
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that, on average, one
2 person in Hawaii dies by suicide every two days. Suicide
3 accounts for twenty-five per cent of all fatal injuries in the
4 State. Suicide is also the fourth leading cause of death for
5 children between the ages of ten and fourteen and the leading
6 cause of death for young people between the ages of fifteen and
7 twenty-four.

8 The legislature notes that suicide rates vary by area, with
9 higher rates on neighbor islands and in rural communities. In
10 2019, the statewide suicide rate was 14.8 deaths for every one
11 hundred thousand individuals. From 2017 to 2019, for every one
12 hundred thousand people, the counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui
13 experienced 21.4, 22.0, and 18.4 suicide deaths, respectively.
14 The city and county of Honolulu's suicide rate, at 10.7 suicide
15 deaths for every one hundred thousand people, was slightly lower
16 than the statewide average.



1 The legislature also notes that, according to the
2 department of health, the percentage of teenagers in Hawaii who
3 consider or attempt suicide are among the highest in the nation.
4 From 2005 to 2013, the percentage of high school-aged children
5 in Hawaii with suicidal ideation ranged from sixteen to twenty
6 per cent. For the same period, the percentage of high
7 school-aged children treated for a suicide attempt never dipped
8 below three per cent.

9 The legislature recognizes that suicide attempts, like
10 suicide deaths, have harmful, lasting, and profound impacts on
11 families and communities. For every person who dies by suicide,
12 more than thirty others have made attempts. The legislature is
13 concerned with the health, safety, and welfare of all people in
14 the State, including military personnel, veterans, and visitors.

15 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to help reduce
16 suicide rates in the State by establishing the prevent suicide
17 Hawaii task force in the department of health.

18 SECTION 2. (a) There is established the prevent suicide
19 Hawaii task force, to be placed within the department of health
20 for administrative purposes. The task force shall:



- 1 (1) Undertake a study to develop general and specific
2 policies and procedures to improve the manner in which
3 suicide prevention is conducted in the State.
4 Specifically, the task force shall:
- 5 (A) Consider goals, themes, and formal objectives for
6 a strategic plan to reduce suicides in Hawaii by
7 at least twenty-five per cent by 2025; and
- 8 (B) Identify action items and develop proposed
9 legislation to be submitted to the legislature
10 prior to each regular session;
- 11 (2) Monitor implementation of the strategic plan and
12 submit annual reports to the legislature on any
13 progress, challenges, and recommendations for
14 adjustments; and
- 15 (3) Examine, evaluate, and determine methods to improve
16 education, awareness, support services, and outreach
17 to prevent suicides in Hawaii.
- 18 (b) The task force shall comprise the following members:
- 19 (1) One representative of the Joint Military Suicide
20 Prevention Taskforce, to be invited to participate by
21 the governor;



- 1 (2) One representative of the Substance Abuse and Mental
2 Health Services Administration of the United States
3 Department of Human Services, to be invited to
4 participate by the governor;
- 5 (3) One representative of the department of education, to
6 be selected by the superintendent of education;
- 7 (4) One representative of the department of public safety,
8 or its successor agency, to be selected by the
9 department director;
- 10 (5) One representative of the department of human
11 services, to be selected by the director of human
12 services;
- 13 (6) One representative of the judiciary, to be selected by
14 the chief justice of the Hawaii supreme court;
- 15 (7) The suicide prevention coordinator for the department
16 of health;
- 17 (8) One representative of the department of health's
18 injury prevention and control section, to be selected
19 by the director of health;



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- 1 (9) One representative of the department of psychiatry of
2 the John A. Burns school of medicine, to be selected
3 by the dean of the John A. Burns school of medicine;
- 4 (10) One representative of each county, to be appointed by
5 the governor;
- 6 (11) One representative of the Youth Suicide Prevention
7 Leadership Council, to be selected by the president of
8 the senate;
- 9 (12) One representative of the Youth Suicide Prevention
10 Leadership Council, to be selected by the speaker of
11 the house of representatives;
- 12 (13) One representative of the American Foundation for
13 Suicide Prevention Hawaii Chapter, to be invited to
14 participate by the governor;
- 15 (14) One representative to be selected by the executive
16 director of Mental Health America of Hawaii and
17 invited to participate by the governor;
- 18 (15) Two members who are survivors of attempted suicide, to
19 be appointed by the governor;
- 20 (16) One member who is a frontline Hawaii Psychiatric
21 Medical Association psychiatrist serving rural and



1 underserved communities, to be selected by the Hawaii
2 Psychiatric Medical Association and invited to
3 participate by the governor;

4 (17) One representative of the Hawaii Primary Care
5 Association, to be selected by the Hawaii Primary Care
6 Association and invited to participate by the
7 governor;

8 (18) One member to be selected by the president of the
9 senate; and

10 (19) One member to be selected by the speaker of the house
11 of representatives.

12 To the extent possible, all members shall have expertise in
13 fields or disciplines related to suicide prevention and
14 education, or awareness of suicide prevention efforts.

15 Any vacancies in the task force shall be filled in the
16 manner provided for by the original appointments.

17 (c) The task force shall hold its initial meeting no later
18 than thirty days after the effective date of this Act and shall
19 select a chair, vice chair, and any other necessary officers
20 from among its members. A majority of the task force shall
21 constitute a quorum to do business.



1 (d) The chair shall seek to maintain a balanced
2 representation of interests and the inclusion of all interested
3 community members, and may select or invite additional task
4 force members at the chair's discretion.

5 (e) All meetings of the task force shall be public. The
6 task force shall meet no less frequently than once per quarter.
7 At the discretion of the chair or by the request of a majority
8 of its members, the task force may hold additional public
9 meetings as it deems necessary.

10 (f) Members of the task force shall serve on a voluntary
11 basis and shall not be compensated for their services; provided
12 that task force members may be reimbursed for expenses,
13 including travel expenses, necessary for the performance of
14 their duties.

15 (g) The task force shall submit an annual report of its
16 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
17 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
18 each regular session until the task force ceases to exist
19 pursuant to subsection (h).

20 (h) The task force shall cease to exist on January 1,
21 2027.



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1 SECTION 3. It is not the intent of the legislature for
2 this Act to jeopardize the receipt of any federal aid. If this
3 Act is found to conflict with federal requirements that are a
4 prescribed condition for the allocation of federal funds to the
5 State, this Act shall be deemed void.

6 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.
7

INTRODUCED BY:

JAN 24 2023



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Report Title:

DOH; Prevent Suicide Hawaii Taskforce

Description:

Establishes the prevent suicide Hawaii taskforce within the Department of Health. Requires the task force to make annual recommendations to the Legislature on ways to reduce suicide rates in the State by 25% by 2025. Dissolves the task force on 1/1/2027.

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