

**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in OPPOSITION to S.B. 2205  
RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION**

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOLE, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 2/7/2022

Hearing Time: 1:00 p.m.

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) opposes this measure and  
2 offers comments.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) offers the following  
4 testimony on behalf of the Department.

5 The Department is committed to protecting and improving the health and environment  
6 for all people in Hawaii including assuring that basic mental health care is available,  
7 appropriate, high quality, and accessible. The AMHD is responsible for leading, fostering and  
8 coordinating a comprehensive mental health system that promotes mental wellbeing through  
9 the delivery of dignified, holistic, and culturally relevant mental health care and services.

10 The Department supports enhancing mental health and suicide prevention services  
11 statewide, including crisis care; however, we respectfully maintain that this measure is not  
12 needed at this time because its purpose is to facilitate the implementation of a 988 lifeline that  
13 has already been implemented in our state.

14 The Department has maintained the operations of the statewide telephonic behavioral  
15 health crisis call center since it was first created in 2002. All calls to (808) 832-3100 and to  
16 1 (800) 753-6879 were then and still are answered by trained local behavioral health staff,  
17 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In 2019, the crisis call center was re-branded as the Department

1 of Health (DOH) Hawaii CARES crisis line. After 2019, this service remains under the oversight  
2 of the AMHD and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD), but has been  
3 operated by a contracted provider and staffed by non-state employees. Callers within the  
4 region that includes Hawaii who dial the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline’s (NSPL) telephone  
5 number, 1 (800) 273-TALK (8255) were and still are routed to the Department’s statewide  
6 telephonic behavioral health crisis call center. The DOH Hawaii CARES crisis line also receives  
7 diverted behavioral health crisis calls from 911. Nationally, in July 2022, the NSPL number will  
8 become “988.” There will be no change for the DOH Hawaii CARES crisis line, except for the use  
9 of the shortened three digit number for receiving NSPL calls.

10 Unlike many other states, Hawaii has an existing 24/7 statewide telephonic behavioral  
11 health crisis call center which includes routed calls from the NSPL and diverted behavioral  
12 health crisis calls from 911. Hawaii also has an existing statewide crisis care continuum that  
13 includes Crisis Mobile Outreach (CMO), Crisis Support Management (CSM), Licensed Crisis  
14 Residential Services (LCRS), and short-term behavioral health Stabilization Bed Units (SBU). The  
15 Department continues to reach out to local partners to provide education and preparation  
16 updates for the statewide 988 transition.

17 With regard to the anticipated call volume following the transition to the NSPL 988 dial  
18 code, the DOH Hawaii CARES crisis line is fully operational and prepared to respond to any  
19 increase in calls through the 988 dial code. Additionally, the Department is working to  
20 administratively support the DOH Hawaii CARES crisis line staff by providing offline  
21 administrative consultation, mass media/social media communications, and other marketing  
22 and advertising collateral for the general public as well as for callers who are not actively  
23 experiencing a behavioral health crisis but who are calling to obtain general information about  
24 Hawaii’s 988 dial code.

1           As drafted, the Department respectfully opposes this measure. We believe that the  
2 intent of the measure is laudable, however, not needed because a 24/7 crisis call center that  
3 answers NSPL/988 calls and dispatches CMO teams already exists statewide.

4           The Department humbly requests that this bill be deferred and that this Committee  
5 support efforts included in S.B. 2529, S.B. 2735, and S.B. 2736, which are the Department's  
6 preferred vehicles to address enhancements to crisis care in our state.

7   **Offered Amendments:** We respectfully request this measure be deferred.

8           Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

9   **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined.

## TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF HAWAII PSYCHIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

To: Chair Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice-Chair Rosalyn Baker, & Members of the Committee  
From: Dr. Denis Mee-Lee, Legislative Committee Co-Chair  
Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association  
Time: 1:00 p.m., February 7, 2022  
Re: SB 2205, RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION  
Position: **COMMENTS**

On behalf of the Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association (HPMA) we are writing to support the intent of SB 2205 and to provide comments requesting important amendments, proposed in Senate Bill 2019 which:

- Augments existing systems (e.g. CARES and 9-1-1)
- Offers relief to the law enforcement and emergency medical systems
- Provides quality and evidence-based care in a timely fashion
- Reduces the burden on residents, local resources, emergency department visits, and 911 calls
- Encompasses innovative ways to grow the workforce of mental health professionals, providing evidence-based treatment with a network of health care and mental health professionals, and increasing access for underserved communities and implement evidence-based methods to triage crisis services
- Provides a sustainable funding mechanism.

The pandemic has exacerbated the need for services that address mental illness and substance use disorder both in the State and nationwide. 187,000 individuals in the State of Hawaii live with mental health conditions, but more than half typically don't receive treatment. In just the last year, NAMI reports that our state lost 176 lives to suicide and 49,000 adult residents reported thoughts of suicide. Despite crises being common, individuals and families in crisis often don't know who to call for help, what kind of support they should expect, and what will happen if they need more help than can be provided over the phone. 9-8-8 will serve as a means to get direct and immediate mental health assistance from trained professionals.

While we support the intent of SB 2205, it lacks an important mechanism for future funding necessary to augment existing systems and provide quality and evidence-based care in a timely fashion. We strongly support provisions in SB 2019 which create sustainable funding for crisis and intervention services by establishing a fee to fund the 9-8-8 services. We support the creation of a task force to oversee and implement the 9-8-8 services and request that a physician specializing in and Board Certified in Psychiatry be specifically added to the task force.

Suicide prevention has been a pillar of the Hawaii Psychiatric Association's advocacy since its inception. We thank the Committee for considering this legislation and urge you to strengthen it further. We are available to provide additional information or answer questions the committee may have.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI  
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**  
P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND  
MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

**WRITTEN ONLY**  
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
ON  
SENATE BILL NO. 2205

**February 7, 2022**  
**1:00 p.m.**  
**Via Videoconference**

**RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION**

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2205.

S.B. No. 2205 establishes a suicide and mental health crisis lifeline (SMHCL) taskforce within the Department of Health (DOH) to develop and implement a plan to utilize the 988 calling code of the National SMHCL; require the SMHCL task force to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature; and appropriates an unspecified amount in general funds in FY 23 to DOH for the development and implementation of the 988 calling code of the SMHCL.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

**SB-2205**

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 7:30:30 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	No

Comments:

We are in support.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health  
Monday, February 7, 2022; 1:00 p.m.  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2205, RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION.**

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 2205, RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION., and offers a **PROPOSED AMENDMENT** for your consideration.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would establish a Suicide and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline Task Force (Task Force) within the Department of Health to, among other things:

- (1) Develop an overall implementation plan for the integration and utilization of the 988 calling code of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; and
- (2) Invest in support for qualified mental health or behavioral professionals who respond to mental health crisis calls.

This bill would also appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the development and implementation of the 988 calling code of the suicide and mental health lifeline.



**Testimony on House Bill No. 2205**  
**Monday, February 7, 2022; 1:00 p.m.**  
**Page 2**

The HPCA recognizes that the mental health needs of the State continue to outweigh present capacity. These needs were greatly exacerbated due to the profound level of stress placed on individuals, families, and entire communities as economic hardships, disruptions in normalcy, and the stark isolation of quarantine have greatly complicated daily life. This has led to an increase in suicides in Hawaii and across our Nation.

Because the HPCA is embedded in Hawaii's most underprivileged and isolated communities throughout the State, we believe we can greatly help in this cause. We can offer our expertise, daily interaction with key demographic cohorts, and trust with communities from decades of providing primary care to Medicaid recipients.

**For this reason, we respectfully request inclusion as a member of the Task Force. With this amendment, we urge your favorable consideration of the bill.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or [eabe@hawaiiipca.net](mailto:eabe@hawaiiipca.net).



## **SB2205 Task Force for Suicide Prevention**

### COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Monday, Feb 7 2022: 1:00 pm : Videoconference

## **Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition supports SB2205:**

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

The biggest problem in Hawaii is **suicide attempts by youth. Hawaii leads the nation** in the number of teens who have attempted suicide at least once in high school.

- According to data from the U.S. Office of Adolescent Health, 1 out of every 10 Hawaii teens has already attempted suicide at least once.<sup>1</sup>
- During COVID this number has exponentially grown.



**THE HUGE GROWING NUMBER OF TEEN SUICIDE ATTEMPTS - EVEN THOUGH NOT SUCCESSFUL - APPEARS TO SAY “ HELP US, WE HAVE A PROBLEM” AND YET WE HAVE A CULTURE THAT HESITATES TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF PEOPLE .**

Honolulu Civil Beat

Teachers, counselors, and health professionals need to know about suicide prevention resources as well as can be trained to deter Teen suicide, but prevention is everyone’s responsibility.

If we want our children to be our future leaders, bringing forth our Ohana values, let’s do our part to help this generation be more confident and healthier.

Aloha, HSAC

<sup>1</sup> Civil Beat: Teen Suicide Is A Big Problem In Hawaii 2019  
[https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.civilbeat.org%2f2019%2f04%2fdanny-de-gracia-teen-suicide-prevention-is-everyones-responsibility%2f&c=E,1,mciCLcYk8TI1aNkKcTVYsy9zRyzrsEqidobO3OK1lGMqoVBqyW8RdzMQzOkrstG1p65DXUxhx5A-MnCfejSRH-khs8x4zPBiBLn8K0hmpC\\_x&typo=1](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.civilbeat.org%2f2019%2f04%2fdanny-de-gracia-teen-suicide-prevention-is-everyones-responsibility%2f&c=E,1,mciCLcYk8TI1aNkKcTVYsy9zRyzrsEqidobO3OK1lGMqoVBqyW8RdzMQzOkrstG1p65DXUxhx5A-MnCfejSRH-khs8x4zPBiBLn8K0hmpC_x&typo=1)

**SB-2205**

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 6:42:47 PM

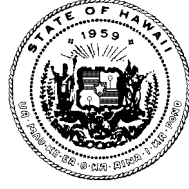
Testimony for HTH on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Stand in Support.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**LATE**

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

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

February 6, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Jarett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2206 – RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION.**

Hearing: February 7, 2022, 1:00 p.m.  
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure as long as the appropriation does not reduce or replace a budget priority identified in the executive budget. Additionally, DHS defers to the Department of Health (DOH) and requests a friendly amendment to allow the Director to appoint a designee to attend.

**PURPOSE OF THE BILL:** The purpose of this bill is to create a task force to develop and implement a plan to utilize the 988 calling code of the National Suicide and Mental Health Lifeline. Makes an appropriation.

The department agrees to participate in this important task force and notes that existing task forces and workgroups also address mental health issues and trauma-informed initiatives. The department defers to DOH whether an additional task force is needed.

Additionally, DHS requests a friendly amendment to allow the Director to identify a designee to attend.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



**Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce**  
*Hawaii's Statewide Public-Private Network*  
*promoting hope, help, and healing*  
*and passing life forward in our local communities*



February 7, 2022

**LATE**

Chair Jarrett Keohokalole  
Vice Chair Rosalyn H. Baker  
Senate Committee on Health  
Hawai'i State Legislature  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: Comments on SB 2205 - relating to suicide prevention**

***Senate Committee on Health - hearing on February 7, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. via videoconference***

*Creates a task force to develop and implement a plan to utilize the 988 calling code of the National Suicide and Mental Health Lifeline. Makes an appropriation.*

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Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Health:

The undersigned members of the Steering (Leadership) Committee of the Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce wish to offer the following testimony with respect to SB 2205. As you may know, the Taskforce is the State's network for public-private collaboration and coordination with respect to suicide prevention. Originally convened in 1999, it is the longest-standing collaborative of its kind. The Taskforce is also author of the Hawai'i Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan, requested by and reported to the Legislature: <https://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/files/2019/02/Prevent-Suicide-Hawaii-Taskforce-Strategic-Plan-by-2025.pdf>.

Please first allow us to convey a heartfelt THANK YOU for continuing to serve as champions for suicide prevention in Hawai'i. As you know, one person dies by suicide every two days in Hawai'i. As we often say, "This is an issue that does not discriminate" – suicide unfortunately affects all groups, communities, and disciplines. In addition, the immense stigma around mental health and suicidality increases the challenge that faces us when encouraging people to seek help when needed.

We thank Senator Misalucha and colleagues for introducing SB 2205, and also your Committee for bringing this bill to hearing. ***The Taskforce supports the intent of this bill***, which aims to ensure appropriate coordination and support for the implementation of the new 9-8-8 calling code, ***but would like to offer a few comments for additional context***.

- We thank the Legislature for its recognition of the Taskforce as a leader and key stakeholder around this issue. We whole-heartedly support the intent of the bill, in particular the emphasis on coordination and collaboration not only among providers, but also inclusive of community workgroups and advocates. The Taskforce has a more than 20-year-long relationship with the mental/behavioral health units of the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH), with a long-term priority being the proper functioning of Hawaii's crisis services. The Taskforce provides DOH with a structure and venue for wider collaboration with the entities named in SB 2205, including all major state agencies, community/non-profits, and representatives from all counties. We also connect with those beyond the prescribed list, including direct engagement with those who have lost a loved one to suicide and/or have lived experience. We expect DOH to continue and enhance collaborations during this critical time.
- SB 2205 also discusses the integration of 9-8-8 with existing crisis services, though this has long been institutionalized through the current call center (now known as Hawai'i CARES). In addition, SB 2205 asks for recommendations related to 9-8-8's implementation, though many of these activities (e.g., awareness, infrastructure-building) are already laid out in the Strategic Plan. Some are being addressed currently through existing efforts, as well as other proposed legislation (e.g., SB 2735 and SB 2736). We are sure you agree that we want to be successful not only in 9-8-8 roll-out, but also in the bigger picture of suicide prevention, including awareness (e.g., of the new number, necessary rebranding, etc.), crisis services (e.g., mobile outreach,

community mental health services), and prevention (e.g., activities and trainings that enable us to prevent people from needing crisis services in the first place).


As a minor note, Page 2, lines 3-6 of the bill state: "According to the World Health Organization, suicide may happen impulsively in moments of crisis related to financial problems, relationship struggles, violence, abuse, and feelings of isolation." While certainly these factors are associated with an increased risk of suicide, we suggest removing the reference to suicides occurring impulsively and implying they are limited to these situations. The safest messaging recommended would be to acknowledge that suicide is a complex issue, and typically there are many factors that contribute to an individual's situation.

In closing, we reiterate that Taskforce is fully committed to continuing our long-standing collaborations, and supporting not only 9-8-8's success, but also the design, implementation, and evaluation of all mental health and suicide prevention supports for Hawaii's communities.

Should you have questions or require additional information about this bill, or any resources related to suicide prevention, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Dr. Jeanelle Sugimoto-Matsuda is the Taskforce's advocacy coordinator, and can be reached at [junesugi88@gmail.com](mailto:junesugi88@gmail.com) or (808) 291-9930.

Thank you, once again, for prioritizing suicide prevention in our local communities; promoting hope, help and healing; and most importantly, *PASSING LIFE FORWARD*.

With Deepest Aloha,



Gina Kaulukukui  
Current Co-Chair, State PSHTF



Deborah Goebert, DrPH  
Current Co-Chair, State PSHTF



Jeanelle Sugimoto-Matsuda, DrPH  
Immediate Past Co-Chair, State PSHTF  
Taskforce Advocacy Coordinator



Brent Oto, MA, CPS  
Immediate Past Co-Chair, State PSHTF  
Taskforce military representative



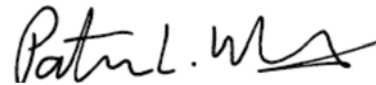
Danielle Bergan  
Co-Chair, E Ola Hou Prevent Suicide Maui County Taskforce



Kristin Mills, MS, MA  
Co-Chair, E Ola Hou Prevent Suicide Maui County Taskforce



Madeleine Hiraga-Nuccio  
Co-Chair, Prevent Suicide Kaua'i Taskforce



Patricia Wistinghausen  
Co-Chair, Prevent Suicide Kaua'i Taskforce



H. Yolisa Duley, PhD  
Co-Chair, Hawai'i Island Prevent Suicide Taskforce



Joy Hohnstine  
Co-Chair, Hawai'i Island Prevent Suicide Taskforce



Pua Kaninau-Santos, MSW  
Liaison, O'ahu Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce