

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2492

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 18 2022

RE: S.B. No. 2645
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-First State Legislature
Regular Session of 2022
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health, to which was referred S.B. No. 2645
entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
SERVICES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to allow standard
telephone contacts for the purpose of providing telehealth
services related to behavior health.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure
from the University of Hawai'i System; Hawaiian Island Association
for Marriage and Family Therapy; National Association of Social
Workers, Hawai'i Chapter; Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition;
Hawaii Medical Association; Hawai'i Primary Care Association;
Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association; Hawai'i Public Health
Association; Kauai Integrative Therapies, LLC; Mental Health of
America of Hawai'i; Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center;
Hawai'i Association of Professional Nurses; Self Help Hawaii, LLC;
and twelve individuals. Your Committee received testimony in
opposition to this measure from the Hawaii Medical Service
Association. Your Committee received comments on this measure
from the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Department
of Human Services, The Queen's Health Systems, Hawai'i Pacific
Health, Healthcare Association of Hawaii, and Kaiser Permanente
Hawaii.



Your Committee finds that during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, the Governor's emergency order allowed the use of standard telephone contacts between health care providers and patients to minimize in-person meetings while ensuring continued access to care. Allowing insurance reimbursement for telehealth through standard telephone contacts greatly increased access to care for vulnerable populations, including the elderly, low-income, medically- and socially-complex patients, and those in rural areas who do not have the broadband capabilities, electronic equipment, financial means, transportation options, or technological proficiency to operate sophisticated digital video conferencing software. This measure aims to make provisions of the emergency order permanent as it applies to behavioral health services by including standard telephone contacts for behavioral health services in the definition of "telehealth".

Your Committee has amended this measure by inserting an effective date of January 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2645, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2645, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health,



JARRETT KEOHOKALOOLE, Chair



