

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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DEPUTY CHIEFS

OUR REFERENCE **ML-SK**

February 15, 2023

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
and Members  
Committee on Health and Human Services  
State Senate  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street, Room 225  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair San Buenaventura and Members:

Subject: Senate Bill No. 1594, Relating to Crisis Intervention

I am Mike Lambert, Major of the Training Division of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports Senate Bill No. 1594, Relating to Crisis Intervention.

Police officers respond to thousands of crisis calls annually. In 2022, there were over 2,400 documented "Applications by a Law Enforcement Officer for Emergency Evaluation (MH-1)." This figure does not include the numerous individuals who voluntarily went to a licensed psychiatric facility for examination or utilized crisis mobile outreach services.

Currently, Section 334-59 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes only allows officers to initiate an emergency admission without calling a mental health emergency worker (MHEW) for instances when an individual is threatening or attempting suicide. There are occasions when an individual is not threatening or attempting suicide but is clearly a danger to self or others. It is impractical for an officer to simultaneously de-escalate or detain this individual and call for an MHEW for transport approval. There are also situations in which having to call for an MHEW delays medical care for an individual whose behavior is due to the consumption of illicit drugs.

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
and Members

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To ensure that the Department of Health (DOH) is comfortable with crisis intervention team officers being able to initiate an emergency admission, the HPD would like to request that the DOH provide training and a certification course for our officers.

Officers have an extremely dangerous job; not having control over real-time decisions at the scene increases the risk to officers, the person in crisis, and the observing community. By certifying officers to initiate an emergency admission, it allows officers to concentrate on the de-escalation and care of the individual in crisis thus reducing future trauma.

The HPD urges you to support Senate Bill No. 1594, Relating to Crisis Intervention, with the proposed amendment to include training by the DOH. We appreciate the committee's consideration of these concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Mike Lambert, Major  
Training Division

APPROVED:



Arthur J. Logan  
Chief of Police

**SB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 4:04:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	In Person

Comments:

This seems like an excellent idea. To begin with, diverting people suffering a mental health crisis away from the criminal justice system is clearly a better way to address the situation for lots of reasons that many of us have discussed for a long time. A crisis intervention officer would also presumably be better trained than a police officer to deal with the specific situation at hand. Further, transporting an individual who is "picked up" on an MH1 to a crisis center seems to be a more comprehensive way to asses and potentially treat that individual than the current practice of taking them to an emergency room.

# PARTNERS IN CARE

*Oahu's Continuum of Care*

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*Our mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses.*

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE INTENT OF SB 1594 RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION**

TO: Senate Committee On Health and Human Services

FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)

**Hearing: Wednesday, February 15, 1pm Conference Room 225/videoconference**

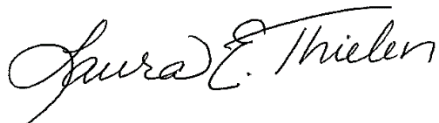
Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT OF THE INTENT SB 1594 Relating to Crisis Intervention**. Partners In Care (PIC), a coalition of more than 60 non-profit homelessness providers and concerned organizations, works on Oahu to end homelessness.

While the intent of Senate Bill 1594 prioritizes services and care for those who are some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community, in order for this measure to be beneficial, we require a significant increase in the long term solutions such as mental health services, substance abuse treatment and different housing resources available on demand. Without these long term resources, it will be a short term solution before someone is returned to the streets. There has been a lack of mental health services for decades in Hawaii. The State Hospital in Kaneohe has been a purely forensic ward which deny access those who are not court ordered to reside there. Diversion We encourage the Department of Health to work with providers and the community to set up resources in all communities that meets the needs of that community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in SUPPORT THE INTENT OF SENATE BILL 1594.

Sincerely,



Laura E. Thielen  
Executive Director  
Partners In Care



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. Box 3378  
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REVISED  
TESTIMONY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 1594  
RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION**

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

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 1p.m. in Rm. 225/VIDEO

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined.

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) supports this measure,  
3 offering comments and amendments.

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

6 The purpose of this measure is to establish and appropriate funds for a crisis  
7 intervention and diversion program within the Department with the goal of diverting  
8 individuals in need from the criminal justice system to the health care system.

9 The Department appreciates the intent of this measure which addresses a critical  
10 component of our “safety net” system where individuals receive care when and where they  
11 need it, and through the most appropriate level of service. In cases where an individual is being  
12 diverted from the criminal justice system to the health care system, such as when behavioral  
13 health crisis care is needed, the Department has an existing crisis care continuum available to  
14 meet this need.

1 In §334-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), a definition of “behavioral health crisis center”  
2 already exists. We believe this definition is appropriate and we support the use of these  
3 centers to provide crisis care services. We do not believe there is a need at this time to  
4 redefine this term in this measure.

5 In regards to the definition of a “crisis intervention officer” as written in this measure,  
6 the Department intends to certify these individuals.

7 Establishing a new crisis intervention and diversion program will require the  
8 Department to establish positions to oversee the implementation and administration of the  
9 program. We estimate that we would need two FTE positions for a crisis services coordinator  
10 and a crisis intervention and diversion program manager. We estimate that the cost for these  
11 program could be approximately \$150,000.00.

12 **Offered Amendments:** The Department respectfully requests the following amendments.

13 Page 2, lines 20-21 through Page 3, lines 1-2, strike this section. As noted above, we  
14 believe the definition established in HRS is sufficient and this new definition is not needed.

15 Page 3, lines 5-7, “Officers shall be certified by the Department of Health as specialized  
16 first responders for calls involving people in crisis.”

17 Page 3, lines 11-12, strike “or placement in a designated mental health program.”

18 Page 3, lines 19 and 21, “or a crisis intervention officer certified by the Department of  
19 Health.”

20 Page 4, lines 3-4, “or a designated behavioral health crisis center”

21 SECTION 6. New appropriation section for the Department for fiscal year 2023-2024  
22 and fiscal year 2024-2025 for the establishment and hiring of two FTE positions within the  
23 Department.



**The Institute for Human Services, Inc.**  
Ending the Cycle of Homelessness

**TO:** Honorable Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura  
Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
  
Honorable Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino  
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

**FROM:** Connie Mitchell, Executive Director  
IHS, Institute for Human Services, Inc.

**RE:** SB1594 – RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION.

**HEARING:** Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 1:00 PM.

**POSITION:** IHS strongly supports the passing of SB1594.

The Institute for Human Services strongly supports the passing of SB1594 and the establishment of a Crisis Intervention and Diversion Program within the Department of Health, based on our experience working with chronically homeless persons who are afflicted with serious and persistent mental illness, requiring mental fitness assessments. We see daily the impact that mental health treatment and intervention has on individuals who were imminently dangerous to themselves and others.

Currently, officers must call mental health emergency workers and request approval to escort those they assess as needing mental health assessment to emergency departments. This delay in the ability to initiate the transport puts not only the community in danger but the officers themselves, as they only have authority to either arrest to detain or to observe the individual until a decision is made for emergency mental health evaluation. If approval is not granted, these individuals are released, only to be picked up by officers again and again.

SB1594 as proposed would empower law enforcement officers to utilize training they have immediately to those in need. IHS has conducted crisis training for Honolulu Police Department and is beginning to expand training to Hawaii County, so far over 180 officers have received such training to equip them with de-escalation skills, trauma-response, and how to assist while protecting themselves.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

