



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 1148, H.D. 1, S.D. 1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: March 31, 2023 at 9:45 a.m.in Room 211/VIDEO

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests that this measure be
2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the
3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governors executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department strongly supports this measure and offers comments.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) provides the following
6 testimony on behalf of the Department.

7 The Department strongly supports this measure which appropriates funds to support
8 and expand the Windward Community College (WCC) mental health technician (MHT)
9 certificate program through the hiring of a mental health technician certificate program
10 coordinator, establishment of a scholarship program, and any other necessary administrative
11 costs.

12 The Department recognizes that education and training and important parts of building
13 the mental health care workforce. We understand that education and training should not stop
14 when someone is hired for employment. Ongoing opportunities to provide training and
15 professional development can help to address staff retention concerns while also supporting

1 employees who want to learn additional skills through convenient learning modes that provide
2 work-life balance (e.g., online distance learning).

3 The WCC MHT certificate program began in Spring 2022. This program provides
4 introductory training to those entering the mental health service field. Courses in psychology,
5 communication, and conflict resolution and mediation offer a range of academic study and skill-
6 based activities to strengthen knowledge about working through difficult situations in the
7 workplace. Of these 25 graduates thus far, 11 are employed at the Hawaii State Hospital.

8 We are pleased with the interest that this program has received thus far and look
9 forward to partnering with WCC to welcome prospective students as well as to congratulate
10 future MHT certificate program graduates, including those who are currently employed or
11 aspiring to be employed by the Hawaii State Hospital.

12 We believe appropriating funds to establish a WCC MHT program coordinator position
13 will allow this program to expand and be offered at other community colleges, and thereby
14 helping to address the need for health care workforce training throughout our state. We
15 respectfully ask for the Legislature's support of this measure and request that funding be
16 appropriated to UH800 with description WINCC.

17 **Offered Amendments:** None.

18 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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



RICHARD RIES, Psy.D., M.Ed.
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
LUNA HO'OMALU O KA PAPA

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378, Room 256
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
Testimony to the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
in SUPPORT of H.B. 1148 H.D. 1 S.D. 1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Friday, March 31, 2023 at 9:45 a.m.

CHAIRPERSON

Richard I. Ries PsyD, MSEd

1st VICE CHAIRPERSON

Katherine Aumer, PhD

2nd VICE CHAIRPERSON

Kathleen Merriam, LCSW CSAC

SECRETARY

Eileen Lau-James, DVM

MEMBERS:

Antonino Beninato

John Betlach

Naomi Crozier, CPS

Jon Fujii, MBA

Heidi Ilyavi

Jackie Jackson, CFPS

Chris Knightsbridge, MAIR, MACL

Kau'i Seguancia

Lea Dias, MEd

Jean Okudara, CSAC

Ray Rice, MEd

Mary Pat Waterhouse

Kristin Will, MACL, CSAC

EX-OFFICIO:

Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director
Behavioral Health Administration

WEBSITE:

scmh.hawaii.gov

EMAIL ADDRESS:

doh.scmhchairperson@
doh.hawaii.gov

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committees:

Hawaii law, HRS §334-10, establishes the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH) as a 21-member body to advise on the allocation of resources, statewide needs, and programs affecting more than one county as well as to advocate for adults with serious mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbances, individuals with mental illness or emotional problems, including those with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Members are residents from diverse backgrounds representing mental health service providers and recipients, students and youth, parents, and family members. Members include representatives of state agencies on mental health, criminal justice, housing, Medicaid, social services, vocational rehabilitation, and education. Members include representatives from the Hawaii advisory commission on drug abuse and controlled substances and county service area boards on mental health and substance abuse.

The SCMH supports this measure to expand and provide resources for the mental health technician certificate of competence program. The program was locally and collaboratively designed to meet Hawaii's needs. This program is vital as a stepping stone for many individuals to build careers in the field of behavioral sciences.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please contact us at DOH.SCMHChairperson@doh.hawaii.gov.

VISION : A Hawaii where people of all ages with mental health challenges can enjoy recovery in the community of their choice.

MISSION: To advocate for a Hawaii where all persons affected by mental illness can access necessary treatment and support to live full lives in the community of their choice.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2023 Regular Session

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Friday, March 31, 2023 at 9:45 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

by:
Brandon M. Kimura
Deputy Administrative Director of the Courts

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 1148, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, Relating to Mental Health

Description: Appropriates funds to support and expand the Mental Health Technician Certificate of Competence Program through the hiring of a Mental Health Technician Certificate of Competence Program Coordinator, establishment of a scholarship program, granting of scholarships, and funding of other necessary administrative costs. Effective 6/30/2023. (SD1)

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the intent of this measure—to enhance the workforce across the state in the field of behavioral health care. This is a type of work critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system and to the larger community.

The Judiciary supports appropriate efforts to assist those suffering from mental health challenges before interaction with and/or outside the justice system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM
‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony
Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

LATE

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, March 31, 2023 at 9:45 a.m.

By

Della Teraoka, Interim Associate Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 1148 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1148 HD1 SD1, which supports and expands the mental health technician certificate of competence at Windward Community College (WCC) through the hiring of a Mental Health Technician (MHT) certificate coordinator, establishment of a scholarship program and any other necessary administrative costs. Should this appropriation measure pass, we request that any positions and funds be appropriated to the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges (UOH800), specifically WCC.

WCC developed the MHT certificate in collaboration with the Hawai'i State Hospital (HSH) in order to provide a foundation of knowledge and increase skills for those serving the mentally ill on our islands. The program falls within the purview of WCC and is offered to students at HSH and beyond. The program consists of three focused courses, available in person and online. Students learn fundamentals of psychology and psychological functioning, as well as conflict resolution and communications. This allows them to understand situations that arise at work, to more effectively deal with patients and to prevent escalation of conflict in tense situations. This leads to a safer workplace and a more supportive therapeutic environment.

This addresses the severe shortage of mental health workers during a time when our State has dire needs for mental health support due to the impacts of the pandemic, socio-economic stressors, high job turnover, and a lack of workforce skilled in this area. It serves not only Hawai'i State Hospital, the second largest employer in Windward O'ahu, but also other mental health related employers such as Windward District Health, Hina Mauka and others. Our online asynchronous offerings allow current workers to grow their skills through course offerings maximally adaptable to their schedules and further allow for this program to be expanded statewide.

The program was first implemented in Spring 2022, which resulted in 2 graduates in the first semester; both continued their employment at the HSH with their improved skills and knowledge. In Fall of 2022, 23 more students graduated with the MHT certificate.

Nine of these graduates were employed at HSH. Already in its first year, this program has had a large impact on the capacity of Windward O'ahu to care for those suffering from mental health issues and to increase workplace satisfaction and safety in the workplace.

The MHT certificate creates a pathway to further training and higher education. A one year certificate currently under development will build on the certificate by adding clinical skills and knowledge necessary to perform higher job requirements in more advanced clinical settings. These certificates are specifically designed to advance students to increasingly higher qualifications, such as degrees in psychology, social work and mental health counseling. This grows the overall capacity of our state to address mental health challenges and needs.

A Coordinator allows for this program to be made available statewide through our sister community college and partnerships with mental health related agencies and workplaces. The Coordinator can further oversee the implementation of a scholarship program, ensuring access for unemployed, underemployed and low wage earners, creating a pathway out of poverty.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1148 HD1 SD1 on the condition its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1148 HD1 SD1.



HB1148 HD1 SD1 Mental Health Technicians

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice C

Friday, Mar. 31, 2023: 9:45 : Room 211 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition supports HB1148 HD1 SD1

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 and recovery services.

HSAC recognizes that Windward Community College (WCC) has needs to expand the mental health technician (MHT) certificate program through funding, hiring a program coordinator, and starting a scholarship program.

- It's essential to build our mental health care workforce given the severe shortage of mental health workers brought about by the pandemic and high job turnover. Moreover, there is a need for a more skilled workforce in behavioral health.
- This training and education will help to address staff retention concerns while also help agencies to develop skilled staff to better support the field of behavioral health care.
- The behavioral health field is in dire need for developing an immediate, critical workforce to assist those suffering from mental health challenges and provide effective, supportive care for those suffering from mental illness.

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



LATE

The Committee on Ways and Means
March 31, 2023
9:45 AM
Room 211

RE: **HB 1148, HD 1, SD 1, Relating to Mental Health**

Attention: Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Gilbert Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) appreciates the opportunity to testify **supporting the intent of HB1148, HD1, SD1**, Relating to Mental Health.

HB 1148, HD1, SD1 expands the mental health technician certificate program by providing funding not only for the hiring of one full-time mental health technician certificate program coordinator, but also establishing a scholarship program and granting scholarship, as well as other administrative costs. Expansion of this certificate program statewide will afford greater opportunities to enter into the field.

The mental health technician certificate program provides practicable training that can be built upon to advance in the workplace and further educational opportunities. To ensure the recruitment and retention of the program coordinator position, it is essential for the FTE appropriation to have a recurring, general funded designation.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

HB-1148-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 11:46:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

HB-1148-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 3:39:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl N Prince	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I urge you to pass HB1148, as amended, to help address the crisis in mental health care in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Cheryl Prince, LCSW

HB-1148-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 11:10:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wast of Tax payer Moneys. Some body needs to get Payed off!!!

HB-1148-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 7:49:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodi Asato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mental health services are in demand everywhere you look within our community. This certificate will provide introductory training for those entering the field of mental health services or enhance those currently working within the mental health or behavioral health field.

I strongly support this bill to grow Windward Community College's Mental Health Tech certificate program.

HB-1148-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:04:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natasha Amaral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I strongly support this bill to grow Windward Community College's Mental Health Tech certificate program.

HB-1148-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:26:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Dorado Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I want to go on record as strongly supporting this bill for Windward Community College's Mental Health Tech certificate program.

Mahalo!

HB-1148-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:32:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalawai'a Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I want to urge your committee to pass and fully fund the support of the mental health technician certificate at Windward Community College. Here is an opportunity for us all to move forward with a solution to a problem in our community that needs great attention.

HB-1148-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:53:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
karolle t. bidgood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill to grow Windward Community College's Mental Health Tech certificate program and ask that you do the same.

Thank you for your consideration and your service.