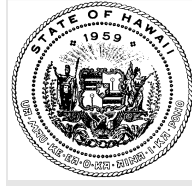


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII



KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A., M.P.H.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1830  
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR  
REPRESENTATIVE JENNA TAKENOUCI, VICE CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON: HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date: February 2, 2024

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health supports this measure and offers comments.

3 **Department Testimony:** There is a clear workforce shortage of mental health providers in the  
4 country and particularly in the state of Hawai'i. In 2022 it was estimated that there were 284  
5 providers per 100,000 individuals with a mental health concern in the state,<sup>1</sup> which falls within  
6 the second worst quartile compared with other states nationwide. As of November 1, 2023,  
7 findings indicate that the percentage of need for mental health professionals met in Hawaii is  
8 14.1%.<sup>2</sup> This data suggests a broad need for additional mental health services across the state.

9 For Hawai'i to achieve behavioral health equity, more effective systems and policies are  
10 direly needed to proactively address workforce shortages of mental health providers. When  
11 individuals are unable to access needed care early on, their risk increases for escalating  
12 symptoms that require high-level, restrictive, intensive, and costly mental health services.

13 This bill supports the ability of graduate students who provide mental health services to  
14 remain in our state and provide these much-needed services, while completing their training and

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<sup>1</sup> Hawai'i Health Matters, Mental Health Provider Rate. Mental Health Provider Rate, 2016-2021. Published April 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.hawaiihealthmatters.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=319&localeId=14>

<sup>2</sup> Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Published November, 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/mental-health-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Percent%20of%20Need%20Met%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

1 licensure requirements. Individuals trained at the doctoral level are difficult to recruit and retain  
2 in the state. This bill provides a reasonable path, commensurate to national standards, for  
3 doctoral level psychologists to obtain their license and while continuing to provide services for  
4 the state. It is very clear that there is a need for additional mental health providers to support  
5 vulnerable populations throughout Hawai‘i.

6 This bill also addresses provisions for retaining providers trained as master’s level  
7 Marriage and Family Therapists, Mental Health Counselors, and Social Workers. The provisions  
8 in this bill for each of these professions, including psychologists, will help retain mental health  
9 providers trained in or working in the state of Hawai‘i so that needed services can be delivered to  
10 the people that need and deserve to have access to these mental health supports.

11

12 **Offered Amendments:** None.

13

14 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA  
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JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

NADINE Y. ANDO  
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I HAZAMA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

## Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the  
House Committee on Health and Homelessness  
Friday, February 2, 2024  
9:45 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

On the following measure:  
H.B. 1830, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rochelle Araki, and I am the Executive Officer for the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division's (Division), Marriage and Family Therapy Program, Mental Health Counselors Licensing Program, and Social Worker Licensing Program. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) require psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; (3) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances; and (4) appropriate funds.

The Department limits its comments to Part II, Part III and Part V and Part VI of this bill as follows:

H.B. 1830, requires the Department to grant, upon application and payment of proper fees, provisional licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist and mental health counselor to those who meet certain requirements to obtain reimbursement for services rendered. While the Department appreciates the intent of this measure, the creation of this new license type appears contrary to the provisions of Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) section 26H-2, which provides, in part, that “the regulation and licensing of professions and vocations shall be undertaken only where reasonably necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of consumers of the services; the purpose of regulation shall be the protection of the public welfare and not that of the regulated profession or vocation.” A new licensure scheme should not be implemented solely for the purpose of reimbursement. There may be unintended consequences of regulating or requiring licensure of a currently exempted population of professionals who provide mental health services. For example, the cost of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed on to consumers.

Regarding part V of this bill, the Department expresses similar concerns that authorizing reimbursements to a currently exempted population: social worker interns, could have unintended consequences such as higher costs for services rendered. These costs could be passed on to consumers.

The Department is unclear whether the requirement for provisional licensure in Part II and III only applies to new applications received beginning July 1, 2026. Currently, interns are exempted from licensure; those practicing under the exemptions of licensure would automatically be subject to license requirements on July 1, 2026, thereby, causing possible disruptions in patient care.

Additionally, the Department requests clarification regarding page 5, lines 3 to 9, lines 12 to 18 and, page 6 lines 5 to 7. HRS §451J-1 defines clinical supervision as occurring “*by a licensed marriage and family therapist whose license has been in good standing in any state for two years preceding commencement and during the term of*

*supervision, or any licensed mental health professional whose license has been in good standing in any state and who has been a clinical member in good standing of the association for the two years preceding commencement and during the term of supervision.*” This bill limits direct supervision to only a licensed marriage and family therapist that is in good standing with the Department. The Department supports including supervision from any Hawaii licensed mental health professional who is in good standing with the Department and has been a clinical member in good standing with the association for the two years preceding commencement and during the term of the supervision.

The Department also seeks clarification regarding the language included on page 20, lines 12 to 18 and page 21, lines 1 to 6, lines 14 to 16. HRS §453D-7(a)(2) requires clinical supervision under “*a licensed mental health counselor, psychologist, clinical social worker, advanced practice registered nurse with a specialty in mental health, marriage and family therapist, or physician with a specialty in psychiatry.*” Again, this bill only allows direct supervision from a licensed mental health counselor that is in good standing with the Department. The Department supports including a Hawaii licensed psychologist, clinical social worker, advanced practice registered nurse with a specialty in mental health, marriage and family therapist, or physician with a specialty in psychiatry that is in good standing with the Department.

Regarding Part VI, the Department appreciates the consideration of personnel and appropriation for funding. However, the Department requests appropriation of general funds upon implementation to ensure the division can hire staff and update our system to accommodate the new licensure as revenues supporting these expenses will not be collected until a later timeframe. Consequently, the Department respectfully requests that the following general fund amounts be inserted in the bill to ensure proper implementation:

1. General fund appropriation to allow the Division:

- a. To establish, recruit, and hire an office assistant V (OA-V) to process provisional license applications expeditiously. The sum of \$73,406<sup>1</sup> or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this position.
- b. To make the appropriate updates to its internal database. The required updates may take upwards of 500 support hours to create these new license types and the associated requirements. These hours would be added onto the already extensive daily work of the Division's developer, program analyst, and others outside of the division. The sum of \$75,000 or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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<sup>1</sup> OA-V: \$44,760 (salary) + \$28,656 fringe = \$73,406



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE**  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
415 S. BERETANIA ST. #415  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**House Committee on Health and Homelessness**  
Friday, February 2, 2024  
9:45 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference  
**In Support of**  
**H.B. No. 1830, Relating to Mental Health Treatment**

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the Committee:

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** H.B. No. 1830, Relating to Mental Health Treatment.

Established through Act 291 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022) the overall aim of the OWR is to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. OWR is focused on breaking down barriers that impact the physical, social and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people. OWR explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support.

Reflecting on the Maui Wildfires, the long-lasting effect this traumatic event has placed on the lives of our families and our communities, coupled with the preceding unresolved traumatic events like the pandemic, a new type of trauma phenomenon called cascading trauma is occurring. Prioritizing access to mental healthcare is crucial to address cascading trauma.

H.B.1830 increases access to mental health professionals (MHP) and assures individuals, couples, and families are able to acquire their services and support, regardless of their financial situation. This bill also provides support and removes barriers for our mental health professionals. Allowing provisional licensures ensures our next generation of MHPs are adequately trained and prepared to provide high-quality service, in addition to relieving potential financial burdens for them and their clinical supervisors.

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is an approach to understanding and responding to the widespread impact of trauma. By passing this bill, the State would be upholding the TIC principles of Safety, Peer Support, Empowerment, and Voice and Choice, which strengthens our pathway towards a trauma-informed state. As such, the OWR supports the purpose of H.B.1830.

Mahalo

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

## **Testimony of the Board of Psychology**

**Before the  
House Committee on Health and Homelessness  
Friday, February 2, 2024  
9:45 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:  
H.B. 1830, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Fernandez, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Psychology (Board). The Board offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) require psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; (3) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social worker intern in certain circumstances; and (4) appropriate funds.

The Board will review this bill at its scheduled meeting later today and will update the committee on its position. In the meantime, the Board's legislative committee offers the following comments on Part IV of the bill only:

- 1) This bill is substantially similar to S.B. 343, and is the companion bill to H.B. 1300 from the 2023 legislative session, which included amendments requested by the Board.
- 2) This measure appears to contain the language the Board recommended last year, which recognized the Board's position that completing a qualifying doctoral program and internship program is essential prior to taking the licensing examination.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.





February 2, 2024

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

Re: HB 1830 – Relating to Mental Health

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1830 which will establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, while authorizing insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances.

Hawaii is currently in need of greater access to behavioral health care services and HMSA understands that. We've been working with our provider community to address the issue through various efforts including recent telehealth legislation, support of the interstate physician compact, and the delivery of integrated primary care.

While we understand the need to provide access to more mental health providers, we also want to ensure that our members are receiving high quality care from their health care provider. Our concern with the current legislation is that without established criteria and scope of service, we believe more clarity is needed to define the circumstances that would be eligible for reimbursement to those with provisional or associate licensures.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on HB 1830.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu  
Assistant Vice President  
Community and Government Relations

**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
**Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair**  
**Representative Jenna Takenouhci, Vice Chair**

**February 2, 2024 9:45 A.M. – Rm 329 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**Testimony in Strong Support of HB1830**

The National Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) strongly supports HB1830 Relating to Mental Health, which establishes associate level licenses for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists; and clarifies the ability of a Licensed Social Worker to bill under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

This bill – along with several other measures introduced during this legislative biennium (SB343, HB1300, HB1242, HB776, and SB1444) does several important things. It creates an Associate level of Licensure for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists, based on the current LSW level of licensure for social workers, which will allow for a mechanism by which clinicians who have completed their graduate school courses can be compensated while they are receiving their required period of supervised practice.

It also clarifies that a LSW social worker can bill insurance under the clinical license of the supervising LCSW.

These steps will create the opportunity to open up more clinicians in supervision to see clients in the very near future, which is vital given the ongoing stressors resulting from Maui Fires, as well as the pandemic; and will immediately address the current shortage of *clinical*-level mental health providers, and long wait times to get in to therapy as a client.

It also opens the door to more diverse candidates in the field of mental health. Few people can afford to work for two years either unpaid or underpaid, as they complete their clinical supervision, which leads to an overrepresentation in our profession of people from affluent backgrounds and an underrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the fields of Social Work, Psychology, Mental Health Counseling, and Marriage and Family Therapy.

This bill can help encourage people who have completed their graduate education in Hawai'i to stay and work here, if they can receive a living wage. We strive to educate students in cultural competency and the importance of understanding the community in which they practice, to create clinicians who will thrive here, then do very little to help keep them in state, after graduation.

It also provides the opportunity for those in supervision to get experience working in private practices and doing more direct therapy, under supervision, which serves to strengthen them as clinicians when they reach the level of independent practice.

### **Suggested Amendments to Strengthen Purpose/Legislative Intent**

We would like to offer some black-letter amendments to clarify the language on **page 47, line 19- p. 48, line 6** of this bill relating to the supervision of social workers seeking licensure as a “Licensed Clinical Social Worker” as follows:

“Services provided by a supervised licensed social worker or L.S.W. [~~social work intern~~] obtaining post-masters clinical social work experience under the supervision of a Hawaii-licensed clinical social worker or individual identified in subsection (a)(3)(D) ; . . . provided further that the billed rate for the licensed social worker or L.S.W. [~~social work intern~~] is commensurate with the requisite level of training.

We also believe the language in HRS 467E-6(8) should be revised to replace the phrase relating to “clinical social work interns” to reflect the current practice, which is to use the phrase: **“under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker L.C.S.W.”**

We believe these amendments make clear that billing must be done through the supervising Licensed Clinical Social Worker. This is important as there is currently confusion in insurance billing practices.

Moreover, HRS 467E authorizes those with a Masters in Social Work (M.S.W.) degree to obtain a “License in Social Work” or “L.S.W.”, as set forth in HRS sections 467E-2. Through the L.S.W. licensure, the *supervised* clinical services provided by the L.S.W. qualifies for insurance reimbursement as part of their clinical training to obtain status as a “Licensed *Clinical* Social Worker” (L.C.S.W.). HRS 467E-7(3)(C) requires this supervised training of M.S.W.s to qualify for an L.C.S.W..

While a practitioner with a M.S.W. does not need a L.S.W. to fulfill the hours of clinical supervision required to obtain an L.C.S.W., we are seeking to establish a mechanism so the L.S.W.'s supervised clinical services can be reimbursed under their supervising L.C.S.W.'s insurance. This is the crux of these proposals: eliminating a requirement that these practitioners work many years for free before achieving clinical licensure, risking brain drain and burgeoning mental health provider shortages.

In this effort, we want to emphasize the **“clinical”** nature of the licenses we hope to be established through these proposals – which would allow insurance reimbursement for the services provided by supervisees/trainees gaining the required training, skills, and guidance necessary to independently perform one-on-one *clinical* therapy.

Additionally, with respect to the “Practice of Social Work,” and the “Limitations of Scope of Practice,” as defined and outlined in HRS Sections 467E-1 and 467E-1.5 respectively, it is important to recognize that “licensed bachelor social workers” (L.B.S.W.s) and “licensed social workers” (L.S.W.s) are NOT authorized to independently perform “Clinical diagnosis or psychotherapy, or both, [as may be] provided by a licensed clinical social worker [L.C.S.W.]” pursuant to the definition of the “Practice of Social Work” in HRS 467E-1(8). (*Underlining added.*)

To reiterate, the current law *already* allows insurance reimbursement for the clinical services provided by those with a “License in Social Work” (“L.S.W.”) who are pursuing a *clinical* license (L.C.S.W.) pursuant to the requirements outlined in HRS 467E-7(C)(3) – which requires supervision by a Licensed “Clinical” Social Worker (L.C.S.W.) that meets the requirements set forth in HRS 467E-7(3)(D).

In this vein to provide more clarity, **we also recommend that existing statutory language on page 46, lines 5-19 which appears to “grandfather” potential clinical supervisors between July 1, 2004 – July 1, 2009 be repealed**, as this language is now moot and potentially confusing.

We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in this bill, as well as in HB1242 explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. **We suggest the insertion of the words “flaw in” on page 2, lines 13 before “regulatory oversight”** for clarification; and also **respectfully request that HB1830’s purpose language be amended to include further language to enumerate the following** additional purposes:

- *Clarifying in law that Associate Level practitioners would not be allowed to do anything they aren’t already permitted to do now, except have their services billed through the insurance covering their supervisor’s treatment and supervision; and*
- *Enabling and encouraging post-degree, pre-licensed mental health practitioners to stay in Hawaii to complete the required hours of supervised work for full licensure – thereby promoting a diverse pool of homegrown providers that can best meet the needs of Hawaii’s people.*

Finally, **we support recommendations from other mental health professionals to remove the requirement that associate licensees in Psychology, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling pass their licensing exam *before* obtaining an “associate license”, [as provided on p. 5, lines 10-11; and p. 20, lines 19-21; p. 40, lines 1-2]** as this creates another financial and logistical burden to potential providers. Removing these testing requirements would be consistent with the purpose of this measure.

We thank you for your careful attention to this critical mental health access bill and are available for further questions and clarifications.

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

Sincerely,

 MSW, LCSW

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LCSW

Executive Director, National Association of Social Workers- Hawaii’i Chapter



The Hawaiian Islands Association  
for Marriage and Family Therapy  
(HIAMFT)

We know systems.  
We know relationships.  
We know FAMILY MATTERS.

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**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS**

**Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair**

**Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

**February 2, 2024 9:45 A.M. – Rm 329 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**Testimony in Strong Support of HB1830 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports **HB1830** as a critical tool in improving access and meeting the overwhelming demand for quality mental health services, particularly during and following the prolonged pandemic. Here's a snapshot of recently recorded ratios of clients/patients to mental health providers in Hawai'i:

Hawai'i 320:1

Honolulu 370:1

Kauai 480:1

Maui 550:1

Moloka'i has no registered providers.

Obviously, this demand far exceeds the viable supply of mental health providers. Among other provisions to remove administrative barriers and increase the speed with which trained and qualified practitioners can enter the workforce, HB1830 would establish provisional/associate-level licensure requirements for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs), Mental Health Counselors, and Psychologists. This would ensure a regulatory framework that would encourage relevant and quality training to associate-level providers by authorizing insurance reimbursement for supervised care provided by these post-degree/pre-licensed mental health professionals during the 12 to 24-month period in which they are completing required supervised practice hours under the mentorship and guidance of an independently licensed mental health professional.

In 23 other states, associate-level licensure is already established as common practice. This regulatory approach not only expands clients' access to providers, it also creates a viable career path for would-be providers: Hawai'i residents interested in pursuing careers as mental health professionals (of which there is a 10,000-15,000 shortage), but who might otherwise not be able to actualize such a career due to outdated statutes that often force post-graduate/pre-licensed providers to work for sub-par wages or even pro bono (while also paying a supervisor to oversee their work, costing MFT supervisees anywhere from \$10,000-\$30,000 for 1,000 hours of supervised direct care during their 2-year post-degree period) and/or in contexts that do not provide sufficiently relevant clinical experience (e.g., prisons, substance abuse centers, case management, etc.) to ensure providers are ready for independent licensure.

This bill would update Hawai'i's licensing statutes in ways that would not only modernize our processes, but ultimately improve the quality and utilization of mental health care provided in our state by creating a more robust system of clinical accountability/training and a financially viable career path for local would-be providers who have a deep understanding of local cultures/customs and who in turn, may be better able to connect with clients, who in turn will be more likely to actually utilize available mental health services.

Moreover, this bill will reduce the loss of potential future mental health professionals to other careers or one of the other 23 states that have already modernized their licensing laws. In turn, this will contribute to the state economy through associate licensing fees, taxes from wages earned by associate-level licensees, and local purchases made by these licensees.

Overall, many aspects of our mental health system are deeply flawed, understaffed, and are in no way prepared to manage the onslaught of mental health issues that the general population are experiencing during and after this pandemic. The consequences of this pandemic, both short- and long-term, in terms of mental health, could be significant and could weaken the Hawai'i health care system.

If we don't develop the means to stave off and/or treat these mental health issues, individuals and families will suffer even more than they already have/do. In all areas of life, untreated mental health issues can become chronic and with crippling, long-term effects – for individuals, families, and communities.

These circumstances call for a change in the paradigm and practices of mental health care in Hawai'i. Our current model of mental health care does not adequately address the complex challenges of modern living. Let's re-vision current models of mental health care delivery by learning from other states and being creative and flexible in how we provide mental health services. To protect our community now and in the future, let's take appropriate action now. Mental health care cannot be an afterthought.

## **SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS FOR CLARITY & CONSISTENT WITH PURPOSE**

### **To Clear Away Unintended Hurdles to Associate Licensure:**

- **Please delete the requirements that associate licensees pass their full licensure exam *before* obtaining an “associate license”, [as provided on p. 5, lines 10-1; p. 20, lines 19-21; and p. 40, lines 1-2] as this creates another financial and logistical burden to potential providers. We suspect some of this language was a drafting oversight in modeling the new associate licensing language after full licensure language in the respective statutes – but inadvertently retaining examination requirements. Imposing these testing requirements for an Associate mental health provider would function as replicating the same requirements as full licensure – rendering the need for associate-level licensure moot. As a consumer matter, this testing requirement would not prevent the Associate from performing any of the services the would-be Associate Licensee already performs – which will always be under supervision. Otherwise, the would-be**

Associate would be disincentivized to stay in Hawaii and move to another state where they could be paid – as frequently happens today.

- We support the removal of testing requirements for associate licensees for all mental health professions, including psychologists – as this will help remove unnecessary barriers and develop the network of local providers in *all* mental health disciplines.

In this vein, please revise the language relating to the exam requirements for Associate-level Psychologists on **p. 39, line 20 – p.40, line 2** to be consistent with the language retained in all House Drafts of HB1300 (a substantially similar measure from the 2023 legislative session). The Senate revised HB1300 to impose exam requirements; however, the American Psychological Association recommends that license applicants **take this exam as soon as they can after graduating**, and clearly states on its website<sup>1</sup> that “***In most jurisdictions**, you’re qualified to sit for the test once you complete the educational requirements for your doctoral degree.*” (Emphasis added.)

Accordingly, we recommend revising the relevant purpose section language on p. 3, lines 8-11 to be consistent with HB1300HD2, p. 1 lines 11-13, as follows:

***“(2) Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing the supervised experience required for licensure;”***

As well as the following language from HB1300 HD2, on p.37, lines 18-20 be used instead:

***“The applicant shall not be required to complete the requirements of paragraph (2) to be eligible to take the examination required by paragraph (3).”***

- To address concerns from the DCCA Provisional Vocational & Licensing Division that Marriage and Family Therapy Interns would be required to obtain an associate license, **we recommend that the language on P. 12, lines 1-3 be retained.** It is not our intent that such interns be exempted from licensure, but that they be incentivized to obtain their Associate License. This would result in more fees for the DCCA.
- We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in this bill, as well as in HB1242, explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. **We suggest the insertion of the words “flaw in” on page 2, lines 13 before “regulatory oversight”** for clarification; and also **respectfully request that HB1830’s purpose language be amended to include further language to enumerate the following additional purposes:**
  - *Clarifying in law that Associate Level practitioners would not be allowed to do anything they aren’t already permitted to do now, except have their services billed through the insurance covering their supervisor’s treatment and supervision; and*

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2007/09/eppp#:~:text=In%20most%20jurisdictions%2C%20you're,requirements%20for%20your%20doctoral%20degree.>

- *Enabling and encouraging post-degree, pre-licensed mental health practitioners to stay in Hawaii to complete the required hours of supervised work for full licensure – thereby promoting a diverse pool of homegrown providers that can best meet the needs of Hawaii’s people.*

We also support clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter’s (NASW) testimony regarding the use of the term “intern” – as our statute uses this term for students, not licensees or graduates; and we agree their statute and language should run parallel in structure as ours. We also recommend NASW’s suggested language on insurance billing be included as well.

## POLICY POINTS TO ADDRESS CONCERNS PRESENTED BY THE DCCA PVL

In testimony on substantially similar measures, ([i.e. SB1444](#)) the DCCA PVL stated a number of concerns relating to the need for additional regulation under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 26H; potential increased costs to consumers; and perceived invalidation of intern exemptions from this licensure.

First, we note the extensive purpose language in this measure detailing the crisis-level need for mental health providers. While PVL states the intent of this provisional/associate-level licensure proposal is “*solely for the purpose of reimbursement*”; we respectfully submit that such a characterization unfairly casts the mental health professions as solely focused on profit. That is not why we became therapists; and we should not be required to work for thousands of hours for free, leaving droves of potential patients on waiting lists for at least 6 months or more, to prove otherwise. It is indeed in the public interest, and for the “*protection of public welfare*” that we support the limits of the brain drain of homegrown, culturally-competent talent to other jurisdictions that value them with provisional/associate-level licensure. Half the other states have NOT deemed such licenses to be harmful.

Second, the presumption that “*the costs of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed to consumers*” is actually contrary to the reality. When insurance reimbursement is provided, patients would no longer need to pay out of pocket for these supervised services – as many supervisors require to compensate for their time providing such mentorship and service.

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

Sincerely,

*Mary A Navarro*

Mary A. Navarro, MA, LMFT, President  
The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy





Subject: HB1830-- Support

To the Honorable Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB1830. The Hawai'i Counselors Association (HCA) Executive Board and members support HB1830. HCA currently has over 100 members who provide mental health counseling and related services to the community or are enrolled in graduate programs. Almost a third of our members are graduate students who would benefit directly from the passing of HB1830. This does not include recent graduates who are currently working on their post-graduate experience. The HCA Executive Board and the majority of members (who have provided feedback) expressed strong support for HB1830. We feel strongly that the bill would open opportunities for graduates of mental health-related programs to enter the field while increasing access to mental health services in our communities, particularly underserved populations. These benefits are seen in over 20 other states that have already established associate-level licensure for mental health professionals.

The intent of HB1830 is to expand the quality of mental health services by allowing provisional/associate-level licensure for mental health practitioners. Hawaii currently has a shortage of licensed mental health professionals, and many providers have waitlists. HB1830 will help to address the shortage of mental health providers in Hawaii by allowing graduate-level professionals to enter the field at an associate level, thus increasing the number of qualified professionals in the mental health field. It will also create a career pathway for graduates of mental health-related programs, including social work, mental health and professional counseling, marriage and family therapy, and clinical psychology.

Additionally, the HCA Executive Board offers comments in acknowledgment and support of appropriating the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Professional Vocational Licensing with additional funds for necessary personnel and improvements to database infrastructure, which are crucial to the implementation of this bill.

Overall, HB1830 will create more job opportunities for pre-license mental health professionals while also addressing the need for more providers and improving access to services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1830.

Sincerely,

Christine M Park, PhD, LMHC, REAT, NCC  
President, Hawai'i Counselors Association



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1830: RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

TO: House Committee on Health and Homelessness

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Hearing: Friday 2/2/24 at 9:45 AM; CR 329 & via videoconference

Chair Belatti and Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 1830**, which establishes a provisional or associate level licensure for marriage and family therapist, mental health counselors, and psychologists. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of providing counseling services to the people of Hawai'i.

The mental health workforce has historically endured a shortage of qualified mental health providers (includes psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, counselors, marriage and family therapist, and advanced practice nurses). The pandemic has exacerbated this workforce shortage, while increasing the overall need for mental health services. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has years of experience providing counseling services and has been able to train and develop highly qualified mental health professionals to add to the workforce. This bill would provide the opportunity for organizations like ours to expand on workforce development and contribute to improving access to mental health services in Hawai'i.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports this bill which will increase the workforce capacity of qualified mental health professionals to address the mental health crisis in Hawai'i.

We urge your support for this bill and ask for your assistance in its passing during this legislative session.

Please contact our Director of Advocacy and Community Relations, Shellie Niles at (808) 527-4813 or [shellie.niles@catholiccharitieshawaii.org](mailto:shellie.niles@catholiccharitieshawaii.org) if you have any questions.



## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

### Testimony to the House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Friday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, 9:45 a.m.

Videconference

HB 1830, Relating to Mental Health

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Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Health & Homelessness!

We write in strong support of HB798 which would establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances.

#### PRO BONO LEGAL COUNSEL

Paul Alston

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Mental Health America of Hawai'i (MHAH), an affiliate of the renowned national organization, is a highly regarded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the State of Hawai'i. For nearly 80 years, MHAH has been fulfilling its mission "to promote mental health & wellness through education, advocacy, service, and access to care" through its vision of 'mental wellness for all.' We endeavor to reduce the shame and stigma of mental illness and improve the overall care, treatment, and empowerment of those with or at risk for mental health challenges across all stages of life in Hawai'i.

This proposal would increase access to critical mental health services in Hawai'i where provider shortages are dire. This is particularly important considering the ongoing youth mental health crisis and statewide trauma related to the Maui fires. Furthermore, this proposal has the potential to recruit and retain local clinicians and improve the overall quality of mental health services through on-the-job training.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation, and we are grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,



Bryan L. Talisayan  
Executive Director



# Hawai'i Psychological Association

*For a Healthy Hawai'i*

P.O. Box 833  
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521 -8995

## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

**Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair**

**Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

February 2, 2024 9:45 A.M. – Rm 329 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

### **Testimony in Strong Support of HB1830 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

**The Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) strongly supports HB1830** as a critical tool in meeting the burgeoning demand for quality mental health services – which is especially timely as the emotional and mental toll of the Maui Fires, as well as the lingering effects of the pandemic and associated hardships continue to be felt by all our residents, prolonged now for several years. These events have exacerbated the chronic shortage of mental health providers in Hawaii.

Of 37 states recently surveyed, 21 already have an associate licensing structure for Associate-level Psychologists in place.

This bill expands access to much-needed high quality mental health services, provided by local practitioners, and will significantly increase the speed with which trained, qualified, credentialed, and culturally cognizant practitioners can enter the workforce and meet Hawaii's demands. There is a critical shortage of mental health professionals in Hawaii, particularly in rural areas; and this bill helps to reduce some arbitrary and/or administrative obstacles to practicing here.

To become licensed as a psychologist, Hawaii Revised Statutes requires candidates to have completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) in psychology, including practicum experience comprised of a full time one-year psychology internship; followed by at least one year of supervised practice experience after completing the degree; and then a passing score on a rigorous national examination.

This proposal helps to alleviate several financial hardships psychology trainees in Hawaii typically face while on this path. New professionals seeking to complete their hours of supervised practice are having tremendous difficulty managing financially - due to Hawaii's very high cost of living.

The associate licensing framework in this bill will authorize insurance reimbursement for work done by pre-licensed, "post-doc" psychology trainees. Post-docs often work in an agency or other setting where they are supervised closely by a licensed psychologist, but insurance plans vary greatly on whether they will reimburse the agency or supervisor for services provided in this way. Some post-docs end up working for free, while maintaining other jobs to survive. Many move to mainland states where associate-level licensure is already in place.

This bill also addresses unnecessary administrative barriers experienced by state-employed psychology post-docs. Current law allows non-licensed individuals who have earned their doctoral degree to be hired into state psychologist positions before licensure; however, these

employees must obtain licensure within two years of hire, and then cease practicing if the license is not obtained in that time period. The state has interpreted this to mean they must be terminated from their state position if this occurs.

During the pandemic, the Board of Psychology did not meet for a prolonged period to approve several candidates' licenses, and several state-employed psychologists lost their jobs due to no fault of their own. Practitioners at the state hospital and in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division were terminated. This is a wholly avoidable hardship for these individuals, and the clients they were serving. The language proposed in this bill would allow the board to give a state-employed psychologist more time to obtain their license under such extenuating circumstances; and would also help others who may need more time due to, for example, the need for maternity or other medical leave.

Another issue that causes financial hardship and delay during this post-doctoral period is the timing of the license application process and examination requirements – the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP). The American Psychological Association recommends that license applicants **take this exam as soon as they can after graduating**, and clearly states on its website<sup>1</sup> that ***“In most jurisdictions, you’re qualified to sit for the test once you complete the educational requirements for your doctoral degree.”*** (Emphasis added.)

Currently, according to the Board of Psychology’s administrative rules, applicants must complete their 1-year post-doctoral experience; apply for licensure; then be “seated” for the required examination (the EPPP); then pass it before they can be licensed. This process can lead to a many-month delay before they are allowed to practice as a psychologist. Many licensure candidates apply to take the exam in another state (incurring further personal expense) so that they can expedite the board of psychology review process by having their passing grade in hand when their application is reviewed by the Hawaii Board.

### **SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO HARMONIZE WITH OTHER STATES TO RETAIN TALENT**

Prior iterations of this proposal required the board to allow licensure candidates to take the exam as soon as they complete their doctorate, consistent with the purpose of this proposal in removing barriers to licensure. Accordingly, we recommend revising the relevant language on p. 3, lines 8-11 to be consistent with HB1300HD2, p. 1 lines 11-13, as follows:

***“(2) Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing the supervised experience required for licensure;”***

as well as the following language from HB1300 HD2, on p.37, lines 18-20 be used (instead of what is currently on p. 39, line 20- p.40, lines 1-2):

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2007/09/eppp#:~:text=In%20most%20jurisdictions%2C%20you're,requirements%20for%20your%20doctoral%20degree.>

*“The applicant shall not be required to complete the requirements of paragraph (2) to be eligible to take the examination required by paragraph (3).”*

In this vein, we support recommendations from other mental health professionals to remove the requirement that associate licensees in Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling pass their licensing exam *before* obtaining an “associate license”, [as provided on p. 5, lines 10-11; and p. 20, lines 19-21] as this creates another financial and logistical burden to potential providers.

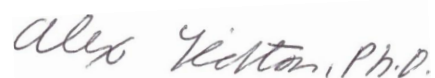
We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in this bill, as well as in HB1242 explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. We therefore suggest the insertion of the words “flaw in” on page 2, lines 13 before “regulatory oversight” for clarification; and also respectfully request that the purpose language be amended to include further language to enumerate the following additional purposes:

- *Clarifying in law that Associate Level practitioners would not be allowed to do anything they aren’t already permitted to do now, except have their services billed through the insurance covering their supervisor’s treatment and supervision; and*
- *Enabling and encouraging post-degree, pre-licensed mental health practitioners to stay in Hawaii to complete the required hours of supervised work for full licensure – thereby promoting a diverse pool of homegrown providers that can best meet the needs of Hawaii’s people.*

Furthermore, we support the **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter’s testimony regarding insurance billing and clarifying the use of the term “intern”.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill, and for your commitment to Hawaii’s mental health.

Sincerely,



Alex Lichton, Ph.D.  
Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 9:40:02 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support.

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 5:30:47 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erin Gustin	Pau Hana Counseling, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings, my name is Dr. Erin Gustin, MA, PsyD and I am a licensed clinical psychologist and the founder and owner of one of Hawai'i's largest mental health counseling centers, Pau Hana Counseling, LLC. We currently employ 40 therapists and serve almost 2000 residents of Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of this bill being passed. The current state of mental health services on this island is untenable. We turn away hundreds of Hawai'i residents every month who desperately need mental health services due to lack of availability of licensed clinicians. And yet, we have half a dozen associate therapists email us every month, trying to get jobs as therapists to help Hawai'i residents. There is a huge disconnect between services needed vs our ability to provide them. As a large counseling organization, who has been dedicated to serving the Hawaiian islands for almost 10 years, in the current state of affairs, we are left with two choices, either to not pay our associate counselors for the hard work they do, or to force clients to pay cash for the intern services. Many of these Hawai'i residents that we are asking to pay cash have great insurance that they pay a lot of money for that they really want to use for services, and we end up turning a great deal of people away that desperately need help because of this reason. Passing this bill would greatly improve the accessibility of mental health services to our Hawai'i residents. We would be able to pay associates for their services, and allow residents to use their insurance for services. Cash pay is not sustainable long term for many of our residents, and thus we end up not really serving their needs. As a counseling center, we take almost nothing from these cash pay clients for them to be able to receive services and to make sure that our associates get paid and complete their hours necessary to become licensed therapists. With rising prices of everything in Hawai'i, it is becoming more and more difficult to live here, and most associate therapists cannot provide services and get their hours without some sort of stipend. If this bill were passed, it would link the need for services with the need for insurance reimbursements that is desperately needed for us therapists to continue to provide mental health services to our residents.



**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:31:04 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Navarro	Hawaiian Islands Assn of Marriage and Family Therapists	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Associate Licenses for Marriage and Family Therapists, Psychologists, Social Workers, and Mental Health Counselors have already been adopted by many states as a way to increase the mental health workforce available to everyone residing in those states. It also helps keep our graduate interns working here in Hawai'i instead of having to leave the state to earn a living while they are accumulating the required 3,000 hours of Supervised Intern work prior to being eligible to take the licensing test here in Hawai'i.

I strongly support this bill as a vehicle to increase the trained mental health professionals residing in Hawai'i.

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 12:32:06 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dawn Martin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 1830 - Relating to Mental Health

Dawn Martin

dawnpatrolassessments@gmail.com

(808) 358-8538

January 31, 2023

Della Au Belatti

Committee on Health and Homelessness

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Conference Room 329

Dear Committee Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Representatives,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1830, a crucial bill relating to mental health, and I urge the committee to pass this legislation for the betterment of our community. As a licensed professional and certified clinical supervisor in the field of mental health, I am acutely aware of the critical shortage of mental health professionals in our state, and the far-reaching consequences this shortage has on the well-being of our community.

The provisions outlined in HB 1830, including the establishment of provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, represent a significant step forward in addressing the pressing need for mental health services. The authorization of insurance reimbursements is a pivotal measure that will enhance accessibility and affordability for individuals seeking mental health care and many other states have this in place already.

One of the key challenges facing our state is the insufficient number of mental health professionals, spanning psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and mental health counselors. This scarcity leads to unmanageable wait times for appointments, particularly impacting individuals in rural areas who already face geographical barriers to accessing healthcare services. The resulting domino effect of prolonged suffering, coupled with a reluctance to seek help, not only exacerbates mental health issues but also contributes to a myriad of societal challenges.

By passing HB 1830, the state legislature can take a significant step towards ameliorating these challenges. The bill's emphasis on establishing clear pre-licensure requirements and clinical supervision for mental health professionals and providing insurance reimbursements will help alleviate the strain on the existing mental health infrastructure, ensuring that individuals across the state have timely access to the care they need.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I trust that you will prioritize the mental health needs of our citizens by supporting HB 1830.

Sincerely,

Dawn Martin, LMHC, CSAC, CCS

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 4:43:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dawn Baxter	Dawn Baxter, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dawn Baxter, a Marriage and Family Therapist, concerned citizen, etc. residing in Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.

Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.

Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent

Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Dawn Baxter, MS, LMFT, CSAC, ICADC

CHARMAINE HIGA-MCMILLAN, PHD  
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST, #1010  
HILO, HI 96720

**Support for HB1830 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals**

Dear Committee Members,

I am a licensed psychologist and I am a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. I am also currently serving as the Director of the [MA Program in Counseling Psychology \(Clinical Mental Health Specialization\)](#) at UH Hilo. I am testifying as an individual citizen of Hilo, HI.

HB1830 aims to establish provisional or associate level licensure requirements for Mental Health Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists and Psychologists in the years prior to full licensure. A primary purpose of the bill is to authorize insurance reimbursements to associate license holders in certain circumstances. This bill not only creates more job opportunities for mental health professionals, but it will also improve access to mental health care for the citizens of Hawaii.

HB1830 would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on the neighbor islands, where there is a significant shortage of qualified mental health providers, to help meet the demand for mental health services. **This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community. Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access to mental health services.**

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

Sincerely,



Charmaine Higa-McMillan, Ph.D.

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 5:32:58 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Logan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a clinical psychologist, I would like the opportunity to supervise postdoctoral trainees in pursuit of licensure and to ensure adequate training and familiarity with our unique patient populations in Hawai'i. Without this Bill passing, I am unable to do that as there is no mechanism to reimburse the trainee or the supervisor for their work. I have an ongoing waitlist due to staffing shortages across Hawai'i so volunteering hours is not feasible. Passing this Bill will allow for direct supervised access to retain our well-trained providers in Hawai'i rather than requiring them to relocate to the continent for their hours and hope they return a few years later.

As a coordinator of the Maui Strong Mental Health Response, we could have (and still could) greatly expand services accessible to those affected by the disaster if this bill was passed. We continue to rely on overextended licensed providers and well-intentioned but uninformed providers from the continent to attempt to meet the increased need. Even before this tragedy, waitlists and provider shortages created unacceptable delays in mental health care in our state.

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawai'i and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Diane Logan, Ph.D., ABAP, CSAC, ICDAC

Clinical Psychologist

Board Certified in Addiction Psychology

Past-President, Hawai'i Psychological Association

Past-President, Hawai'i Island Psychological Association



**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 5:39:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Support for SB1830**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse Senate Bill 1830, a pivotal initiative aimed at establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

As someone currently navigating the challenges of being an "Intern MFT" in the State of Hawai'i, I intimately understand the hurdles faced by emerging professionals in our field due to the absence of an associate license, a support system that many other states have successfully implemented. The limitations imposed by our current status not only hinder our ability to be reimbursed for services but also place us under significant duress, reducing the time we can dedicate to serving our communities.

The absence of an associate license compels emerging professionals like myself to seek alternative income sources to sustain a living in Hawai'i, creating an additional layer of complexity. This reality underscores the urgency of Senate Bill 1830, as it addresses a crucial need for financial stability while simultaneously fostering a conducive environment for emerging professionals to serve their communities effectively.

Moreover, the bill is a beacon of hope for those of us who have faced challenges in finding employment that aligns with our field of expertise, hindering our readiness for licensure. Senate Bill 1830 is not just a piece of legislation; it's a catalyst for closing the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities.

I urge you to consider the significant positive impact Senate Bill 1830 can have on the mental health landscape in Hawai'i and support its swift passage.

- **Modernization of Practice:**
- This bill aligns Hawai'i with nearly half of all states that already have an associate/training license, modernizing our practices to meet contemporary needs.

• **Access to Quality, Local-Kine Care:**

- Current provider-to-patient ratios in Hawai'i show a stark need for more mental health professionals.
- And even if we improved provider-to-patient ratios by importing therapists from the continent, Hawai'i Island's better ratios but poor health outcomes and factors indicates a gap in care utilization.
- Local examples, like the tragedy in Lahaina, underscore the need for culturally responsive, local mental health providers.
- NAMI's recommendations highlight the importance of culturally responsive care, which this bill supports by growing local professionals.

· **Mechanism of Accountability:**

- Interim licensing helps ensure that pre-licensed therapists adhere to professional standards and complete their licensure hours effectively.
- This process also promotes better supervision and mentoring, vital for quality mental health care.

· **Combating Brain Drain:**

- Keeping our talented mental health professionals in Hawai'i is crucial. This bill can help reduce the brain drain that our state is currently experiencing.
- Local upbringing often translates to a higher likelihood of professionals staying or returning to Hawai'i, vital for maintaining a diverse and culturally aware workforce.

· **Economic Impact:**

- Employing local providers keeps money within the community, supporting our economy.
- Importing providers does not address the unique economic and cultural dynamics of Hawai'i.

· **Challenging the Status Quo:**

- The current expectation for therapists to work extensive unpaid hours post-degree is discriminatory and unsustainable, especially in Hawai'i's economic climate.
- This bill addresses these barriers, making the profession more accessible and equitable.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Koch, Intern MFT

509-781-1559

[kochkounseling@gmail.com](mailto:kochkounseling@gmail.com)

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 5:43:02 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
lilia Glauberman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I testify that support for this bill

**Jeffrey D. Stern, Ph.D.**  
**1433 Kamehameha IV Rd**  
**Honolulu, HI 96819**

**THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE**  
**REGULAR SESSION OF 2024**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS  
REP. DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR  
REP. JENNA TAKENOUCI, VICE-CHAIR

Testimony in support of HB 1830, Relating to Mental Health

Hearing: Feb. 2, 2024 9:45 A.M., Rm. 329

Jan. 31, 2024

Honorable Chair Au Bellati, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the State House committee on Health and Homelessness. I am writing to express my **strong support** for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai‘i.

As a professor and supervisor of graduate students in clinical psychology (PsyD students), I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities.

HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by creating opportunities for emerging professionals. By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai‘i. Additionally, HB1830’s provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population. Finally, by allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, HB1830 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service. It also appropriates funds to support administrative changes that will be required.

Most importantly, this legislation will improve access to care while ensuring oversight and it will allow our post-docs to begin their careers in Hawai‘i rather than moving to the mainland or elsewhere, where they have associate licensure.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my mana‘o.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Stern, PhD  
Psychologist and Assistant Professor of Psychology  
Hawai‘i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:11:13 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
YiLin Fang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is YiLin Fang, a graduate student studying mental health counseling, residing in Honolulu.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.

Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.

Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent

Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

YiLin Fang

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:14:44 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon Thornburg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shannon Thornburg, intern Mental Health Counselor at University of Hilo residing in Hilo, Hawai'i.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

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Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent

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I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.



Sincerely,

Shannon Thornburg  
Intern Therapist UH Hilo  
9713209082  
sthornbu@hawaii.edu

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:22:04 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Spira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill, which brings our State into compliance with the Standards of other States which hire Psychological Associates to serve patients who could not otherwise afford or find therapists to assist them. In this time when there is a deficiency of providers, allow Psychological Associates, under the supervision of Licensed Psychologists, to see patients and get billed for their services. Without such billing, there is no incentive, indeed a disincentive, for Psychologists to take on the supervisory role and risk of a Psychological Associate.

James Spira, PhD, MPH, ABPP

Former Professor, University of Hawaii

Former Member, HI DCCA Board of Psychology

Former President, Hawaii Psychological Association

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:26:06 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sean W. Scanlan, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Sean Scanlan, and I am a licensed clinical psychologist and also a psychology professor. I support this bill because I believe it will bring more immediate services to the people that need it. Mahalo.

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:24:27 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nicole Loria	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a pre-licensed therapist I was not able to refer clients from my previous work as a substance abuse counselor in an outpatient clinic to my new position in a private practice because I cannot take their insurance. This blocked my ability to continue their treatment plan and caused unnecessary stress on my clients. Other states, such as Colorado, offer options like Licensed Professional Candidate Certifications which allow pre-licensed professionals to work with insurance based clients, making mental health care accessible to all. Hawai'i is in a mental health crisis with the Native Hawaiian population suffering increasing numbers in drug addiction, child and domestic abuse, homelessness and poor physical and mental health outcomes. Thus, this state is in dire need of increased mental health care options to better serve its people. This bill is a step forward in that direction.

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:51:16 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Powers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**To the Honorable Committee Members**

**Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Emily Powers, and I am a current intern practicing mental health counseling in Hilo, Hawai'i.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Emily Powers

## **Written Testimony in Support of HB1830**

**To the Honorable Committee Members**

**Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is *Christine Martinez-Suzukawa, LMFT, a Marriage and Family Therapist* residing in Wailuku, HI.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i. Now more than ever, we need more mental health providers in Hawai'i as our state suffers more natural disasters, increasing economic stressors and an increase in violent crimes.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Christine Martinez-Suzukawa, LMFT  
Choicepoint Psychotherapy, LLC  
Wailuku, HI

**January 31, 2024**

**Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

*Sincerely,*

**Paula T. Morelli, MSW, PhD, LCSW** [morelli@hawaii.edu](mailto:morelli@hawaii.edu) (808)372-4578



**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 10:46:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miranda Spring	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i. I am a currently clinical psychology graduate student. I have witnessed firsthand the challenges the individuals on our islands face in obtaining mental health care. The effects of the Maui fires is only one recent example of the urgent need for providers to fill gaps in care. My generation is ready to take ACTION and make an impact on our community. For us to do that, it starts with you.

SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals, must like myself, when entering the mental health field to address the shortage of providers**
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services through affordable and accessible avenues**
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery by streamlining the licensure process**

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for dedication in improving the mental health of our community.

Mahalo,

Miranda Spring

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 5:10:20 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jodie E. Gerson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 5:38:45 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amma King	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**To the Honorable Committee Members**

**Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is *Amma King*, a *pre-licensed mental health counselor* residing in Honolulu, HI.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai’i’s economy

*As a recent graduate of UH Hilo's Counseling Psychology program, I have found it personally challenging to use my skills and knowledge toward the mental health of Hawai'i residents due to my lack of license. It would take 2-4 years for me to obtain post-graduate hours needed to get a license in order to practice, and securing a relevant position that would allow me to work toward those hours has been challenging and is not as straightforward as it initially seemed.*

*Being able to work as a mental health counselor with a provisional license would be helpful in getting the experience needed to become licensed, and it would be a great benefit to our communities and individuals academically credentialed in this field.*

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Amma King

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 6:15:04 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dr. John Souza, Jr.	Elemental Guidance, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**To the Honorable Committee Members**

**Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. John Souza, Jr., a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, residing in Hilo.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. John

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 6:28:14 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Misty Tashina Bradley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Thank you all for your efforts in considering the collective mental health of our community. There are several bills up for consideration that have the potential to demonstrate the legislature's commitment to our island 'Ohana. HB1830 needs the full support and follow-through of our elected officials. As a student at Chaminade University in the Marriage and Family Counseling Psychology program, as a business owner, as a home owner, as a dedicated member of my Kailua-Kona community, the pathway of providing mental health services in Hawaii is difficult and creates unnecessary financial strain on myself and my family as I must provide pro-bono services to meet the requirements of not only my program, but my licensure requirements as well. I have aspirations to continue on in pursuit of my PsyD to further service my community, however, the current Doctoral licencing requirements are very difficult to factor into my long-term plans - especially as I factor in how I plan to provide for my children's education as they approach their own college years.

Please consider passing into law ALL bills relating to improving our mental health licencing pathways that pay our students who have interest in improve our state's access to mental health professionals. Hawai'i deserves to be a state that sets the example for other states on our care provided - as we do in many other areas. Don't let these bills die before they are passed into law.

My respect and kindest regards to all of you.

Misty Tashina Bradley, LMT

associated with Pau Hana Counseling, LLC and Hawaii Holistic Care, LLC

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 6:32:02 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kim Pierce	Root2Rise Counseling Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good work - these efforts will make mental health services more available. It will also significantly strengthen the professional development track of mental health providers in Hawaii - making it more likely they will complete licensure and more likely to provide services in State. Mahalo



**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 7:07:18 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lauren Ampolos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lauren Ampolos, PhD

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 7:38:59 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Meriah Nichols	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I support this bill as addresses the economic barriers that currently exist, in which post-degree therapists are expected to work extensive unpaid or very low paid hours. It will help to keep talent and expertise in Hawaii and prevent brain drain. It also promotes better supervision and mentoring for post-grad therapists.

Thank you,

Meriah Nichols

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:38:51 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christy Chadwick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Christy Chadwick

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:44:54 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sadea Campbell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sadea Campbell, a graduate student in the Counseling Psychology program at UH Hilo, residing in Hilo.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.

Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.

Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent

Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Sadea Campbell

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:59:05 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hitomi Demura-Devore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Dear Committee Members,**

**I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.**

**I'm a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, providing mental health care in Hawai'i for the past 8 years. Since the COVID pandemic, the need for mental health care has increased tremendously and I have heard from many people in the community who have not been able to receive necessary care due to the shortage of psychotherapists. I have also witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by:**

- 1. Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals: By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.**
- 2. Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services: The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.**
- 3. Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery: Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, HB1830 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.**

**I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.**

**Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.**

**Sincerely Yours,**

**Hitomi Demura-Devore, LCSW**

**Staff Counselor**

**Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i**

**mdemuradevore@gmail.com**

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:08:30 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Fenton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

As an individual born and raised in Hawaii, who has worked as both a social worker and therapist, I understand how critical this issue is to providing needed services to the people of Hawaii. Training the next generation and ensuring increased access to care in a sustainable way is needed. The people of Hawaii and those seeking to provide care deserve to have this bill passed.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Fenton



**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:14:12 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emma Ishihara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the esteemed members of the committee,

I am writing this testimony in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands, to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging professionals to stay in Hawaii and meeting the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to testify on this bill,

Emma.

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:15:21 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emily Polk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Emily Polk, a University of Hawaii graduate student of counseling psychology, residing on the west side of Hawaii Island.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.

Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.

Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent

Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,  
Emily Polk

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:20:47 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachel Ferguson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Written Testimony in Support of HB1830**

**To the Honorable Committee Members**

**Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rachel Ferguson, a student completing my master’s degree in Mental Health Counseling residing in Volcano, Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai’i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai’i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing

the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Rachel Ferguson

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:21:30 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toni Shifflet	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Toni Shifflet, a pre licensed mental health counselor residing in Hilo.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Improving Hawai'i's economy.

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Toni Shifflet

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:22:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naghum Alfulaij	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Written Testimony in Support of HB1830**

**To the Honorable Committee Members**

**Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is *Naghum Alfulaij*, a *Research Associate and Mental Health Counseling student* residing in Honolulu, HI.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing



the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Naghum Alfulaij, PhD

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:24:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carlos Chavez Bugarin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Support for HB1830 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by:

**Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.

**Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.

**Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, HB1830 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Carlos Chavez Bugarin

MSW Student

Cchavezb@hawaii.edu

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:30:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tatjana Kaleikini	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tatjana Kaleikini, a Marriage and Family Therapist Intern and current Master's Degree Student at Chaminade University residing in Honolulu, Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.

- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Tatjana Kaleikini

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:30:40 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MARNIE HONEYCUTT	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am an LCSW, practicing on the Big Island for the last 24 years. I have interned and supervised many students through the years due to the extreme lack of providers available. I am due to retire in the next year and would love to see more providers available to the community.

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Marnie Honeycutt, LCSW

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:36:48 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Britt Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, HB1830 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Britt Young, M.A., LMFT

Executive Director, Xplor Counseling, LLC

(808) 343-0093

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,



**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:45:10 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiana Aina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Committee on Health and Homelessness**

**Testimony in Strong Support for HB1830**

Dear Chair Bellati, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my **STRONG SUPPORT** for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

As Clinical Social Work Student Intern, I am very aware of the barriers faced by emerging professionals in our field. Upon graduation, aspiring mental health professionals are challenged to complete the required clinical hours without insurance reimbursement. This is especially true as the cost of living continue to increase, prohibiting people from engaging pre-licensed professionals for immediate mental health support rather than wait for an opening with a licensed professional. It is so important to retain these mental health professionals, as their local education and field experiences provide foundational understanding for the stresses unique to the people of Hawai'i.

As a resident of East Hawai'i, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges posed by limited access to mental health services and their impact at the individual, family, and the community levels. Taking immediate measures to increase access will help others to access the support they seek to manage their well-being.

HB1330 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the accessibility of mental health services of Hawai'i. In turn, this will have a positive impact on the well-being of our communities.

I appreciate the Committee's commitment to these very important issues, and I am humbled to have this opportunity to share my feedback.

Sincerely,

Tiana Aina

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:28:06 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Fabio Cardoso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee,

I am a graduate student enrolled in the MSCP graduate program at Chaminade University of Honolulu. Currently undergoing my internship, I eagerly anticipate my graduation in June 2024. The proposed bill brings Hawai'i in line with almost half of all states, introducing an associate/training license to modernize our practices and meet contemporary needs. In Hawai'i, the existing provider-to-patient ratios underscore a pressing demand for more mental health professionals. Even with efforts to import therapists from the mainland, Hawai'i Island's improved ratios coexist with poor health outcomes, highlighting a gap in care utilization. The Lahaina tragedy emphasizes the need for culturally specific and responsive care, which is best provided by local health care providers.

The introduction of interim licensing aims to ensure that pre-licensed therapists uphold professional standards and effectively complete their licensure hours. This process fosters better supervision and mentoring, essential elements for ensuring quality mental health care. Retaining our skilled mental health professionals in Hawai'i is paramount, and this bill can contribute to alleviating the current brain drain affecting our state. By keeping local providers in our communities, we also support the economy.

The current practice of expecting therapists to work extensive unpaid hours post-degree is discriminatory and unsustainable, particularly in Hawai'i's economic climate. The proposed bill addresses these challenges, making the mental health profession more accessible and equitable.

Given the various bills related to associate licensing under consideration, expect regular emails from us to mobilize support and encourage testimony. We appreciate your continued engagement in these crucial advocacy efforts.

Sincerely,  
Fabio Cardoso  
Graduate Student, MSCP Program  
Chaminade University of Honolulu

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 11:20:50 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LYDELL LAWRENCE	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to align my voice with those who are for this bill. This will allow more people to receive help in Hawaii. Here are some key points that I have read and agree with:

**Modernization of Practice:**

- This bill aligns Hawai'i with nearly half of all states that already have an associate/training license, modernizing our practices to meet contemporary needs.

**Access to Quality, Local-Kine Care:**

- Current provider-to-patient ratios in Hawai'i show a stark need for more mental health professionals.
- And even if we improved provider-to-patient ratios by importing therapists from the continent, Hawai'i Island's better ratios but poor health outcomes and factors indicates a gap in care utilization.
- Local examples, like the tragedy in Lahaina, underscore the need for culturally responsive, local mental health providers.
- NAMI's recommendations highlight the importance of culturally responsive care, which this bill supports by growing local professionals.

**Mechanism of Accountability:**

- Interim licensing helps ensure that pre-licensed therapists adhere to professional standards and complete their licensure hours effectively.
- This process also promotes better supervision and mentoring, vital for quality mental health care.

**Combating Brain Drain:**

- Keeping our talented mental health professionals in Hawai'i is crucial. This bill can help reduce the brain drain that our state is currently experiencing.
- Local upbringing often translates to a higher likelihood of professionals staying or returning to Hawai'i, vital for maintaining a diverse and culturally aware workforce.

**Economic Impact:**

- Employing local providers keeps money within the community, supporting our economy.
- Importing providers does not address the unique economic and cultural dynamics of Hawai'i.

• **Challenging the Status Quo:**

- The current expectation for therapists to work extensive unpaid hours post-degree is discriminatory and unsustainable, especially in Hawai'i's economic climate.
- This bill addresses these barriers, making the profession more accessible and equitable.

**Ongoing Advocacy Efforts:**

- **Regular Updates:** As there are several bills regarding associate licensing being considered, you will receive regular emails from us to mobilize support and testify. We appreciate your ongoing engagement in these crucial advocacy efforts.

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 11:47:44 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Grace Parubrur	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Grace Parubrur and I'm currently in the Masters of Social Work program at UH Manoa. I am in favor of this bill as I have seen firsthand the deficit of mental health providers through my practicum sites, personal experience, and also the crisis in Lahaina. Current provider-to-patient ratios in Hawaii show a stark need for more mental health professionals. By passing HB1830, access to care would not only be expanded but enhanced by allowing local mental health professionals to remain on the islands. These mental health professionals would provide care through a cultural lens making it easier for locals to relate to and trust, which would be hard for outside providers from the continent to mimic. HB1830 can help reduce the brain drain that our state continues to experience. Lastly, employing local providers would keep money within our community and support our local economy.

Thank you for this opportunity,

Grace

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 1:46:12 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laura Ellen Maile Pokipala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The health and wellbeing of the community is at risk of slipping deeper into sadness, fear, and anger if they are not given an opportunity to heal. We have homeless individuals who are mentally ill, addicted to illegal substances, or sadly, military veterans with diagnosed and undiagnosed PTSD that are criminalized due to the lack of care and support provided in the community. By allowing HB1830 to move toward becoming a law, many front line individuals doing very hard and often dangerous work can get credit toward licensure. Also, these individuals will be able to bill insurance companies for these services under proper supervision, thus contributing to a healthier economic state for mental health providers. Building a healthy State of Hawai'i starts with addressing the mental, emotional, and physical well-being for all. HB1830 is just the start.

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 1:48:06 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jean Adair-Leland Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jean Adair-Leland, Ph.D.



Dear Committee on Health and Homelessness,

Bill HB 1830

Hearing: February 2, 2024 at 9:45 am

Via Videoconference

Conference Room 329 State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street.

IN SUPPORT

My name is Jane Leek and I am writing in support of HB 1830 which asks for approval of provisional licenses for mental health counselors, social workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists who are completing the required hours of supervision as defined by the state but as of yet are not able to charge their clients insurance due to the lack of a provisional license. I am a master's in social work student at the University of Manoa. I am about to graduate in May of 2024. As a licensed social worker in the state of Hawaii to pursue my clinical license I will need to find a LCSW who is willing and able to supervise me to bill my clients' insurance for services provided. Because I live in a recognized health professional shortage area my access to the proper professional supervision is limited and costly, thereby restricting my ability to work and earn income

as a mental health professional in the field in which I am trained and experienced. Please pass this bill, to mitigate the barriers individuals face when seeking mental health services in the state of Hawaii, and to help me as professional provide services to my community without undue financial burden, time barriers and in recognition of my hard work and dedication to the mental health of our community.

Jane Leek

Masters of Social Work Graduate Student

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 4:59:01 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Matthew Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matthew Johnson, an Associate Mental Health Counselor providing counseling services in the state of Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.

Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.

Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent

Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Matthew Johnson, MS

Associate Mental Health Counselor

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 5:31:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Taryn Itagaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Taryn Itagaki

**ATTN:** SAIKI, AIU, AMATO, BELATTI, CHUN, COCHRAN, EVSLIN, GANADEN, GARRETT, GATES, HASHEM, ICHIYAMA, ILAGAN, KAHALOA, KAPELA, KILA, KITAGAWA, KOBAYASHI, LA CHICA, LAMOSAO, LOWEN, MARTEN, MARTINEZ, MATAYOSHI, MIYAKE, M. MIZUNO, MORIKAWA, NAKAMURA, NAKASHIMA, NISHIMOTO, ONISHI, PERRUSO, POEPOE, QUINLAN, SAYAMA, TAKAYAMA, TAKENOUCHI, TAM, TARNAS, TODD, WOODSON, HOLT, AND YAMASHITA

**HLT, CPC, FIN**

**Hearing Date:** February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. 0945 hours

**From:** Madison Kramer, MSW Student and community member

### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

As a graduate student in the field of social work, I can tell you firsthand how greatly HB1830 impacts the community and the practitioners attempting to complete licensure requirements. By enacting this bill, you would allow the residents of Hawai'i the access to more professionals. Professionals who are fresh out of school, equipped with knowledge, and supported by supervisors, and able to alleviate some of the mental health care crisis we are seeing. As I am sure you are all aware, an increase in the need for mental health service providers skyrocketed as a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic. Honolulu Civil Beat reported the ratio of clients to therapists is 320-to-1. This is simply unsustainable if we as a state are unable to provide efficient and appropriate intervention.

HB1830 would enable professionals seeking further licensure to improve their quality of service without the excessive financial burden of being required to complete clinical hours uncompensated. This would also help encourage or incentivize more people from the Hawaiian community to pursue careers in the mental health and social working fields. One of the largest hinderances of becoming a mental health professional in Hawai'i is dealing with the high cost of living, all while being expected to be an unpaid intern. Allowing mental health interns to earn an income would allow more people to seek this field as a career option. With more local mental health professionals, more people within the community have access to the care they need and deserve. More social workers and mental health professionals would only help the community and it should be in everyone's best interest to encourage this growth through the adoption of this bill and others alike.

The requirements of the student or "associate/provisional licensed" individual that are outlined in the bill are quantifiable, just, reasonable, and provide accountability for interns until official licensure can be completed. The responsibilities outlined in this bill are ones every mental health field student is vastly aware of and is unlikely to omit from practices. This opportunity allows the community to be served without the financial strain for post-graduate clinical practitioners. The ethical standards in the mental health professions are supportive of

implementation of the provisional license requirements that would benefit both new practitioners and clients/constituents of Hawai'i. I urge you to carefully consider your support of this proposal. Any expansion of the law would only enhance the mental health care fields and better serve the people of Hawai'i.

Respectfully,

Madison Kramer

February 1, 2024

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 7:50:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trina Orimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Support for HB1830**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my **STRONG SUPPORT for HB1830** which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists.

There is no doubt that we are in the midst of a mental health crisis that is made exponentially worse by statewide workforce shortages.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals (including myself) in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, HB1830 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



Trina Orimoto, PhD

Licensed Child & Adolescent Psychologist

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:39:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
KRISTIN AIONA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. This bill needs to pass. If UH Hilo is increasing the amount of students who can get a mental health counseling degree, and if this bill doesn't pass, what they are doing is moot. Expecting a person to work for thousands of hours while getting barely paid is absolutely not sustainable.

**HB-1830**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 11:02:53 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kendyl Oshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i. I know this bill will not only benefit mental health professional, but also the community by increasing access to care.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Kendyl Oshiro, Doctoral Candidate, (808) 348-4439