

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

House Committees on Human Services and Health and Homelessness

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

8:45 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

In Strong Support

H.B. No. 1053, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Aloha Chairs Mizuno and Belatti, Vice Chairs Amato and Takenouchi, and members of the Committees on Human Services and Health and Homelessness:

The Office of the Governor **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** H.B. No. 1053, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adverse childhood experiences or ACEs can have lasting and lifelong negative effects on the health and well-being of our keiki. Increasing resources for early childhood intervention will create additional support for families and ensure that these families have access to mental health resources.

This bill would help to address this ongoing need by creating a new Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program within the Department of Health. This program would increase access to mental health services for children from birth to age five and work to develop and implement flexible strategies to better understand the needs of our infants and young children across the state.

Many children struggle with mental health challenges, and the pandemic only intensified and highlighted the ongoing challenges they are facing. We are at a critical juncture in increasing awareness of, and access to, mental health services to improve outcomes for Hawaii residents and build healthier communities. H.B. No. 1053 is a step in the right direction to achieving this goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Second State Legislature, 2023 Regular Session

House Committee on Human Services
Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

House Committee on Health & Homelessness
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 8:45 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

by:
Jessi L.K. Hall
Judge, District Family Court
Family Court of the First Circuit

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 1053 – Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

Purpose: Establishes the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program within the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five, develop and implement flexible strategies for the delivery of services and workforce training, and promote better understanding of the needs of infants and young children, the importance of positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-informed care.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary takes no position on House Bill No. 1053, but acknowledges the need for effective mental health programs, to include those for our youngest and most vulnerable members of our community.

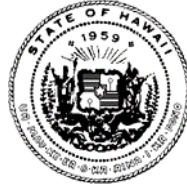


House Bill No. 1053, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
House Committee on Human Services & Committee on Health and Homelessness
Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 8:45 a.m.
Page 2

Many believe that trauma endured by babies does not have a lasting effect. Through our Hawai'i Revised Statutes §587A cases, especially our Zero To Three specialty court, we have learned that just is not true. The actions of adults towards our youngest keiki can have a lifelong impact on their mental health. Our community has had limited access to mental health programs for keiki from ages zero to five. Research shows that when keiki can commence an effective treatment earlier in their development, we observe better outcomes for their future. As a community we owe it to all keiki to be provided with the opportunity to have the best start to life possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 5, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 1053](#) - RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.

Hearing: February 7, 2023, 8:45 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconferencing, State Capitol

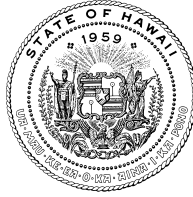
DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and defers to the Department of Health (DOH). DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not replace or reduce priorities identified in the executive budget and forthcoming Governor's Messages.

PURPOSE: This bill establishes the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program within the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five, develop and implement flexible strategies for the delivery of services and workforce training, and promote better understanding of the needs of infants and young children, the importance of positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-informed care.

DHS appreciates the Legislature's investment in early childhood as intervention and other services that strengthen families' ability to observe and respond to their child's needs to

support their child's development will have a lasting positive impact. DHS will continue to work with the DOH and community stakeholders to deliver various services for children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Senate Committees on Health and Human Services
Tuesday, February 7, 2023
8:45 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
In Strong Support of
H.B. No. 1053, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

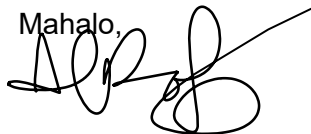
Aloha Chairs Mizuno and Belatti, Vice Chairs Amato and Takenouchi and members of the Committees:

The Office of the Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** H.B. No. 1053, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

As negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to show up in our daily lives, awareness, and prevention of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) is a priority for our state. The Act 209 Trauma-Informed Care task force is developing a recommendations report to embed trauma-informed principles in our state departments. This framework will provide concepts for departments to approach and respond in ways that enhance connection in families, which is a critical element to prevent and interrupt the impact of traumatic experiences.

The Office of Wellness and Resilience is dedicated to addressing the impacts of ACEs for keiki to kupuna, and this bill will increase resources for early childhood intervention and create additional support for keiki and their families through access to effective trauma-informed mental health resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this measure.

Mahalo,


Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA
Executive Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience
Office of the Governor



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

February 5, 2023

TO: Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: H.B. No. 1053 – RELATING TO INFANT & EARLY CHILDHOOD
MENTAL HEALTH
Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2023
Time: 8:45 am
Location: Conference Room 329

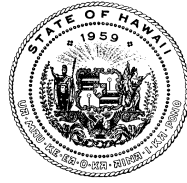
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Supports the Intent

EOEL supports the intent of H.B. No. 1053 and defers to the Department of Health.

EOEL works with stakeholders to establish a system that ensures a solid foundation of early childhood development and learning for Hawaii's children from prenatal to age five. Supporting early mental health and development in the youngest years is critical. Mental health issues, even at this stage of the earliest years, can be caused by biological and/or development factors, experiences of trauma such as family violence, child abuse and neglect, parental substance abuse, and experiencing systems of poverty. These issues may result in developmental delays that could have long-lasting and detrimental impacts to children's health and development.

EOEL supports the Legislature's efforts to provide an infant and early childhood mental health program to implement strategies that aims to support and strengthen young children's growth, development, and learning by identifying, intervening, and preventing issues at some of the earliest stages of life. We also appreciate the Legislature's intent in the bill to support workforce training across the various early learning settings as workforce supports will be critical in implementing effective programming.

We look forward to continuing to work with other stakeholders and departments to continue strengthening the systems of support for our youngest keiki across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1053
RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.**

REP. JOHN MIZUNO, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

REP. DELLA BELATTI, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date: February 7, 2023

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** \$800,000 general fund appropriation.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports HB1053. The last
3 officially published strategic plan from DOH prioritized the need to create and promote systems
4 of care that support infant and early childhood health, in particular 0 – 5 age range, which is
5 when 90% of a child's brain develops.

6 The Office of Wellness and Resilience, the Executive Office on Early Learning, the Lieutenant
7 Governor's early childhood education focus, and many other public and private initiatives are
8 critical stakeholders in this conversation. The department looks forward to continued discussion
9 on this measure to assure that leadership and coordination is robust, and that agency expectations
10 are clear.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

12 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.

13



Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai'i

Date: February 3, 2023

To: Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair; Committee on Human Services
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair; and members of the House Committee on Human Services

From: The Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawaii, dba AIMH HI

RE: House Bill 1053, Relating to The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health System

Hearing: February 7, 2023 8:45 AM

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this very important bill that intends to establish a system of infant and early childhood mental health consultation for children from birth to five years of age. My name is Erin Henderson Lacerdo, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health.

The Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health (dba AIMH HI) was founded in 2008 with the vision that *In Hawai'i the early years are celebrated and revered, first relationships are nurtured, and infant and early childhood mental health is everyone's kuleana.*

Our mission is to be *the go-to resource for sharing expertise and advancing practices that ensure Hawaii's youngest keiki grow up emotionally healthy and resilient.*

This bill presents an incredible opportunity to build a system of consultation, with the potential to create a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate mental health continuum that spans prevention to intervention, that will support not only the children of Hawai'i, but also the workforce that supports those children. There is a critical shortage of mental health services for children 0-5 and their families, and further, many sectors within the early childhood arena are struggling to fill staff vacancies for mental health. High quality consultation can not only increase the quality of existing programs but can also increase staff retention through the creation of a supportive environment.

As the Infant and Early Childhood system is built out, we strongly request the following elements be included as program components.

- 1) **The IECMHC system is competency-based.** It is not enough that a mental health consultant has a mental health license. Supporting such young children requires that the primary caregivers are integrated and considered, and as such, we recommend using nationally accepted competencies set forth by the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health (https://mi-aimh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2016-consultant-competencies_with-Alliance-Logo.pdf) and the Center for Excellence in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (<https://www.iecmhc.org/documents/IECMHC-competencies.pdf>).
- 2) **Consultants are highly qualified.** To assure that consultants are developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive, and specialized in supporting young children and their families, consultants should be selected from the roster of vetted professionals who

Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai'i (AIMH HI)
P.O. Box 235147, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96823
www.aimhhi.org



Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai'i

- demonstrate competency in infant and early childhood mental health and consultation. This roster is managed and maintained by the Public and Private Rostering Body.
- 3) **Consultants are supported.** Consultants receive on going, Competency® based Reflective Supervision. Reflective Supervision will aid in retaining these highly qualified and specialized consultants in the profession.
 - 4) **Consultants are connected.** Consultants have access to and are part of a community of practice that is based in on going professional development and are reviewed annually by the Public and Private Rostering Body.
 - 5) **The field is supported.** There is an ongoing workforce development plan and commitment to investing in the growth, mentoring, and development of future IECMH consultants. IECMH Consultants which in turn support the retention of the overall IECMH workforce that is currently experiencing a critical shortage.
 - 6) **The system is a public-private partnership.** The Integrated Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health Plan (<https://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/hawaii-plans/hawaiis-integrated-infant-and-early-childhood-behavioral-health-iecbh-plan/>) began the work to coordinate efforts between public and private entities. We implore that this plan is referenced and utilized as a resource in developing the system, including the adoption of the definition of IECMH consultation:
 - a. *"IECMHC is a prevention-based approach that pairs a mental health consultant with adults who work with infants and young children in the different settings where they learn and grow, such as childcare, preschool, home visiting, early intervention, community programs and their home. Mental health consultation equips caregivers to facilitate children's healthy growth and development. It starts from the premise that all relationships in a child's life matter and works to promote both strong relationships and supportive environments for children, all of which are key to brain-building."*

AIMH HI will be happy to provide staff and committee members with justification and details of these requested program components.

In partnership with Hawai'i Community Foundation Promising Minds initiative AIMH HI has trained over 60 potential consultants in competency-based consultation.

HB 1053 will build on the work that is already under way to develop an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultation model. Since 2022, Hawaii's IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Council has been working with ZERO TO THREE and Georgetown University on a two-year project to build a sustainable, equitable, accessible statewide IECMH consultation system. The key components listed above are being further developed by the Council.

This cross-sector group of includes representatives of experts and early adopters in home visitation, early intervention, and early childhood care and learning settings. Members of this group come from philanthropy, mental health, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Executive Office of Early Learning, Head Start/Early Head Start, and other invested partners.



Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai'i

The creation of a IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will be able to implement this team's work to ensure that Hawaii can effectively support the social-emotional and mental health needs of our youngest children.

AIMH HI respectfully requests that your committee acknowledge the hard work of the IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Council as laying a foundation for the work to be undertaken by the new IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health created by this bill in your committee report. The new IECMH consultation program created by HB 1053 will be armed with a well-developed action plan that complements and augments existing plans, such as the Early Childhood State Plan, and can build on the work that is already underway.

We thank you for your commitment to a high quality, competency-based system for infant and early childhood mental health consultation. Thank you for this opportunity to testify and offer additional information about Governor Green's timely proposal to create an IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health.

Na'u nō me ka ha'aha'a,

Erin Henderson Lacerdo, LCSW, IECMH-E®
Executive Director
Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health



Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai'i

Date: 2/3/2023

To: Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair; Committee on Human Services
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair; and members of the House Committee on Human Services

From: The Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawaii, dba AIMH HI

RE: House Bill 1053, Relating to The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health System

Hearing: February 9, 2023 9:00AM

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this very important bill that intends to establish a system of infant and early childhood mental health consultation for children from birth to five years of age. My name is Erin Henderson Lacerdo, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health.

The Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health (dba AIMH HI) was founded in 2008 with the vision that *In Hawai'i the early years are celebrated and revered, first relationships are nurtured, and infant and early childhood mental health is everyone's kuleana.*

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This bill presents an incredible opportunity to build a system of consultation, with the potential to create a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate mental health continuum that spans prevention to intervention, that will support not only the children of Hawai'i, but also the workforce that supports those children. There is a critical shortage of mental health services for children 0-5 and their families, and further, many sectors within the early childhood arena are struggling to fill staff vacancies for mental health. High quality consultation can not only increase the quality of existing programs but can also increase staff retention through the creation of a supportive environment.

As the Infant and Early Childhood system is built out, we strongly request the following elements be included as program components.

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Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai'i

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 - 5) **The field is supported.** There is an ongoing workforce development plan and commitment to investing in the growth, mentoring, and development of future IECMH consultants. IECMH Consultants which in turn support the retention of the overall IECMH workforce that is currently experiencing a critical shortage.
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AIMH HI will be happy to provide staff and committee members with justification and details of these requested program components.

In partnership with Hawai'i Community Foundation Promising Minds initiative AIMH HI has trained over 60 potential consultants in competency-based consultation.

HB 1053 will build on the work that is already under way to develop an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultation model. Since 2022, Hawaii's IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Council has been working with ZERO TO THREE and Georgetown University on a two-year project to build a sustainable, equitable, accessible statewide IECMH consultation system. The key components listed above are being further developed by the Council.

This cross-sector group of includes representatives of experts and early adopters in home visitation, early intervention, and early childhood care and learning settings. Members of this group come from philanthropy, mental health, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Executive Office of Early Learning, Head Start/Early Head Start, and other invested partners.



The creation of a IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will be able to implement this team's work to ensure that Hawaii can effectively support the social-emotional and mental health needs of our youngest children.

AIMH HI respectfully requests that your committee acknowledge the hard work of the IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Council as laying a foundation for the work to be undertaken by the new IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health created by this bill in your committee report. The new IECMH consultation program created by HB 1053 will be armed with a well-developed action plan that complements and augments existing plans, such as the Early Childhood State Plan, and can build on the work that is already underway.

We thank you for your commitment to a high quality, competency-based system for infant and early childhood mental health consultation. Thank you for this opportunity to testify and offer additional information about Governor Green's timely proposal to create an IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health.

Na'u nō me ka ha'aha'a,

Erin Henderson Lacerdo, LCSW, IECMH-E®
Executive Director
Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health

HB-1053

Submitted on: 2/3/2023 5:31:08 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/7/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
nanci kreidman	domestic violence action center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha,

there are many clients of the Domestic Violence Action Center whose children are suffering emotional and mental health challenges. this Bill would be enormously helpful to staff needing guidance for supporting families who have suffered the harm of abuse.

we shall look forward to favorable action.

thank you



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Representative Mizuno, Chair
Representative Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Representative Belatti, Chair
Representative Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Re: HB1053, relating to infant and early childhood mental health
8:45 a.m., Feb. 7, 2023

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and members of the committees:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in SUPPORT of House Bill 1053, relating to infant and early childhood mental health**. We also respectfully offer comments for your consideration.

Our brains develop most rapidly from birth to 5 years old, with the first three years being the most rapid of those. One of the most important components of successful development for our youngest keiki is that they have strong, nurturing relationships with adults in their lives—whether it be parents, caregivers or other providers. It's vital that we support children and those who care for them with a system that promotes healthy development and nurturing relationships.

The current system looks after infant and early childhood mental health through services given to each specific child. A dedicated infant and early childhood mental health program in the Department of Health could help to support these existing efforts while expanding their impact by supporting parents and caregivers in their ability to foster healthy and nurturing relationships while knowing when and where to get help for keiki.

We especially look forward to the potential this program can bring to enhancing and collaborating with existing programs and services for young children. We believe an infant and early childhood mental health program can be an important complement to the various existing programs in the Family Health Services Division as well as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

We urge you to advance this important measure.

Mahalo,
Ke'ōpū Reelitz
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



Date: February 3, 2023

To: Committee on Human Services
Representative John Mizuno, Chair

Committee on Health and Homelessness
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Strong Support for HB 1053, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. Over 300 ECAS network partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS strongly supports passage of HB 1053. HB 1053 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

Infant and early childhood mental health has been identified as a top priority by all ECAS teams. Data is showing that our keiki's social and emotional development scores are dropping. It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 need mental health supports. Since 2018, direct service providers, philanthropic organizations and representatives from Department of Health, Department of Human Services and the Executive Office on Early Learning have been working together to implement the [Integrated Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health Plan](#), funded predominately by philanthropy, with close to \$5 million in investments.

State investment and infrastructure is critical at this time to sustain what has been built, expand services, and meet the developmental needs of our keiki. Anchoring infant and early childhood mental health in the Department of Health will strengthen's Hawai'i's competitive opportunities for federal funding, create centralized coordination and enable the integration of IECMH into home visiting, early intervention and child care in a systematic way.

Most recently, Hawaii's IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Team has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable and equitable statewide IECMH consultation system. By December 2023, this council will develop a plan that the new IECMH program in DOH could implement. The momentum is here.

As Governor Green frequently says, "Hawaii's children deserve a trauma-free life." The creation of the IECMH program will focus on prevention, thereby saving millions in downstream mental health interventions and will enable Hawaii's keiki to have a brighter start.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support of HB1053.**

HB-1053

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 3:21:34 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/7/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Tochiki	EPIC Ohana	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Committee on Human Services and the Committee on Health and Homelessness

EPIC Ohana has worked closely with the Association for Infant Mental Health in an initiative called Makua Allies, providing peer support to perinatal mothers experiencing substance use disorder. We have seen the value and importance of using a two generation approach to improve outcomes for babies. Training and system of care coordination are essential for the care of our keiki under 5, and can make a huge impact in the reduction of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and consequently the long term health of the children. An Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health program in the Department of Health can provide that coordination.



February 7, 2023

TO: Committee on Human Services
Representative John Mizuno, Chair

Committee on Health and Homelessness
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair

FROM: Commit to Keiki

RE: H.B. 1053
Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Commit to Keiki **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** House Bill (HB) 1053, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. HB 1053 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Hawaii Community Foundation has partnered with several philanthropic organizations to invest approximately \$5 million in Promising Minds to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. While philanthropy's investment has identified and started to address a critical community need, the demand for services, especially post-COVID, is overwhelming and state participation is critical to both provide additional services and to access federal funding in this new, growing practice area.

In addition, since 2022, Hawaii's IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Council has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable, equitable, accessible, statewide IECMH consultation system. By December 2023, this council will develop a plan the new IECMH program in DOH could implement.

As Governor Green frequently says, "Hawaii's children deserve a trauma-free life." The creation of the IECMH program now will build on and anchor the work already underway and enable Hawaii's keiki to have a brighter start.

Thank you for allowing Commit to Keiki to provide testimony on this important measure.

Commit to Keiki, a project of the Early Childhood Action Strategy, is a public-private collaborative to ensure that Hawai'i's youngest children (birth to 5 years old) and their families have a brighter start. Early Childhood Action Strategy is a project under Collaborative Support Services, Inc. Led by a diverse Steering Committee, with representatives from Hawai'i business, education, early intervention, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, Commit to Keiki serves as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to Hawai'i's youngest keiki and families.



1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1506 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
<https://familyhuihawaii.org>

February 6, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawai`i State Legislature,

On behalf of Family Hui Hawai`i, I would like to provide our support for House Bill 1053 and Senate Bill 1351 establishing the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Program within the Department of Health (DOH) to provide and coordinate a mental health service continuum for children age birth to age five, develop and implement flexible strategies for the delivery of services and workforce training, and promote better understanding of the needs of infants and young children, the importance of positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-informed care,

Additionally, we recommend that the IECMH program require strategies to expand the knowledge and training around IECMH to families as well as the workforce. When families are equipped with knowledge and support to embrace their role as their child's first and most enduring teachers, they can advocate for their children best and therefore partner with the workforce to provide the best and ideal support for children's mental and physical health. Policymakers must consider and support the needs of children's families around health and early learning. In professional circles where we work with families every day, we may inadvertently overlook the voice of constituents whom we serve. It is our responsibility to equip families with the supports to be a partner in the early learning health and wellness system as well as a client of the services that the system provides.

Family Hui Hawai`i is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to strengthening families and communities, reducing violence against children, and promoting the healthy development of children, socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively, through peer to peer connection, parenting education and links to community services. Family Hui Hawai`i is a first contact provider to families with young children, prenatal-5 years serving over 1000 parents and children statewide each year. We provide parents the education content and social supports to raise their children confidently during the critical age of early brain development placing children on a track of healthy development leading to success in school and in life. Each year, we see the struggles that families face every day and the difficulty they have in accessing supports and services. We believe that families are strong, that cultural diversity and family choice are strengths that families build on to raise their children.

Family Hui Hawai`i also recommends that the IECMH program builds upon the work that is already underway through the Promising Minds initiatives supported by the Hawaii Community Foundation and the work of IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Council in Hawaii.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the mental health crisis across all age groups in America. Trauma-informed services for our youngest keiki are especially important during the most critical years of brain development and growth. Research on Adverse Childhood Experiences during the early years show a direct correlation to poor life outcomes including depression, drug abuse, family violence, and early death. The prevalence of childhood and family trauma and stress in Hawai'i has reached crisis levels since the start of the pandemic. The State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services has seen a dramatic decline in infant and toddler social and emotional development. In June 2020, 1000 parents with children <18yo were surveyed nationally. Female, single parents and families with younger children had higher declines in mental health.

Research shows that 52% of children in families with financial hardship are facing emotional distress. The investment in the families of our youngest children is a needed and economically strategic use of funds. During these early years, learning and wellness is about the whole child, physically, cognitively, and social-emotionally. Early learning is not just in the classroom and does not begin at age 4 years at PreKindergarten. Learning is everywhere the child is – at home, at their auntie's house, family child care provider's home, early learning centers, and at home with their family. Families play a critical role in preparing their children to be successful in school and life. They are the constant in the many learning environments that their children will experience as they grow. It is important to have an easy access point for families to receive information about their child's whole growth and development.

Prevention strategies building family resilience, social and concrete supports, parenting and early childhood development knowledge are proven to alter the outcomes of early adversity, reducing overall family stress and increasing wellbeing. Funding towards a full-time position for the IECMH program would provide a critical step in building a strong system for supporting our children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB1053 and SB1351. I urge you to move these bills forward.

Respectfully,



Cherilyn Shiinoki

Executive Director



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

TO: Committee on Human Services
Representative John Mizuno, Chair

Committee on Health and Homelessness
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair

FROM: Micah A. Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President

DATE: February 6, 2023

RE: Support for HB 1053, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **strongly supports** House Bill 1053 (HB1053) relating to infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH).

HCF is supporting the bill as it relates to the [Promising Minds](#) Initiative focused on keiki ages 0-5 and their families; and the potential positive impact it has on the broader [Health and Wellness sector of the CHANGE Framework](#) of which preventative mental health is a large part. It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports.

In 2019, HCF launched Promising Minds, a four-year initiative dedicated to improving early childhood behavioral health in Hawai'i by investing in the future of our keiki, especially those at-risk of trauma, abuse and neglect, or dealing with their aftereffects. Hawai'i Community Foundation and co-funders of Promising Minds have invested \$5 million in strengthening Hawai'i's mental health system so it includes infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families. Promising Minds has worked with over 100 early childhood providers and 60 clinicians across our island home to provide them with new knowledge and skills in early childhood mental health and trauma-informed practices. Through the Promising Minds evaluation, early childhood providers that participated in professional development were asked about the trauma that they encounter when working with families, HCF learned that domestic violence (52%) and emotional abuse (48%) were reported as most prevalent. The Promising Minds evaluation has helped illuminate that:

- Practitioners from a variety of early childhood settings (child care, home visiting, early intervention, early Head Start) **recognized the need for more practitioners within the system** that are trained or specialize in trauma-informed care, such as IECMH consultants.
- Practitioners shared that an **increase in trained, trauma-informed care professionals** would ensure that children and families do not get lost when navigating systems.
- Practitioners are interested in **strengthening their internal data practices** to guide program improvement related to trauma-informed practices and child and family wellbeing. Many want to be able to better communicate the results of their program. A stronger IECMH system would help to address this program need.

Another component of Promising Minds is the IECMH Fellows Program by the Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai'i (AIMH HI). The purpose of this program is 1) to increase the proficiency and confidence of mental health professionals that work with Hawai'i's youngest children and their families and 2) grow the number of consultants that serve as a direct resource for those families and the community that serves them. As a result of the Fellows Program, Hawai'i has a growing network of professionals that have demonstrated competencies in IECMH. Characteristics of the Fellows include an average of 10 years practicing in the mental health field, primarily working in a program or agency; they are program managers, social workers, licensed clinical therapists and counselors.

The Promising Minds evaluation findings showed that IECMH Fellows identified the children and families they work with had experienced the following types of trauma.

Emotional abuse	94%
Foster care/transition of care	94%
Exposure to domestic violence	90%
Physical abuse or assault	90%
Homelessness	90%
Neglect	90%

Additionally, the efforts of Promising Minds, the IECMH Fellows Program, and other activities help to meet key objectives in [Hawai'i's Integrated Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health Plan](#). The Plan developed out of a critical need for integration to ensure behavioral health support was accessible and equitable for all keiki. Through its implementation through public-private partners Hawai'i has received new federal funds to support the work, increased the IECMH workforce and made efforts to strengthen the systems serving children and families.

Finally, HB1053 builds on work that is currently underway. Since 2022, Hawai'i Community Foundation has participated alongside nine organizations and state agency divisions on the IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Team. The public-private team has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable and accessible IECMH consultation system. By December 2023, the team will have a finalized plan. The new IECMH program in DOH could utilize this plan to implement its programming.

I believe this bill will address the needs caused by trauma and toxic stress that increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic has waned, infants, toddlers and preschoolers and their families are experiencing poor mental health. If we provide an ounce of prevention in the early years, the social and health benefits can positively impact a lifetime.

Mahalo for hearing this important bill and I urge the Committee to move HB1053 forward.

HB-1053

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:43:54 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/7/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louisa Lee	Ka ?Umeke Ka?eo	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This testimony is in support of HB1053/ SB1351, to create an infant and early childhood mental health program in the department of health. This act aligns with the State’s efforts to increase the availability of preK/preschool programs across Hawai‘i, and is an essential proactive approach to ensuring children from birth to age five have access to mental health services. This is one of many actions regarding mental health that needs to occur if we are to develop thriving ‘ohana and communities.

February 4th, 2023

TO: Health and Human Services House Committees

RE: HB 1053-Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Aloha friends,

My name is Amanda Luning. I am a community consultant, advisor, and advocate in many areas, and specialize clinically in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH), substance use disorder treatment for pregnant and parenting women, and dyadic trauma therapies for families with young children. I am the Clinical Director of the Salvation Army Family Treatment Services (SAFTS) and a Board Member with the Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai'i (AIMH HI). ***My testimony for this bill is as an individual and not on behalf of an agency or organization.***

IECMH professionals are very unique, and while I admit I cannot say that without some bias, please allow me explain.

The early years truly are incredible. The pacing of development is unparalleled in other periods of the lifecycle. From the most miniscule and often unnoticed processes of an infant learning to coordinate their suck-swallow-breathe reflex; to a toddlers first sense of independence via “mine” and “no”; to the preschoolers discovery that they can take images in their mind and manipulate clay or paint and make something beautiful; early childhood is such a huge part of determining who we will grow to be. Yet this magic (*and critical neurological development period*), can pass by in a flash, well nurtured or not.

I became a preschool teacher more than two decades ago because I loved working with the magic of children. What I quickly came to find out, however, was that truly “loving children” meant that I too had to love some really, really difficult grown ups. And I will admit, this was hard.

Very young children do not develop outside of their nurturance constructs. The “*critical early brain development period*” that folks in our field are always referring to doesn’t happen in isolation. IECMH as a practice (*both in prevention and intervention*) is about holistic, interdisciplinary, multigenerational understandings of attachment and caregiving. It is about supporting those *around* our keiki to ensure that they have what they need to grow up mentally and physically healthy and resilient.

Traditionally the professionals that work with “*little ones*” aren’t trained in substance abuse and domestic violence. About the societal and psychological strains of generations of inequity and oppression. Severe mental illness and trauma are not usually in the curriculum when we’re learning about the importance of sensory play and circle time. And to add just a little more context, early caregiving has also been historically seen as “*women’s work*” (*both in the home and professionally*), and is still highly misunderstood and underappreciated, and tremendously low paying.

So we end up with undercompensated nerdiness and excitement about critical brain development baby magic AND all of things that are involved with struggling grown ups? Sounds like a really great way to cause lots of secondary-trauma and serious stress! Not only do IECMH folks need a lot of specialized education, experience, and training, they also need really good support. A basic fidelity of the field says that ongoing relationship-based reflective practice (*also known as Reflective Supervision and Consultation-RSC*) is one of the best ways to support quality and growth in the field, increase curiosity and compassion, and avoid provider isolation and burnout (*sound at all like a parallel at all for what we hope for our keiki and families!? Good trauma-informed care reminds us we’re all just people!*).

House Bill 1053 provides a framework for making the intentional expansion of this crucial work possible by: establishing “*the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program within the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five, develop and implement flexible strategies for the delivery of services and workforce training, and promote better understanding of the needs of infants and young children, the importance of positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-informed care.*”

I support this Bill as a long-time specialized clinical mental health professional and advocate, but also as just a human being who truly believes that early investment and prevention are the best way to support any positive social change. If we can believe it now, we *will* see it later.

Most Sincerely,



Amanda M. Luning, IECMH-E®, LMHC

Feb. 5, 2023

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Subject: **Measure** - HB 1053 RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE
Hearing Date - Feb. 2, 2023
Time - 8:45 AM
Location - Conference Room 329

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. I am with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Education (COE) and serve as the director of the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE³) Project.

I am in support of HB 1053.

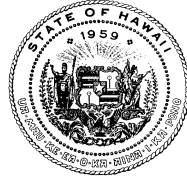
I have been working in the field of early care and education for over four decades in a variety of positions, including providing more support to the early care and education workforce on how to address the mental health needs of infants, toddlers, preschoolers.

I know firsthand that Hawai'i needs a better coordinated and enhanced infant and early childhood mental health program, for children from birth through age five.

I am support of establishing the Infant and Early Children Mental Health (IECMH) Program within the Department of Health (DOH) to provide and coordinate mental health services for young children.

This program will develop and implement flexible strategies for the delivery of services. and workforce training, and promote better understanding of the needs of infants and young children, the importance of positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-informed care.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1053
RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.**

REP. DELLA BELATTI, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date: February 7, 2023

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** \$800,000 general fund appropriation.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports HB1053. The last
3 officially published strategic plan from DOH prioritized the need to create and promote systems
4 of care that support infant and early childhood health, in particular 0 – 5 age range, which is
5 when 90% of a child's brain develops.

6 The Office of Wellness and Resilience, the Executive Office on Early Learning, the Lieutenant
7 Governor's early childhood education focus, and many other public and private initiatives are
8 critical stakeholders in this conversation. The department looks forward to continued discussion
9 on this measure to assure that leadership and coordination is robust, and that agency expectations
10 are clear.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

12 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.

13

HB-1053

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:28:03 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/7/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bethany Albrecht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support House Bill 1053 (HB 1053), Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. HB 1053 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under age 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Promising Minds initiative and many partner organizations and funders across the state have been working together to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. All of this work is grounded in trauma-informed practices. The creation of a IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will help to coordinate and address the social-emotional and mental health needs of our youngest children. There is a critical shortage of mental health services for children ages 0-5 and their families and many sectors within the early childhood arena are struggling to fill staff vacancies for mental health. I have participated in Promising Minds and as a result our keiki and families have benefited...]. I am excited to see this work continue and grow through state investment.

In addition, since 2022, Hawaii's IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Team has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable, equitable and accessible IECMH consultation system. By December 2023, this Coordinating Team will develop a plan the new IECMH program in DOH could implement.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify on this important bill. I urge the Committee to move HB1053 forward.