

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
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Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB487  
RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE.**

REPRESENTATIVE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date: February 15, 2023

Room Number: 329

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

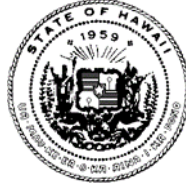
2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the Trauma Informed Care  
3 Taskforce (TIC-TF) and the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR). DOH provides some  
4 comments for consideration, but defers to the OWR.

5 We suggest considering a conversion of the TIC-TF to the Wellness and Resiliency Advisory  
6 Board (WRAB) sooner than the proposed date of July 1, 2025. The proposed scopes for the TIC-  
7 TF and the WRAB are identical except for the TIC-TF to serve as an advisory board to the  
8 OWR, and it appears that the legislative intent has been determined to attach the OWR to the  
9 Department of Human Services. A sooner transition could help with the establishment the OWR  
10 and potentially provide additional guidance during the OWR's initial formative years.

11 We also recommend that the chair of the WRAB be other than a State employee. With the plan  
12 for the OWR to be an attached office rather than part of a department, there seems to be intent  
13 for it to have independence. Having a State employee as the WRAB chair could seem in conflict  
14 with the intended independence of another State entity. We propose that either all WRAB  
15 members or only non-State employee members select a chair from among the non-State  
16 employee members.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 12, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair  
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 487](#) – RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE.

Hearing: February 15, 2023, 8:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure, provides comments, and defers to the Office of Wellness & Resilience.

**PURPOSE:** This bill Transfers the Office of Wellness and Resilience from the Office of the Governor to the Department of Human Services on 7/1/2025. Extends the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force dissolution date to 6/30/2025 and establishes the task force as an advisory board to the Office of Wellness and Resilience until its dissolution. Reconstitutes the membership of the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force into a permanent advisory board to the Office of Wellness and Resilience to be called the Wellness and Resilience Advisory Board.

DHS appreciates the Legislature's efforts to transform government to become trauma-informed. The shift to become a Trauma-Informed State is necessary. International, national, and local reports describe the continuing and disproportionate health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation

on low-income families, children, and youth.<sup>1</sup> When schools and child care facilities closed, women with less than college degrees, especially mothers with children under five, left the workforce to provide child care, reducing family resources and increasing household stress.

COVID-19 amplified the need for coordinated service delivery so residents could access benefits and services quickly and efficiently, and government processes did not create further stress and anxiety. While many new relationships and processes developed during the pandemic, departments need additional resources to lead and continue to make needed changes so that our systems and processes provide services mindful of "what happened" to a person. Negative and traumatizing experiences trying to access government services lead to a loss of faith in government and less citizen engagement.

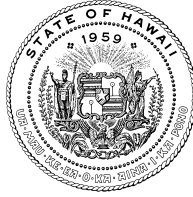
The government workforce has also been reduced as public workers find higher-paying and less stressful employment in the private sector. As a result, DHS emphasizes the need to include employee mental health as part of trauma-informed strategies.

DHS will work with the Governor's Office and the Office of Wellness & Resiliency to facilitate the transfer.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

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<sup>1</sup> See, Andrade C, Gillen M, Molina JA, Wilmarth MJ. [The Social and Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Family Functioning and Well-Being: Where do we go from here?](#), J Fam Econ Issues. 2022;43(2):205-212. doi: 10.1007/s10834-022-09848-x. Epub 2022 May 27. PMID: 35669394; PMCID: PMC9136200; Drake P, Williams E, [A Look at the Economic Effects of the Pandemic for Children](#), Kaiser Family Foundation, August 5, 2022, and UHERO Public Health Report, [Vaccination Booster Uptake Lags as COVID Impact Reach Widens](#), January 5, 2023.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**House Committees on Health and Homelessness**  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023  
8:30a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference  
**In Strong Support of**  
**H.B. No. 487, Relating to the Office of Wellness and Resilience**

Aloha Chair Au Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the Committee:

The Office of the Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of H.B. No. 487, Relating to the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

Established through Act 291, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, OWR will address barriers and build wellness and resilience through trauma-informed, strengths-based strategies and support agencies in their trauma-informed care reform efforts and move toward a collaborative, shared purpose of collective system reform.

The technical changes requested in H.B. 487 will assist the OWR to build its operations and create a sustainable foundation to effectively address the charge of Act 291. Extending the date of transfer to Department of Human Services to July 1, 2025, will provide needed time to solidify the mechanisms required to successfully build structure and address the additional opportunities to collaborate and support working groups aligned with the OWR's charge.

Additionally, the request to formalize a relationship with the Act 209 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2021) Trauma Informed Care Task Force and have it operate as an advisory committee will allow the Task Force and community members to help inform the direction to the OWR. As the Executive Director of the OWR, weaving the principles of trauma-informed care to guide all aspects of this office, including the involvement of community voice, creating opportunities to collaborate and provide transparency in the OWR from the inception, will be critical to its success. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of this measure.

Mahalo,

Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA  
Executive Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience  
Office of the Governor

**HB-487**

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 6:17:16 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/15/2023 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nikos Leverenz	Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, & Committee Members:

Hawai‘i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) supports HB 487, which (1) transfers the Office of Wellness and Resilience from the Office of the Governor to the Department of Human Services on 7/1/2025, and (2) extends the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force dissolution date to 6/30/2025 and establishes the task force as an advisory board to the Office of Wellness and Resilience until its dissolution.

HHHRC’s mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions. Many of our program clients and participants have also been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Health and Homelessness  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023; 8:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 0487, RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE.**

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Joint Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 0487, RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would:

- (1) Transfer the Office of Wellness and Resilience from the Office of the Governor to the Department of Human Service;
- (2) Extend the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force (Task Force) dissolution date to June 30, 2025; and
- (3) Reconstitute the membership of the Task Force into a permanent advisory board to the Office of Wellness and Resilience, to be known as the Wellness and Resilience Advisory Board.

**Testimony on House Bill No. 0487**  
**Wednesday, February 15, 2023; 8:30 a.m.**  
**Page 2**

The experience of trauma has widespread impacts on the lives of our citizenry. This often leads to or exacerbates mental illness, substance use and physical health conditions. Because of this, in a truly integrated whole health system of health care, effectively treating behavioral and physical health conditions must involve the impact of trauma.

Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of policymakers, health care providers, and government workers, the very services and systems designed to help people become healthy can be re-traumatizing. This bill seeks to improve the quality of outcomes for persons impacted by trauma by establishing the framework for a statewide trauma-informed and responsive practice. Accordingly, we respectfully urge your favorable consideration of this bill.

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



*Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.*

To: Representative Belatti, Chair  
Representative Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Re: HB487, relating to the Office of Wellness and Resilience  
8:30 a.m., Feb. 15, 2023

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi and committee members:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in SUPPORT of House Bill 487, relating to the Office of Wellness and Resilience.**

It has been inspiring to see how the will of the legislature to create a trauma-informed task force has burgeoned into an Office of Wellness and Resilience. The work of the task force has provided an important foundation from which the office can make a difference across state departments and into our communities.

We support this bill to clarify administrative attachment as well as set the vision for the future of the office and what will be the Wellness and Resiliency Advisory Board. We support a governance structure where the office can get important advice and counsel from a representative advisory group. The representative task force thus far has ensured that individuals, families and communities that are often marginalized—intentionally or by circumstance—are included in their discussions. We welcome their continued support of the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

We thank you for this opportunity to testify. **Please support HB487.**

Mahalo,

Ke'ōpū Reelitz  
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy





## HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

Vonnell Ramos, President  
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President  
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer  
Jefferson Gourley, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive  
Director

### Network Membership

*Bay Clinic*  
*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i*  
*Big Island Substance Abuse*  
*Council*  
*Bobby Benson Center*  
*Child and Family Service*  
*Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i*  
*Collins Consulting, LLC*  
*Domestic Violence Action Center*  
*EPIC `Ohana, Inc.*  
*Family Programs Hawai`i*  
*Family Support Hawai`i*  
*Friends of the Children's Justice*  
*Center of Maui*  
*Get Ready Hawai`i*  
*Hale Kipa, Inc.*  
*Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.*  
*Hawai`i Children's Action*  
*Network*  
*Hawai`i Health & Harm*  
*Reduction Center*  
*Ho`ola Na Pua*  
*Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i*  
*Ka Hale Pomaika`i*  
*Kahi Mohala*  
*Kokua Kalihi Valley*  
*Kaua`i Planning and Action*  
*Alliance*  
*Maui Youth and Family Services*  
*Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native*  
*Hawaiian Health Care*  
*Systems*  
*P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.*  
*Parents and Children Together*  
*PHOCUSED*  
*PFLAG – Kona, Big Island*  
*Planned Parenthood of the*  
*Great Northwest, Hawaii*  
*Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana*  
*Residential Youth Services*  
*& Empowerment (RYSE)*  
*Salvation Army Family*  
*Intervention Services*  
*Sex Abuse Treatment Center*  
*Susannah Wesley Community*  
*Center*  
*The Catalyst Group*

February 11, 2023

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair,  
And members of the Committee on Health and Homelessness

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 487 RELATED TO THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 487 Related to the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

I serve as the non-profit representative on the Hawaii Trauma-Informed Care Task Force.

Formed in response to legislation passed by this body in 2021, the Task Force is currently collecting data on models of cross-agency collaboration to provide trauma-informed services. We recognize the need address trauma-related needs in ways that respect and honor cultural diversity. We are identifying assessment tools and government, non-profit, and faith-based providers can use to identify ways they can make their programs and services more trauma-informed. And we are working on plans to help organizations use those tools.

We know that the effort to help children and families avoid adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and provide comprehensive, coordinated, culturally sensitive services to survivors of trauma will require a long-term commitment as well as human and fiscal resources.

Moving the Office of Wellness and Resilience under the jurisdiction of the Department of Human Services and positioning the Hawaii Trauma-Informed Care Task Force as an ongoing advisory group is appropriate and needed.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org  
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro  
Executive Director

February 15, 2023

Committee On Health & Homelessness

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

**HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports HB487**, which transfers the Office of Wellness and Resilience from the Office of the Governor to the Department of Human Services on 7/1/2025; extends the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force dissolution date to 6/30/2025 and establishes the task force as an advisory board to the Office of Wellness and Resilience until its dissolution; and reconstitutes the membership of the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force into a permanent advisory board to the Office of Wellness and Resilience to be called the Wellness and Resilience Advisory Board.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We strongly believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances.

We are very excited about the launch of the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR), and we thank the legislature for making this important office a reality last session. We believe the OWR will help to break down silos and increase cross-sector collaboration and alignment, including between government, non-profit organizations, philanthropic funders, faith groups, and the broader business sector. While there is tremendous work happening at the community level, the OWR will connect the dots between these place-based innovations, identify policy barriers and opportunities, and help braid funding streams.

The OWR will bring much-needed coherence and leadership to a critical cross-sector issue that impacts Hawaii at many levels: trauma. This is needed more than ever, as the COVID-19 pandemic has been directly or indirectly devastating to many of our

community members. Kids have lost parents and grandparents, have faced stressors due to financial hardship at home, and have become deeply disengaged from their schools, peers, and teachers. Of course, children faced abuse and trauma even before the pandemic, and these cycles can be incredibly difficult to break.

We believe the technical changes made by HB487 will enable the office to operate effectively and sustainably for years to come. In order for Hawaii to be a true “trauma-informed state,” the OWR must have the clarity it needs to operate with local partners and carry out its important mission. This is true for any new office, which needs a transparent runway for delivering short and long term impact in order to justify its existence.

This work can’t wait, and nothing less than the health and sustainability of our Hawaii community depends on it.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro  
Founding Executive Director  
HawaiiKidsCAN



# Kamehameha Schools®

House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Date: February 15, 2023

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Where: Conference Room 329

## TESTIMONY

By Lauren Nahme

VP of Strategy & Transformation

RE: **HB487 - Relating to the Office of Wellness and Resilience**

E ka Luna Ho‘omalua Belatti, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omalua Takenouchi, a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike, aloha!

Kamehameha Schools **SUPPORTS** HB487, which transfers the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) to the Department of Human Services (DHS), extends the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Task Force dissolution date to 6/30/2025, establishes the task force as an advisory board to OWR until its dissolution, and, upon its dissolution, reconstitutes the membership of the TIC Task Force into a permanent advisory board to OWR to be called the Wellness and Resilience Advisory Board.

**Hānai i ke keiki, ola ka lāhui** – When the child is nurtured, the people thrive. Kamehameha Schools believes that when we all focus on the well-being of our keiki, everyone will thrive. Unfortunately, many Native Hawaiian keiki are disproportionately at risk to suffer from social, cultural, ‘āina and historical trauma. Trauma-informed care aims to transform sources of distress into anchors of resilience as a key strategy to better life outcomes.

As a member of the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force, we believe that Native Hawaiian culture-based approaches are prudent and sensible solutions, along with other recommendations of the Task Force, to support the development of all vulnerable youth, resulting in greater educational, social, health and overall life success.

We further believe that making OWR permanent under DHS and reconstituting the TIC Task Force as a permanent advisory board to OWR is critical to successfully implement the recommendations of the TIC Task Force over the long-term, including Native Hawaiian culture-based solutions, to ensure our keiki are given the best chance of moving from trauma to resilience with the urgency they deserve.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to **pass this measure**.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

**HB-487**

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 2:34:53 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/15/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As with my previous testimony on HB486, ***PLEASE include representation from the Domestic Violence community on this task force and advisory board to the Office of Wellness & Resilience.*** Ignoring, overlooking or forgetting about domestic violence is a huge mistake - please permit a voice representing domestic violence to this advisory board.

Thank you ~