

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 11 2022

RE: S.B. No. 2829
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. 2829
entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish provisional or associate level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists and psychologists, and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; and
- (2) Allow psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing other requirements.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Health; Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy; Hawai'i Psychological Association; National Association of Social Workers - Hawai'i Chapter; Wellness Partners Hawaii, Inc.; Elemental Guidance, LLC; Ho'oulu Counseling LLC; Kauhale Healing LLC; and thirty-four individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from eight individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs,



Department of Public Safety, Hawaii Board of Psychology, and thirty-seven individuals.

Your Committee finds that there is a shortage of mental health professionals throughout the State, especially in rural areas. A significant cause of this shortage is that new mental health professionals seeking to complete their hours of supervised practice can encounter tremendous financial difficulty due to Hawaii's high cost of living and the fact that their services are not eligible for insurance reimbursement. This measure would reduce financial hardship for early career mental health providers and those seeking licensure in the field of mental health by allowing for reimbursement under a provisional license and while under the supervision of a licensed supervisor.

Your Committee heard the testimony of many mental health professionals and advocates noting that the measure as drafted does not include licensed mental health counselors, who provide critical mental health services akin to services provided by marriage and family therapists and psychologists. Your Committee finds that mental health counselors should also be included in the measure.

Therefore, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Establishing provisional or associate level licensure requirements for mental health counselors and authorizing insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of January 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

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. 2829, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2829, 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 KEOHOKALOLE, Chair



