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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i
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Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

April 12, 2022

Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair
Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference

Re: SCR 42 – Urging the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation to expand the Ka'ū Rural Health Clinic to improve access to Urgent Care and Outpatient Behavioral Health Services.

Honorable Chair Yamane and Vice Chair Tam:

On behalf of myself and as Councilmember representing the rural districts of South Kona, Ka'ū and Volcano Village (Council District 6), I express my strong support of SCR 42 relating to expansion of the Ka'ū Rural Health Clinic.

As you may know, many of the Ka'ū residents face cultural, financial, and geographical barriers that prevent them from accessing health services in rural areas such as my Council District of Ka'ū. Expansion of the Ka'ū Rural Health Clinic to include access to urgent care and outpatient behavioral health issues is much needed.

Mahalo a nui loa for your favorable consideration.

Very truly yours,

Maile David

Maile David, Council Member
Council District 6, S. Kona, Ka'ū, and Volcano Village

SCR-42

Submitted on: 4/12/2022 4:52:59 PM

Testimony for HHH on 4/14/2022 9:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Zahava Zaidoff | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee.

My name is Zahava Zaidoff and I strong support of this rresolution.the following is something I wrote and pasted on my social media several days ago. It will walk you through the process we need to go through to get mental health help in my district.

I live in Ka'u district, Ocean View specifically.

Let's talk about the most basic mental health care for youth. No, not residential treatment, because we don't have that on our island. No, not outpatient, because we don't have that available on our island either. Not a child psychiatrist, because that's nearly impossible to find on the island, and doesn't exist in my district, or anywhere within a 90 min drive of my home.

I am talking about good old fashioned once a week therapy. You know, the type of mental health care that isn't used for imminent crisis. Just simple therapy to process emotions, situations, trauma etc without the need for anything intensive; just weekly therapy.

When I go to Google to look for therapists or psychologists in my entire district, nothing shows up.

So I search more deeply. More targeted words.

We have a health clinic here, which is great. We love our doctor, dental is offered once a week, (but they haven't been accepting new patients for over 2 years).

So, here's the story: they brought in a psychologist last June. We were stoked. In person therapy. But you see, our clinic is merging with another clinic in July, so as of January 2022, they took our psychologist and made her an admin staff who doesn't do therapy anymore. Uugghh.

Back to Google. Ka'u rural hospital/clinic doesn't offer therapy. Ka'u Wellness had a therapist in Ocean View, but she left at the the end of March to move back to the Continent. Department of Health has a place in Naalehu. Yay. I call them and they only serve over 18 and you need to call a different number to get an intake and it could take a while. But wait... they have a youth

department too! Oh, it's not in our district, an hour away, and a long process to get approved and treated. Uugggh.

But wait, the person there assures me that our local clinic has replaced the psychologist and has in person therapy.

Ok, I call our clinic back and they assure me that they don't have in person therapy, only phone with a provider in Keeau.

Really? I can't find a mental health therapist for weekly therapy in my entire district? Not only for youth, but for adults too?

How is this a thing?!?!

I know I often post about the need for residential treatment and outpatient services and psychiatric services. It's true, we don't have those things.

But really? Therapy? I can't find in person therapy for a teenager within an hour drive of my home?

I am open to ideas if anyone has any. Keep in mind though that telehealth is not an option for many keiki here because they are burnt the hell out on zoom. They want to actually sit in a room with a professional who is trained to help them.

Anyone wanna open an office in Ka'u?

Our keiki (and adults) need help!

Please help us. Our youth are dying. Our community is overwhelmed. There is no one here to help us. With 2 clinics and a hospital, how is it possible that I can't find a therapist?

Please vote yes on this resolution.

Mahalo and with respect,

Zahava Zaidoff

SCR-42

Submitted on: 4/13/2022 11:34:51 AM

Testimony for HHH on 4/14/2022 9:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Christopher Garske | OVCA | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The Ocean View Community Association supports this bill, as the Ka'u district and the town of Ocean View, are badly in need of additional medical resources.

Christopher Garske

President

Ocean View Community Association