
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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be dissolved on
38 June 30, 2023; and
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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
41 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Commerce



1 and Consumer Affairs and Executive Officer of the Board of
2 Psychology.

