

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Ka 'Oihana Ho'opalekana Lehulehu
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Michael J. Hoffman
Acting Deputy Director
Corrections

William F. Oku
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1300, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

By

Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair,
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

AND

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair,
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 23, 2023; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and via Video Conference

Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Aquino, Vice Chair
Fukunaga, and Members of both Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) has reviewed House Bill (HB) 1300, House Draft (HD) 2, which seeks to establish provisional or associate level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances, allow the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists, and allow psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing supervised experience requirements.

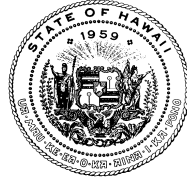
The Department **strongly supports** the allowance of the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers for psychologists in certain situations and the allowance of psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing the supervised experience requirements. PSD defers to the expertise of the Department of

Testimony on HB 1300, HD2
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
March 23, 2023
Page 2

Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) on the feasibility of the proposed regulatory matters involving provisional or associate level licensure.

Like other entities throughout the State, PSD is also experiencing a high demand for mental health services. In order to meet the mental health needs of individuals in our care and custody, the proposed measure seeks to address the limitations in Hawai'i Revised Statutes 465-7.6 Licensure of state employed clinical psychologists.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 1300, HD 2.



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

**Testimony COMMENTING on HB1300 HD2
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.**

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOLO, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Hearing Date: March 23, 2023

Room Number: 229

1 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health stands in support of this bill.

3 This bill establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and
4 family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance
5 reimbursements in certain circumstances; allows psychologist license applicants to sit for the
6 licensing examination before completing supervised experience requirements; allows the board
7 of psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists; and
8 authorizes insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in
9 certain circumstances.

10 There is currently a lack of mental health professional in Hawaii, especially in rural areas
11 throughout the state. With the current difficulties the nation is facing post-pandemic, it has
12 become increasingly more difficult to provide mental health care in our community, as it has
13 been difficult to retain and recruit mental health providers to our state. The passage of this bill
14 would reduce financial hardship for early career psychologist and those seeking licensure in the
15 field of mental health.

1 It may be helpful to know that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) has
2 for many years been considered a provider in relationship to the MedQuest Division (MQD), and
3 the CAMHD has an agreement with MQD to bill treatment services by unlicensed clinicians, all
4 of whom are supervised by a license clinician. Without such a provision our service array would
5 be decimated. This model of direct services and reimbursement has been an effective and
6 responsible way to deliver direct services within the state.

7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

8

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 Health and Human Services and
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
in SUPPORT of H.B. 1300 H.D. 2
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

CHAIRPERSON

Richard I. Ries PsyD, MEd

1st VICE CHAIRPERSON

Katherine Aumer, PhD

2nd VICE CHAIRPERSON

Kathleen Merriam, LCSW CSAC

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Kau'i Seguancia

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Jean Okudara, CSAC

Ray Rice, MEd

Mary Pat Waterhouse

Kristin Will, MACL, CSAC

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Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director
Behavioral Health Administration

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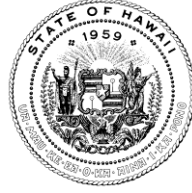
Chairs San Buenaventura and Keohokalole, Vice-Chairs Aquino and Fukunaga, and Members of the Committees:

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 strongly supports efforts to sustainably increase the pool of qualified mental health providers in Hawaii. This measure would not only increase the number of mental health providers in Hawaii during a time when mental health needs are growing, but also provide the necessary training and oversight important for those graduating from programs in Hawaii.

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.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
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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
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
and
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Thursday, March 23, 2023
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 1300, H.D. 2, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committees:

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, beginning July 1, 2024: (1) establish a provisional or associate level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) allow psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing other requirements; (3) allow the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists; (4) authorize

insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances; and (5) appropriate funds.

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

H.B. 1300, H.D. 2, 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 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 to consumers.

Regarding part V of this bill, the Department expresses similar concerns that authorizing reimbursements to a currently exempted population: social work 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, 2024. Currently interns are exempted from licensure; those practicing under the exemptions of licensure would automatically be subject to license requirements on July 1, 2024, thereby, causing possible disruptions in patient care.

The Department appreciates the current draft’s addition of necessary funding and personnel to implement this measure, and requests the amounts ultimately provided reflect the following:

- a. To establish, recruit, and hire an office assistant V (OA-V) to process provisional license applications expeditiously. The sum of \$67,876 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. Note that these updates would require additional support and maintenance outside of the budget request being made through Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' request. The sum of \$75,000 or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this request.

The Department must ensure that any such measure does not impact its current budget requests. Should this measure be enacted without personnel and general funds, it would be mandate that the Division is not fiscally prepared to address.

Should the Committee consider passing this bill, the Department respectfully requests further a delayed implementation date of July 1, 2025, to ensure that the Division has the appropriate time to: (1) establish, recruit, and hire the personnel granted by this measure; and (2) create the necessary applications and make appropriate updates to its database.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Testimony of the Board of Psychology

**Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
and
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Affairs
Thursday, March 23, 2023
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 229 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 1300, H.D. 2, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committees:

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

The purposes of this bill are to, beginning July 1, 2024: (1) establish a provisional or associate level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) allow psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing other requirements; (3) allow the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists; (4) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances; and (5) appropriate funds.

The Board offers the following comments:

- 1) Page 37, lines 18 to 20, allows a holder of a doctoral degree in clinical, counseling, and school psychology to sit for the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (exam) required for licensure prior to meeting pre-doctoral internship and postdoctoral experience requirements. The Board strongly disagrees with the timing of authorization to sit for the exam as set forth by the bill, and finds the current language extremely concerning and in direct conflict with the Board's administrative rules. The Board does not believe that taking the examination prior to completing a doctoral degree comports with the intent of this bill, which appears to be more focused on creating a provisional

license to be obtained after completing a doctoral degree program, which would also include completing an internship. The Board also believes that internship experience and degree completion are generally essential to successfully passing the exam, which primarily tests the theoretical knowledge psychologists learn in their education program. The Board strongly requests that the authorization to sit for the exam be granted only to those who have completed a qualifying doctoral degree and qualifying internship, and that the bill language on page 37 be amended as follows:

The applicant shall be required to complete the requirements of paragraph (1) and sub-paragraphs (2)(A) or (B) [not be required to complete the requirements of paragraph (2)] to be eligible to take the examination required in paragraph (3)."

- 2) Page 40, lines 5 to 8, authorizes the Board to grant waivers or extensions to licensees who are unable to comply with its continuing education requirements. The Board notes that this language is unnecessary and redundant since Hawaii Revised Statutes section 465-11(f) already provides a remedy for such circumstances:

Any licensee seeking renewal of a license without full compliance with the continuing education requirement shall submit with the renewal application the required fee, a notarized affidavit setting forth the facts explaining the reasons for noncompliance, and a request for an extension on the basis of the facts; provided that the licensee shall complete at least thirty-six hours of continuing education for the next licensing biennium. The board shall consider each case on an individual basis and may grant an extension based on:

- (1) Practice in an isolated geographical area with an absence of opportunities for continuing education by taped programs or otherwise; or

(2) Inability to devote sufficient hours to continuing education because of incapacity, undue hardship, or any other serious extenuating circumstances.

Finally, the Board strongly suggests that the following language on page 40 be removed from the bill:

~~[; provided further that the board may grant waivers or extensions if the licensee can demonstrate a delay was due to circumstances beyond the licensee's control.]~~

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



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

We know systems.

We know relationships.

We know FAMILY MATTERS.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

March 23, 2023 10:00 A.M. - VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE – Rm 229

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1300 HD2 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports HB1300 HD2 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, HB1300 HD2 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.

The only amendments to this bill we would recommend is to incorporate the **purpose language of HB1242**, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawaii, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already allowed to do; as well as **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing.**

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

Sincerely,



Dr. John Souza, Jr., LMFT, DMFT, President
The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy



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 HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

March 23, 2023 10:00 A.M. - VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE – Rm 229

The Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) strongly supports HB1300 HD2 as a critical tool in meeting the burgeoning demand for quality mental health services – and is especially timely as the emotional and mental toll of the pandemic and its associated hardships is felt by all our residents, prolonged now for three years. The aftermath effect on our public behavioral health systems is immeasurable.

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 leave the state – where associate-level licensure is already in place.

Another issue that causes financial hardship and delay during this post-doctoral period is the timing of the license application process. 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. Accordingly, this proposal requires the board to allow licensure candidates to take the exam as soon as they complete their doctorate.

HB1300 HD2 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.

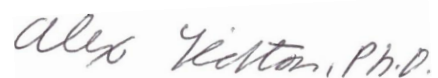
During the pandemic, the Board of Psychology did not meet for a prolonged period to approve several candidates' licenses, and several state-employed psychologists lost their jobs due to no fault of their own. Of those terminated included practitioners at the state hospital and in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division. 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.

The only amendments to this bill we would recommend is to incorporate the **purpose language of HB1242**, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawaii, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already allowed to do; as well as **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing**.

The pandemic has had devastating effects not only to our public health system and economies, but to our collective mental health. The disruptions, anxieties, depression, substance abuse, and chronic stress that COVID has created in our lives have brought many in our community to the brink of emotional collapse. The need for mental health services could not be more apparent or pressing; and we must all do what is necessary to improve access to professional treatment. We all deserve access to quality mental health treatment – and this bill is a highly effective, low-cost way of addressing this need which is in keeping with modern regulatory approaches in other jurisdictions.

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-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 11:25:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerith Edwards	Testifying for Kaliko Counseling Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello -- I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in the state of Hawaii. I have been in private practice for six years, and before that, I worked in the non-profit mental health care sector and at the University of Hawaii Hilo as a mental health Counselor. I supervise the work of 2 pre-licensed mental health counselors with masters degrees in Counseling Psychology from UH Hilo. This individuals by every right should be included in this new legislation.

The MHC license is in some real sense equal to the CP license, the CSW license, and the MFT license in that we literally do the same work, day by day, treating individuals, couples, families, children, and groups.

Please include individuls with masters level studies who are pursuing a license as Mental Health Counselors in this bill. Under proper supervision, their services are on a par with licensed MHCs who charge insurance. In private practice settings, it would be incredibly helpful to these new counselors to be able to charge insurance, even if they are only able to do that under the auspices of their already licensed supervisors.

Please feel free to call me during your legislature session tomorrow, March 23, 2023 for more information about what I am saying. I am here with boots on the ground and what I am saying is very, very important to increasing our treatment capacity and meeting the needs of Hawaiiis populations for high quality mental health care that is covered by insurance. This is urgent.

Kerith Edwards, LMHC (MHC-506)

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 9:14:47 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vishwani Ram-Souza	Testifying for Elemental Guidance, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Thank you for taking a moment to consider.

As it stands, this is the current statistics for client to licensed clinician ratio:

Hawai'i 320:1

Honolulu 370:1

Kauai 480:1

Maui 550:1

Moloka'i has no registered providers.

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,

Dr. Vishwani Ram-Souza, LMFT, PhD

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 9:11:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik Acuna	Testifying for Erik E. Acuna, LCSW LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I support this bill in the belief that it will allow greater access to much needed mental health services in our community. Not only will it provide greater access to our clients, but it will also allow for easier access and better clinical training to our interns and non-licensed clinicians. There are very few opportunities in our community to gain proper clinical training. This bill will incentivize licensed therapists to train our non-licensed providers.

Thank you for your time.

Erik Acuna, LCSW-4135

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 8:53:00 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Pierce	Testifying for Root2Rise Counseling Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for considering this bill. It is a must do for Hawaii. We must follow the precedent set in other states to serve two critical purposes.

1. Make more mental health providers available to support current need
2. Improve the career path for post graduate providers in order to increase likelihood they will stay in the field and in the state.

This is a must pass situation for our state and the urgent need in our communities is overwhelming. This bill must be put into action.



ALOHACARE

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice-Chair, Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair, Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair, Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

Hearing: Thursday, March 23, 2023 10:00 AM

RE: **HB1300, HD2 Relating to Mental Health- Support**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB1300, HD2**. This measure establishes associate-level licensure requirements and insurance reimbursements for certain mental health professionals in training, allows psychologist license applicants to sit for their examination prior to supervised experience requirement completion, allows the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances and authorizes insurance reimbursement for supervised social work interns in certain circumstances.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai`i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 80,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately half of our membership are keiki. We are Hawai`i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person health needs.

Hawai`i's high demand for mental health services, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and recession, have highlighted our State's dire shortage of mental health professionals. The shortage most severely impacts our most vulnerable residents, Medicaid beneficiaries and those who live in rural communities. A lack of timely access to mental health treatment can have devastating consequences on our residents.

This measure expands access to quality mental health services by addressing licensing and reimbursement limitations as well as helping to relieve the financial burden on aspiring mental health professionals. In turn, this will increase the number of local practitioners in the workforce needed to meet the demand of our community.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB1300, HD2**.

1357 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1250, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Call: 973-0712 • Toll-free: 1-877-973-0712 • Fax: 808-973-0726 • www.AlohaCare.org

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 2:20:09 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Damien Young	Testifying for Kauhale Healing LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are currently experiencing a mental health epidemic in the state of Hawaii, with the need for mental health services far surpassing the available providers. Every single one of my licensed colleagues has a full practice with a lengthy waiting list, leaving most individuals seeking a therapist without an ability to get mental health support. Currently all pre-licensed interns under direct supervision don't have a way of billing insurance, so the only option is for individuals to pay out of pocket for services which most can not afford to do. The end result is that the people on our islands are suffering needlessly without an ability to receive the mental health services they so desperately need - and with suicide and substance abuse rates higher than ever, people are literally dying because of it. Please be pono and pass this bill to enable a greater breadth of mental health providers to serve our community. Blocking or slowing this bill down will only cause harm to our community.

Aloha--

My name is Britt Young, and I'm the founder and Executive Director for Xplor Counseling, LLC. In my opinion, this bill is an opportunity to add much-needed manpower to our overwhelmed mental health industry here in Hawaii. The measure also provides for more specific and targeted training for pre-licensed clinicians.

It is likely no surprise that Hawaii has a shortage of mental health professionals, as this has been well-understood for some time. Currently, at Xplor, we have approximately 120 people on our wait list, most of them being children. Even with forty-plus clinicians at Xplor, we still cannot fill the gap fast enough.

What is certain is that some people on the wait list will be able to resolve their concerns while waiting on a list, but most will not. For many, the wait will exacerbate symptoms and possibly create problems that are more difficult to treat later. Some will go to the hospital as a last resort for immediate treatment, which places more burden and expense on insurers and facilities. For children, who have been most displaced, what may have started as a small behavioral issue can evolve into deeper psychological distress if they do not get services in a prompt manner.

With supervised pre-licensed clinicians at Xplor and other practices, the wait lists might all but disappear, as we add dozens of clinicians to serve our community. You may even ask yourself: Would I want my child or grandchild to be wait-listed for months while they struggle with mental health issues?

By passing this measure, you would be opening the door for pre-licensed clinicians to serve our community and get fairly compensated for their work.

Another reason this bill is essential to pass is because the current system does not allow much space for clinicians to get the right training in their specialty of choice.

Since I graduated from my Masters Program in 2008, about half of my graduating class has gone on to become Mental Health professionals, and the overwhelming reason for this is the financial and logistical difficulty to get to the next level, which is full licensure.

For the current graduate, finding placement for post-graduate work is quite limited, and one has only a handful of choices in any given community. Often, the work will be important, yes, but also low-paid and not likely in the preferred field of study. For example, "interns" as they are called would be limited to working in a privately or publicly funded agency or practice, or in a practice that has enough self-pay clients to be sustainable. In this case, the intern is paid minimal fees for service and, because options are limited, will likely work with a population of someone else's choosing.

For example, although I had no intention of working with children, my first intern positions were working exclusively with children. As much as I enjoyed the work, it did not prepare me for my eventual couples therapy practice.

When I lived in Deerfield, Illinois, I was thrilled to learn there was an Associate Licensure track for which I qualified. Because insurance companies reimbursed for my services, I was able to serve a population of my choosing and hone my skills working with Family Systems. What's more is that I was able to earn a wage that allowed me to pursue my career vs the low wages offered at private or state agencies.

Because I was heavily supervised, the quality of my work was never in question, and I was able to grow as a clinician. Please note, sampling different populations as a clinician is important, and I enjoyed my time working with children, but had I lived in a state where I was contained only to one population, I would have missed-out on developing important skills.

Hawaii is ready to join most other states in creating an Associate Licensure track—this provisional licensure track will not only keep needed clinicians in the industry, but it would also set a pathway for pre-licensed clinicians to get the proper training they need to be successful as a fully-licensed clinician.

Please consider passing this measure.

Fondly,

Britt Young, M.A., LMFT

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:59:34 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alan R. Spector	Testifying for Alan R. Spector, LCSW Psychotherapy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in private mental health practice and I am writing in SUPPORT of HB1300. This is a common sense bill that would have an immediate impact on addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in the state. I see no downsides in passing this bill.

Mahalo

Alan R. Spector, LCSW

Kaneohe

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 6:12:37 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miriam Goldberg	Testifying for Talk It Out LLC	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,

Miriam Goldberg, LCSW



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1300 HD2: RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

TO: House Committee on Health and Human Services & Commerce and Consumer Protection

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: **Thursday 3/23/2023 at 10:00 AM; CR 229 & via videoconference**

Chairs San Buenaventura and Keohokalole, Vice Chairs Aquino and Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services & Commerce and Consumer Protection

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 1300 HD2**, 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 Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii 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 Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has a long history of providing counseling services to the people of Hawaii.

Hawaii has struggled for years with a shortage of mental health professionals. According to data from the Kaiser Family Foundation, only 14% of the mental health clinicians need is met in Hawaii. We are in strong 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.

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

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 if you have any questions.



HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:17:10 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anuheha St. Laurent	Testifying for Anuheha St.Laurent- Marriage & Family Therapy LLC	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.

I am a recently licensed Marriage & Family Therapist who delayed obtaining my license for nearly 6 years because financially, the process was a huge sacrifice. My family couldn't afford to pay for the required supervision hours by a licensed therapist while working in the mental health field as a pre-licensed professional, which was already a wage that couldn't support my family's basic living expenses. If I had been able to work as an Associate Licensed Therapist and bill insurance companies, I would definitely have been able to complete it as soon as possible and earn enough to manage living expenses for my family.

And most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services. At the group practice I've been working at the past year throughout my internship, there were about 30 of us Interns who had very small caseloads, but could have seen many more clients if they had been able to utilize their insurance. Because we were unable to bill their insurance companies, we could only see clients who were willing and able to pay out of pocket for our mental health services. Even with sliding scales as low as \$20/hour, clients would end up not obtaining therapy because they couldn't afford it and majority of the other therapists who were/are actually licensed were fully booked and had/have long wait lists.

This bill must be passed in order to pay therapist interns a liveable wage and encourage them to actually become licensed and stay in the mental health field and to bridge the gap between supply and demand of individuals in Hawaii who need/want mental health therapy. Thank you for your consideration,

Anuheha St. Laurent

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

March 23, 2023 10:00 A.M. - VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE – Rm 229

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1300 HD2

Thursday,

The National Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) strongly supports HB1300 HD2 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 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 pandemic and 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

The only black-letter amendments we suggest is to clarify the language on page 46 of this bill relating to the supervision of social workers seeking licensure as a “Licensed Clinical Social Worker.” We prefer the language of a substantially and substantively similar bill - **HB1242, on page 47, line 12 – page 48, line 4** – which makes 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.

“Services provided by a supervised social worker who is working to obtain post masters clinical social work experience under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker or individual identified in section 467E-7(a)(3)(D) in order to qualify for a license as a licensed clinical social worker shall be eligible for insurance reimbursement through the insurance of the applicable client through reimbursements of claims submitted by the supervising licensed clinical social worker while listed under the supervising licensed clinical social worker's treatment authority and supervision; provided that the licensed supervising clinical social worker's services shall be eligible for reimbursement as a contracted provider; provided further that the billed rate for the licensed social worker shall be commensurate with the requisite level of training.”

We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in HB1242, explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. We therefore **respectfully request that HB1242's purpose language be included in an HD1**, in addition to two additional enumerated 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.*

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- Hawai'i Chapter



Subject: HB 1300 HD2– Support

Dear members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 1300. The Hawai'i Counselors Association (HCA) Executive Board and members support HB 1300. HCA currently has 90 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 HB1300. The HCA Executive Board and members have expressed strong support for HB1300. 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.

The intent of HB1300 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. HB1300 will 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.

Overall, HB1300 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 HB1300.

Sincerely,

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

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 3:28:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeremy Kalan	Testifying for Center for Healing & Transformation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Truly, this should always have been the way things were. After spending enormous amounts of time and money on Doctorate programs, a professional should be able to be paid to work with clients in private practices and anywhere else that serves the psychological needs of the community.

Right now, I cannot hire anyone that does not have a license because insurance companies will not pay for their services. This severely limits our ability to serve our clients.

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and kindly 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.

Mahalo nui loa,

Jeremy Kalan

CEO & Co-Founder of the Center for Healing & Transformation



March 23, 2023

The Honorable Joy SanBuenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Re: HB 1300 HD2 – Relating to mental health

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Fukunaga,
and Members of the Committees:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1300, which will establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances.

HMSA supports the legislature's intent to expand access to behavioral health care services in Hawaii. While we believe that access to behavioral health care is important and, especially in rural areas poses a challenge for our community, without established criteria and scope of service, we believe that 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 comment on HB1300 HD2.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations

3/22/23

Subject: HB 300 HD1 – Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the HB 300 HD1. I support HB 300 HD1 with amendments, and strongly recommend the Senate Committee on Ways and Means adopt and include the University of Hawai'i's budget request which in part supports the UH Hilo MA Program in Counseling Psychology. The Masters' Program in Counseling Psychology at UH Hilo will allow ***the only program in the UH System that trains Mental Health Counselors to expand and continue to provide high-quality training.***

About one in five adults and one in six children live with a mental health condition such as anxiety or depression, and suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10–14-year-old children and 25-34-year-old adults. Mental health counselors work with clients of all ages to help them live healthier, happier lives. They typically provide talk therapy where they supportively listen to their clients and provide specific evidence-based interventions for a variety of issues such as anxiety and depression, navigating transitions in life, career counseling, grief counseling, and relationship problems to more severe challenges such as post-traumatic stress, suicidality, substance abuse problems and severe mental illness. Mental health counselors work in a variety of settings including community mental health clinics, public and private elementary and secondary schools, correctional facilities, vocational rehabilitation centers, residential care facilities, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, child welfare, and military and veteran counseling settings.

The need for highly-trained mental health professionals was a known problem prior to the pandemic, and the situation has only gotten worse over the last three years. Since the UH Hilo MA Program is a hybrid distance education program, approximately 20 highly-trained graduates enter the workforce throughout the state of Hawaii each year. About half of these graduates are located on the island of Oahu and the other half are dispersed throughout the neighbor islands.

I am currently a student at UH Hilo MA Counseling program and I am in awe with how well my professors are able to provide great service and education to their students but see the struggle with how small their faculty is. It would be great if they were given the support they need to be able to provide more for the program and their students. As of right now, there are only a handful of professors that I can go to for help and I think that by expanding their faculty, not only would we be able to have more insight and guidance to our education, but also be able to send out more future counselors to our community.

The budget request submitted by the UH Board of Regents supports the hiring of two Assistant Professors and one Program Coordinator for the program. This will allow the program to expand by increasing student enrollment by 50%, which will produce more well-trained mental health counselors who can enter the field and provide much needed support to the residents of Hawaii.

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

Sincerely,

Diane Manzana

94-691 Kaaoki Pl., WaipahuHI 96797

To: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Senator J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
The Honorable Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Re: Strong Support of HB 1300, Relating to Mental Health
Hrg: Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 10:00 am, Conference Room 229

Position: Support

My name is Logan Nishihara and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am testifying in favor of HB 1300. I have been working as a behavioral health care coordinator in our community since 2020. By utilizing the collaborative care model, my colleagues and I have been able to bridge the gap in connecting patients to appropriate services based on their needs. Through working with individuals and their families, I have noticed an increase in the need for providers in the community that are able to support patients in a timely manner. Many providers are at capacity to take on new patients, have waitlists, and are at risk for burnout.

This bill will provide opportunities for not only emerging therapists but opportunities for individuals in our community to seek the help they need. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in awareness and destigmatization of mental health treatment which has led to individuals seeking help. This bill will allow emerging therapists to see and bill for patients under supervision from licensed providers which will assist in creating more access to care.

As a social work student who has aspirations to become a licensed social worker and licensed clinical social worker in the future, this bill will allow me and others similar to gain true clinical experience to help prepare in becoming well-equipped, well-trained, supportive, and empathetic therapists in the future.

In conclusion, I am testifying in strong support of HB 1300.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

March 19, 2023

RE: HB1300

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1300 and the establishment of provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances. My name is Taliesin Sumner-Longboy, I have been a direct service provider for over 5 years on Hawai'i island and will be graduating from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Thompson School of Social Work in May 2023. In my work as a professional and as a graduate student, I have seen the need for mental health providers as well as the barriers to utilizing qualified graduates to address that need while working under licensed professionals.

This bill will not only provide more on the ground resources for vulnerable populations, but also incentivize graduates to complete clinical hours locally as they will have access to compensation that is otherwise, without the passing of this bill, only available in other states.

I implore you to support this bill and its passage in this legislative session.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Taliesin Longboy', written in a cursive style.

Taliesin Sumner-Longboy



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

We know systems.

We know relationships.

We know FAMILY MATTERS.

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1300 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports HB1300 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, HB1300 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.

The only amendments to this bill we would recommend is to incorporate the **purpose language of HB1242**, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawai'i, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already allowed to do; as well as **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing.**

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

Sincerely,

Franklin de Gracia

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 8:06:55 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colin Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Colin Moore, strongly support HB1300 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, HB1300 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.

The only amendments to this bill we would recommend is to incorporate the purpose language of HB1242, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawai'i, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already

allowed to do; as well as clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter’s testimony regarding insurance billing.

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

Sincerely,

Colin Moore

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 10:40:05 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marina Galvan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am strongly 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. **How many stories circle about the difficulty of finding a mental health professional? Let's make limited access a thing of the past and allow a path to healing for so many.** 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,

Marina

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 12:25:20 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Fox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

I am writing in support of HB 1300, which has successfully survived crossover and has found its way to your HHS/CPN list of measures.

I teach in the UH system and have graduate degrees in psychology and social work. My areas of expertise include cultural psychology and adaptation to stresses. Both for my classes and my own research, I follow mental health trends closely. What I am seeing in the news and in academic literature frightens me, because incredibly high rates of diagnosable-level anxiety and depression have been reported. The isolation, losses, and fears of the pandemic have been traumatic for nearly everyone and these are not illnesses that just go away without treatment.

Hawai'i is woefully understaffed with mental health providers at this time. This leaves thousands of Hawai'i residents without treatment options at a time when probably 70% have experienced diagnosable levels of symptoms in the past two years. Suicide attempts have increased among teens across ethnicities and people of all ages really need treatment access to truly recover from the damage of isolation and risk of death during COVID.

Even if it were only for a limited few years, allowing provisional licensure for mental health graduates in their final supervision stage could greatly increase the number of counselors and therapists available by allowing them to practice while completing their supervised hours and qualify for full licensure. The post-graduates are people who have completed their academic training and practica but often have difficulty finding positions that really allow them to gain appropriate experience or directly help clients. Many end up spending years answering phones at worst and shuffling papers as case managers at best.

These people are by definition receiving supervision from licensed providers in their fields (e.g. Marriage and Family Therapy, Clinical Social Work, etc.). They cannot, however, receive insurance compensation, which prevents them from working as care providers at most agencies and practices. Required supervision will keep clients safe during the provisional period. I implore you to pass this bill so that they can get to work helping the people of Hawai'i. I would be happy to provide data and other resources, if you have questions.

Mahalo for your time and attention around this important issue,

Stephen Fox, PhD, MA, MSW

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 4:35:13 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fabio Cardoso	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,

Fabio Cardoso

MSCP Graduate Student at Chaminade University of Honolulu

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 9:38:56 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Juarez	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,
Teresa Juarez

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 6:02:11 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Powers	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,

Emily Powers

15-2724 Welea St, Pahoia HI 96778

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.

I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and have also been a Supervisor of LMFTs in Hawaii. I feel this bill is critically needed. We currently do not have nearly enough Licensed Therapists to do the job. This bill will help patients get the help they need.

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:24:00 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Litman	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,

David Litman

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:31:22 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Borer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1300 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports HB1300 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, HB1300 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.

The only amendments to this bill we would recommend is to incorporate the **purpose language of HB1242**, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawai'i, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already allowed to do; as well as **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing**.

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

Sincerely,

Kathleen Borer, RN., LCSW

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:55:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Navarro	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-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 11:54:03 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danni Sutana Gardner	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,

Danni Sutana Gardner

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:15:07 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

As a licensed clinical social worker in Hilo, I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. We have very limited providers. My practice is consistently full. I receive many referrals but very few colleagues have any opening. In addition it seems the majority of colleagues here are from the mainland, and Hilo given it's diverse cultural population needs more providers that represent their own community. 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,

Emily Malate, LCSW

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:19:57 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvette Skope, LMFT	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,

Yvette Skope, LMFT

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:35:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Carlton-Jarmon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I am in support of the 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 neighboring islands to help meet the demand for mental health services in our communities. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent, hopefully encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cynthia Carlton-Jarmon, MFT, Ret/USArmy

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:52:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I support this bill HB1300 as a registered voter, and mental health provider. I believe this bill will help our industry and our community as a whole raise the bar in training while also alleviate our waitlists for mental health services. This is the most important measure to have come before this committee in regards to helping people get mental health services. I strongly support this measure and hope you will pass it

Thank You,

Melissa Wilson

Omao, Kauai

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:05:22 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:10:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alanna Barnes	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.

Furthermore, I am a student at HSPP at Chaminade University of Honolulu working towards my Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology. This bill will directly affect my future path toward obtaining licensure and working directly with clients who need therapeutic services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alanna Barnes, M.A.

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:20:29 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amber Schildwacher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a clinical psychology doctoral student at Chaminade University. I am in support of the Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. There is a lack of mental health providers and the need for care is quickly increasing. This bill will allow for more providers to give care and more patients to receive mental health care. Hawaii is home to individuals who are going untreated and suffering in mental illness. The bill would allow students, like myself, to take licensing exams in a timely manner, after we are done our course work. This would also allow students to focus purely on clinical care during our internship and post-doctoral positions by allowing us to take our exam earlier.

Thank you for taking time to read my testimony.

Amber Schildwacher

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:48:11 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am in support of this bill because of the crisis nature we are facing across the state. As a licensed LCSW, I was overloaded during covid, to the point of burn out, and am now delaying retirement because the need has not fallen. We need to think proactively.

Please take into consideration the number of people on waiting lists before you make a decision.

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-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:17:50 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Bonham	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. As a licensed clinical social worker, I see how many patients are seeking care and struggling due to a shortage of providers. If passed, this bill will help to increase the number of mental health providers in the state. Additionally, it will enable more mental health professionals to obtain quality on-the-job training.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Bonham, LCSW

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:22:53 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith White	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

Mahalo,

Judith C. White, Psy.D.

HI licensed psychologist

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

Thank you for your

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:40:06 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
nancy sidun	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.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Nancy Sidun

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:53:59 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kendyl Oshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am in complete support of the Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask the committee to pass this bill. As a graduate student myself, this will definitely be helpful once I graduate, especially with having to pay off student loans and the increased cost of living here in Hawaii. This bill will encourage people to stay in Hawaii to continue to serve and meet the unique needs of our community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kendyl Oshiro

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:57:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Gustin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings, I am the owner and founder of Pau Hana Counseling, LLC, one of the largest outpatient mental health programs in Hawaii. We currently employ 36 therapists, about half of these being interns or practicum students working on their hours towards licensure.

The current situation for interns and residents of Hawaii seeking out mental health services is untenable. We get over 100 calls a month from Hawaii residents seeking out services, and have to turn many of these people away, mainly because we cannot keep enough open spots with licensed therapists. Currently, almost every resident of Hawaii that calls wants to be able to use their insurance to pay for services, understandably so, because they pay a lot of money for insurance and want to use it. However, insurance companies will only reimburse for licensed therapists, leading us to turn many of these residents away who desperately need help. Without being able to use insurance reimbursement, interns either have to work for free, or residents have to pay cash. For those residents who pay cash, as an organization, we do not keep any money for ourselves and just pay our interns for their services. This is not a sustainable situation long term. Being able to bill for interns under their supervisors would help solve many problems that we are having as a whole. It will help keep more interns in Hawaii and help serve more Hawaii residents. Please consider passing this bill to best serve our community and the dire need we have for more mental health services.

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 3:02:50 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heidi Lahl	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,

HEIDI LAHL

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 3:30:13 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annelise Yang	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,

Annelise Yang Thompson

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 3:54:39 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Wong	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,

Jessica Wong, LCSW

Aloha Committee Chair and Members,

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.

I am a clinical psychologist in independent practice, and my practice has been completely full for more than a year. There is a critical shortage of mental health providers and viable training programs. This bill would assist in alleviating the shortage and providing access to care.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rosemary Adam-Terem, Ph.D.

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 5:25:15 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katrin Skeele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a graduate student, I strongly support bill HB1300 HD2. An associate license will not only benefit recent graduates who are pursuing full licensure, but it will also protect our clients. I believe it is crucial to clearly distinguish between Master/Ph.D. level clinicians and unlicensed providers from unregulated professions such as coaching. Implementing an associate license will support our professional identity and protect clients seeking mental health support.

Sincerely,

Katrin Skeele

Graduate Student at the University of the Cumberlands
Membership Committee member, Hawaii Counselors Association

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 2:53:49 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Johnson	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. This bill would encourage recent graduates to come to Hawaii to help fill the growing need for mental health providers, as well.

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Matthew Johnson, MS

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 8:07:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather Desensi	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.

The field of mental health is not one that many venture into but is one that everyone needs. The resources for those who have already gotten their Master and have years of experience are still unable to provide the support due to the lack of laws that are out into place. If associate mental health therapist are able to provide more services this will allow for therapist in this state to stay and continuing the amazing work.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heather Desensi,

Director of PARENTS Inc

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 9:15:22 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Wolf	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Cocern

3'21'2023

I am a LCSW practicing in Hilo, Hawaii over the last two years. I have been licensed in three states - Hawaii, North Carolina and Ohio. Other states have a LASW license and Hawaii does not. Any movement towards Associate licensure in the mental health feild in Hawaii is a good idea. I am sorry you are not creating that for LASWin Hawaii as the current MSW system is confusing to outsiders and out of state insurance companies.

Recently I was interviewed about the shortage of mental health professionals by a journalist for a state wide newspaper and they told me that there are 114 open positions for LCSW's. Seem's a shame it is so hard to become one in the stae of Hawaii. I understand from taking to other providers in the feild of mental health that is also hard to become fully licensed in Hawaii for them. There is a general shortage of Mental health professionals - the laws around licensure are out of date and behind the times.

Thank you for updating these laws - keep up the good work!

Eric Wolf LCSW in Hawaii

PS: Maybe next you could tackle how hard it is to get paneled to insurance companies as indepdent mental health professioanls.

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 10:14:05 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ally Trest	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members,

Many thanks to each of you for your service to your constituents and our community. I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully but urgently 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 dier demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging upcoming providers to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit your constituents in seeking services by improving their access to and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration - aloha.

Ally Trest, UH Manoa MSW Student/Future LFMT

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 5:48:55 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole Shifflett	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,

Nicole Shifflett, MSW, LSW

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 6:24:49 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
YiLin Fang	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 Hawai'i and meet the unique needs of our community.

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

Thank you for your consideration,

YiLin Fang

1079 Puolo Dr, Honolulu, HI 96818

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 3:32:54 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judi Steinman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support HB1300 HD2, allowing Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals. I respectfully urge your committees 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,

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 7:31:45 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samantha Bailo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of this bill that would allow more qualified clinicians to receive reimbursement from insurance companies, making more therapists available for our community.

Thank you

Samantha Bailo, MA

Counseling Psych Grad- UH Hilo 2022

Pau Hana Associate

Hale Kipa Mental Health Professional

Hawaii Community College Counselor

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 8:13:06 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am in full support of HB 1300 H2, to quickly expand our mental health capacity here in Hawaii. The need is great and the resources are too limited today. Please support this bill.

Aloha,

Linda White

MSW student, mother of 3, long term Hawaii resident

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 9:17:50 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 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 Hawaii. 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 Hawaii so volunteering hours is not feasible. Passing this Bill will allow for direct supervised access to retain our well-trained providers in Hawaii rather than requiring them to relocate to the continent for their hours and hope they return a few years later.

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,

Diane Logan

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 10:54:22 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Petra Parvati Meedt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill.

As a current associate mental health professional, I have personally experienced that overwhelming need to provide mental health services, especially for couples and families, and the lack of licensed professionals. Including pre-licensed mental health professionals under supervision is crucial to continue to provide quality mental health services when they are needed most. Some of my clients (particularly couples!) have told me that they have been waiting for months for appointments from licensed mental health professionals, and are very grateful that they were able to start therapy, even if that meant that their insurance would not cover it and they had to pay a reduced fee.

I hope this testimony is helpful to support the inclusion of associate mental health professionals into the current system by being able to bill insurances under their supervisor's license. This will not only make urgently needed mental health services more accessible to the general population, but also support aspiring professionals to obtain the required supervised work experience to obtain licensure in Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Petra Parvati Meedt

Marriage and Family Therapy Associate (HI)

Licensed Psychologist (PR)

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 11:17:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lianne Philhower	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,

Lianne Philhower

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 11:41:46 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leslie Gonzales	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,

Leslie Gonzales

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 12:22:57 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina Henline	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.

Our communities need more mental health options available in all areas. It will help to make our islands a safer, happier and more opportunistic place to live.

Thank you for your consideration,

Christina K. Henline

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 1:07:54 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Myers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing in support of HB1300 including the amendment to provide DCCA funding for the administration and processing of the Associate License for mental health counselors. This licensing will allow greater employment opportunities as well as expanded mental health care for the community. Having the needed funds in place to make these expansions is important to the licensing programs success.

Sincerely,

Tara Myers

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 2:56:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlotte Savage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I get calls ALL THE TIME of patients in need of mental health treatment and I do not have the room. I have a long waiting list. I help as many as I can but I can only work so many hours a week. I am always in process of helping people find therapists who have openings. We have a dire need in Hawai'i to be able to serve the mental health needs of our constituents. **Passing HB1300** will increase therapy options for our residents. It will allow therapists in training to have the training opportunities they need to train full time while allowing them to get paid, and allowing providers that train them to be able to pay them. **We save lives and families and relationships daily**, what we do is important. *Our trainees need on-island opportunities and this bill will allow them to have training opportunities on the island*, instead of having to leave to the mainland looking for prelicensed paid training. **Noone can work for free here on the island, and we cannot expect these professionals in training to work for free.** They leave or give up the profession altogether due to lack of this provision, which many other states offer. PLEASE help our resident professionals and residents in need of therapy get the help they need and deserve. Mahalo nui loa for considering this.

Aloha,

Dr. Charlotte Savage (clinical psychologist)

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 2:59:12 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannah Katherine Hancock	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,

Hannah K. Hancock, MSW, LCSW

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 9:04:57 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kirsten W Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

3/22/23

Subject: HB 300 HD1 – Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the HB 300 HD1. I support HB 300 HD1 with

amendments, and strongly recommend the Senate Committee on Ways and Means adopt and include

the University of Hawai‘i’s budget request which in part supports the UH Hilo MA Program in Counseling

Psychology. The Masters’ Program in Counseling Psychology at UH Hilo will allow the only program in

the UH System that trains Mental Health Counselors to expand and continue to provide high-quality training.

About one in five adults and one in six children live with a mental health condition such as anxiety or

depression, and suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10–14-year-old children and 25-34-

year-old adults. Mental health counselors work with clients of all ages to help them live healthier,

happier lives. They typically provide talk therapy where they supportively listen to their clients and

provide specific evidence-based interventions for a variety of issues such as anxiety and depression,

navigating transitions in life, career counseling, grief counseling, and relationship problems to more

severe challenges such as post-traumatic stress, suicidality, substance abuse problems and severe mental illness. Mental health counselors work in a variety of settings including community mental health

clinics, public and private elementary and secondary schools, correctional facilities, vocational rehabilitation centers, residential care facilities, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, child welfare,

and military and veteran counseling settings.

The need for highly-trained mental health professionals was a known problem prior to the pandemic,

and the situation has only gotten worse over the last three years. Since the UH Hilo MA Program is a hybrid distance education program, approximately 20 highly-trained graduates enter the workforce throughout the state of Hawaii each year. About half of these graduates are located on the island of Oahu and the other half are dispersed throughout the neighbor islands.

As a post graduate with six rich years of experience on Hawaii Island, mental health problems have grown exponentially leading to provider burn out and preference for indirect work. This has created a compounding effect on the direct service workers dedicated to the future of our community. Increasing the opportunities for apprenticeship and other benefits for newly graduated counselors would greatly benefit the licensed providers and our children and families.

The budget request submitted by the UH Board of Regents supports the hiring of two Assistant Professors and one Program Coordinator for the program. This will allow the program to expand by increasing student enrollment by 50%, which will produce more well-trained mental health counselors who can enter the field and provide much needed support to the residents of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.
Sincerely,

Kirsten Wong, LMHC
150 Kimokimo Place Hilo, HI 96720

LATE

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 8:36:29 PM
Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Kay Lowe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1300 HD2 ASSOCIATE LICENSE

Aloha,

I am in total 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.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Mary Kay Lowe, MA LMFT

LATE

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 9:17:34 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vida Yap	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,

Vida Yap

LATE

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 12:17:22 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Hu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I am writing in support of the Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals (HB1300). I was born and raised in Hawai'i, and I look forward to practicing as a licensed clinical psychologist in Hawai'i. As a doctoral student who currently trains in a community mental health setting, I see first-hand the shortage of mental health services in Hawai'i. I respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would help to increase available providers and meet the demands for mental health services. Moreover, this bill would also improve and expand training opportunities. Graduate students would be encouraged to stay in Hawai'i and serve this very special community.

Me ka mahalo piha,

Alana Hu

LATE

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 6:35:02 PM
Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Negron	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,

Andrea Negron, MSW, LSW

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 4:29:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Mitsioura	Individual	Comments	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,

Maria Mitsioura

HB-1300-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 10:38:54 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Haylin Dennison	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha committee members,

My name is Haylin Dennison, and I am here today to testify in support of Hawaii HB1300. As a parent of a trans youth and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, I have seen firsthand the devastating impact of the mental health crisis in our state.

Suicide was the leading cause of death for youth in Hawaii-Specifically Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders between the ages of fifteen to twenty-four in 2019 (SAMSHA), These youth are three times less likely to receive mental health treatment compared to their white counterparts in our state.

I am a therapist and mother of 4. My eldest son is 15 years old and trans. According to the 2018 DOH sexual Minority report, 1/2 of all trans youth in hawaii attempted suicide in the past year. Trans youth are 7x more likely than cisgender youth to attempt suicide on our state. This is not due to the common misperception that these kids are “troubled,” the research is CLEAR that this is due to the discrimination these kids face in their own home, school, church, sports, and community.

I am a licensed therapist and have been working w teenagers for 20 years. During the pandemic, every single MH inpatient facility had waiting lists that were months long. To clarify, these are not outpatient facilities where teens go to receive treatment. Those clinics were also full, but inpatient facilities such as FTC or Kahi treat actively suicidal youth or youth who are an imminent danger to themselves or others. The fact that the sickest of the sickest kids who were placed at the highest risk for suicide did not have access to life saving medical treatment they deserved is a complete heartbreak.

The shortage of mental health specialists in our state is a major factor contributing to this crisis. It is difficult for youth to access the care due to long wait times. The inability to pay pre-licensed therapists is also a significant barrier to accessing mental health care in our state. These clinicians are often undervalued and underpaid, despite playing a critical role in providing quality mental health services to our community.

This shortage has a trickle-down effect on our entire industry. It is simply supply and demand. Fewer MH specialists mean fewer clinical supervisors, and that means fewer Master level trainees able to complete required hours to obtain licensure. Overall, this leads to lower quality clinical training and clinical supervision for pre-licensed clinicians. This creates an endless cycle

that makes it literally impossible to provide high-quality mental health services and treatment for those who need it the most, including our youth. We must take action to break this cycle by investing in the recruitment and training of more mental health specialists, including clinical supervisors, so that we can ensure that our keiki has access to quality, consistent, mental health care.

My 15 y/o trans child is the smartest, kindest, strongest human I know. He came up with a concept to destigmatize mental health tx for teens and 1 year ago we cofounded a mental health clinic for teenagers called, Spill The Tea Cafe. If my 15 y/o can take action, so can we.

By supporting Hawaii HB1300, we will take a critical and necessary step towards breaking this cycle and providing high quality mental health services that our community needs. This bill will increase the number of mental health providers in our state and ensure that those who are providing care are able to receive fair compensation for their services.

Mahalo for considering my testimony in support of Hawaii HB1300.