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MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

**WRITTEN ONLY**  
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES,  
& HOMELESSNESS  
ON  
HOUSE BILL NO. 1666

**February 10, 2022**  
**9:00 a.m.**  
**Room 329 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1666: 1) establishes a Mental Health Crisis Pilot Program within the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide licensed mental health counselors to assist first responders in responding to mental health crises in areas with high rates of homelessness for a period of two years; 2) requires DHS to administer the pilot program in each county with a population greater than 600,000; 3) sets reporting requirements for DHS; and 4) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds to DHS in FY 23 for the pilot program.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 8, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1666 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 10, 2022, 9:00 a.m.  
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers comments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace budget priorities identified in the executive budget and defers to the Department of Health.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to establish a pilot program within the Department of Human Services (DHS) to make one or more licensed mental health counselors available to assist county first responders in responding to mental health crises in areas with high rates of homelessness. The bill also makes an appropriation and requires a report to the Legislature.

As currently drafted, this bill establishes the pilot program within DHS and limits the pilot to counties of a specific size. Of note, the Department of Health's Adult Mental Health Division (DOH AMHD) currently administers similar Crisis Mobile Outreach (CMO) services for severely mentally ill adults, dispatched through the Hawaii CARES line and available on Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii island. DOH AMHD also administers a continuum of related services for severely mentally ill adults, including Homeless Intensive Case Management (HICM), crisis stabilization beds, and mental health group homes. DHS Med-QUEST Division (MQD) is

involved in discussions with the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness and with DOH AMHD on ways to align and improve the behavioral health crisis continuum of care, including for individuals who are houseless.

In addition, DHS notes that the City and County of Honolulu launched its new [Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement \(CORE\) program](#) in October 2021. CORE is designed to triage and connect homeless individuals to behavioral health and medical services and collaborates with both Honolulu Emergency Services Department and the Honolulu Police Department.

Given the availability of similar existing services administered by DOH, DHS respectfully suggests that DOH may be better suited to provide the additional mental health counselor resources described in the bill. Additionally, DHS suggests that the Legislature consider adding resources to support and expand existing resources rather than creating a separate pilot.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

February 10, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **HB 1666 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 10, 2022, 9:00 a.m.  
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

**POSITION:** The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this bill, respectfully offers comments, and defers to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Health (DOH) regarding the placement of the proposed pilot. The Coordinator requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to establish a pilot program within DHS to make one or more licensed mental health counselors available to assist county first responders in responding to mental health crises in areas with high rates of homelessness. The bill also makes an appropriation and requires a report to the Legislature.

The Coordinator recognizes the critical importance of mental health services and notes DOH and the counties currently administer a range of programs similar to the proposed pilot. If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator defers to DOH on potential enhancement of its existing efforts and how the proposed pilot fits within the existing system of mental health care.

Specifically, DOH Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) oversees a broad range of mental health services that support the work of first responders, such as police. For example, AMHD administers the Mental Health Emergency Worker (MHEW) program in partnership with police to authorize emergency transports for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.

Additionally, AMHD oversees Crisis Mobile Outreach (CMO), Homeless Intensive Case Management (HICM) for individuals with frequent law enforcement or emergency department utilization, and a broad continuum of housing and stabilization beds for severely mentally ill adults. DOH Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) administers similar services for youth.

As Chair of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), the Coordinator works closely with DHS, DOH and the counties to align programs like CMO with other homeless services. For example, the Coordinator is actively engaged in conversations with the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Community Services, Honolulu Police Department, Honolulu Emergency Services Department, DOH AMHD, and DHS Med-QUEST Division on efforts to streamline referrals for the City's new [Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement \(CORE\) program](#). Specifically, CORE is designed to divert non-emergency medical and behavioral health calls from 911, and recent conversations include the design of flow charts and decision trees regarding referrals to crisis bed stabilization and other related services.

In addition to systems-level coordination, the Coordinator and staff regularly share information regarding programs like CMO, CORE, and HPD community policing efforts with homeless and behavioral health providers statewide through [monthly webinars](#) and [bi-weekly provider meetings](#). Recent webinars have included presentations from HPD, the DOH AMHD Administrator, and the four counties, and upcoming sessions will focus on new medical respite efforts on Hawaii island and updates on CORE implementation.

Finally, the Coordinator acknowledges that mental health responses is one piece of a more comprehensive effort to address homelessness and housing instability. In addition, the HICH adopted recent policy priorities in 2022 advocating for increased low-income housing development for individuals transitioning out of homelessness, reducing upfront barriers to rental housing, and expanding programs that assist key homeless sub-populations (e.g., unsheltered youth, adults with severe mental illness, etc.). For more information about the 2022 HICH policy priorities, visit <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/advocacy>.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
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**THE HONORABLE RYAN I. YAMANE, CHAIR**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, AND HOMELESSNESS**  
**Thirty-First State Legislature**  
**Regular Session of 2022**  
**State of Hawai`i**

February 10, 2022

**RE: H.B. 1666; RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.**

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and members of the House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") submits the following testimony in support of H.B. 1666.

Among the chronically homeless population, national statistics indicate that 30-60% either have mental health conditions or have experienced lifetime mental health problems.<sup>1</sup> State-specific data indicates that 23% of homeless individuals in Hawaii may be severely mentally ill.<sup>2</sup> In Hawaii, it is currently estimated that 46 out of every 10,000 people are homeless—one of the highest rates in the nation—and 70% of our homeless individuals live in unsheltered locations.<sup>3</sup> Every day, our county police officers and other first responders (as a whole) come into contact with homeless individuals who have mental health issues, yet they are not qualified—nor is it their role—to serve as mental health professionals or mental health crisis interventionists.

While it is unclear what is meant by “available,” as used in H.B. 1666 to describe the mental health counselors who would be assisting county first responders, the Department supports the general premise that having the direct assistance of licensed mental health

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<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *Current Statistics on the Prevalence and Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness in the United States*; July 2011. Available online at: [https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs\\_campaigns/homelessness\\_programs\\_resources/hrc-factsheet-current-statistics-prevalence-characteristics-homelessness.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/homelessness_programs_resources/hrc-factsheet-current-statistics-prevalence-characteristics-homelessness.pdf); last accessed February 9, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Based on sheltered individuals in Hawaii. See U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *2015 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report: Part I: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness in the U.S.* Available online at: [https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC\\_PopSub\\_State\\_HI\\_2021.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_PopSub_State_HI_2021.pdf); last accessed February 29, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> “2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress,” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), dated March 18, 2021. Available online at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>; last accessed January 25, 2022.

counselors could better equip first responders in handling the myriad of mental health issues that they come across in the community.

Because H.B. 1666 does not outline specific details regarding the proposed pilot program, the Department respectfully suggests that a steering committee or working group be formed, to better formulate a plan before the pilot program is implemented. Also, the Department notes that the Honolulu Police Department has initiated at least two programs in recent years that may have served similar purposes: HELP (Health, Efficiency, and Long-Term Partnerships)<sup>4</sup> and LEAD (Letting Everyone Advance with Dignity).<sup>5</sup> These may be worth looking into before any plans for the proposed pilot program are finalized.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu supports the passage of H.B. 1666. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/36258370/new-hpd-unit-offers-help-to-homeless/>; last accessed February 9, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/law-enforcement-assisted-diversion-lead/> ; last accessed February 9, 2022.





## **HB1666 Mental Health Counselor with First Responders Pilot**

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair

Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022, 9:00 am: Videoconference

### **HSAC Supports HB1666:**

*GOOD MORNING CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies.*

This pilot program as well as others are needed to **get support to first responders to help them as well as the people in distress**, especially when so many people have mental health or substance abuse issues.

**One of the hidden values of having a mental health counselor help first responders is that many of the first responders that are dealing with crisis situations develop their own mental health challenges.<sup>1</sup>**

- There is large movement nationally to recognize that **30% of first responders develop health conditions** including depression, PTSD, anxiety, sleep disorders and substance abuse disorders.
- They need the support to deal more effectively with crisis situations to safeguard their own mental health.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.

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<sup>1</sup> SAMHSA: First Responders: Behavioral Health Concerns, Emergency Response and Trauma 2018  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/supplementalresearchbulletin-firstresponders-may2018.pdf>