

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 H.B. 1826 HD1
RELATING TO EDUCATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

REPRESENTATIVE KYLE T. YAMASHITA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Friday, February 23, 2024, 10:00 a.m., Room 308 / Videoconference

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

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

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

7 The Department has coordinated with the Windward Community College (WCC) and we
8 respectfully jointly support this measure which appropriates funds to support and expand the
9 WCC’s mental health technician (MHT) certificate program through the hiring of an MHT
10 certificate faculty instructor and a faculty outreach position program, establishment of a
11 scholarship program, and any other necessary administrative costs.

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

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

3 The WCC MHT certificate program began in Spring 2022 and has a total of 46 graduates
4 to date. This program provides introductory training to those entering the mental health service
5 field. Courses in psychology, communication, and conflict resolution and mediation offer a
6 range of academic study and skill-based activities to strengthen knowledge about working
7 through difficult situations in the workplace. Of these 46 graduates thus far, 19 are employed at
8 the Hawaii State Hospital.

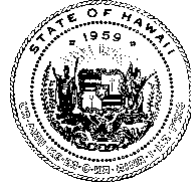
9 In 2023, the legislature allocated one permanent position for a Mental Health
10 Technician Certificate Program Coordinator to the Department. The coordinator position is
11 critical to WCC's mission to develop and grow the specialized workforce needed not only for
12 the Hawaii State Hospital (HSH) but for other entities statewide that interface with individuals
13 with severe mental illness (SMI) conditions. The Department respectfully recommends that this
14 position be moved to WCC. This will allow the college to expand the program to meet the
15 critical needs of the HSH and other statewide entities and to address the immediate and
16 significant workforce shortage of mental health providers.

17 We are pleased with the interest that this program has received thus far and look
18 forward to partnering with WCC to welcome prospective students as well as to congratulate
19 future MHT certificate program graduates, including those who are currently employed or
20 aspiring to be employed by the HSH.

21 We believe appropriating funds to establish positions to support the program, moving
22 the MHT Certificate Coordinator position from HSH to WCC, and establishing a scholarship
23 program will allow this program to expand and be offered at other community colleges, thereby
24 helping to address the need for health care workforce training throughout our state. We
25 respectfully ask for the Legislature's support of this measure.

- 1 **Offered Amendments:** None.
- 2 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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



KATHERINE AUMER, PhD
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 House Committee on Finance
in Support of H.B. 1826 HD1
RELATING TO EDUCATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

February 23, 2024, 10:00 a.m., CR 308 and Videoconference

CHAIRPERSON

Katherine Aumer, PhD

1st VICE CHAIRPERSON

Kathleen Merriam, LCSW CSAC

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Jean Okudara, CSAC

Ray Rice, MEd

Mary Pat Waterhouse

Kristin Will, MACL, CSAC

Fern Yoshida

Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii law, HRS §334-10, established 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.

IMMEDIATE PAST

CHAIRPERSON:

Richard I. Ries PsyD, MSEd

EX-OFFICIO:

Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director
Behavioral Health Administration

WEBSITE:

scmh.hawaii.gov

EMAIL ADDRESS:

doh.scmhchairperson@
doh.hawaii.gov

The Hawai'i State Council on Mental Health supports HB 1826 SD1, which appropriates funds for temporary positions to expand the University of Hawaii Windward Community College's mental health-related programs statewide. This investment is crucial in addressing the increasing demand for mental health support, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. By providing additional resources, this bill enables the college to offer essential mental health education, counseling, and support services to a broader audience. Moreover, investing in mental health programs at the community college level is a proactive and cost-effective approach to addressing mental health concerns. Community colleges serve as accessible and inclusive hubs for individuals from diverse backgrounds, making them ideal settings for promoting mental health awareness, resilience, and support. By empowering students and community members with the

State Council on Mental Health Testimony
S.B. 1826 SD1
Relating to Mental Health
February 23, 2024/10:00 a.m.
Page 2

knowledge and skills to address mental health challenges, we can foster healthier and more resilient communities statewide.

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



‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII’

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Friday, February 23, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

By

Erika Lacro

Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 1826 HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports HB 1826 HD1, which expands the Mental Health Technician (MHT) certificate of competence at Windward Community College (WCC) through the hiring of a MHT certificate faculty instructor, a faculty outreach position, scholarships, and administrative costs.

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

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

Since its inception in Spring 2022, this program has already graduated 46 students, 19 of whom were employed at Hawai'i State Hospital. In just two years, this program has had a large impact on the capacity of Windward O'ahu to care for those suffering from

mental health issues and to increase workplace satisfaction and safety in the workplace. This capacity is now being expanded with trauma-informed coursework tailored to the needs of adult corrections officers and the Honolulu Police Department, increasing workforce skills related to mental health in key professions serving vulnerable community members.

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

A Faculty Instructor will allow for curriculum development and expansion to meet the needs of employers and those we serve, implementation of the courses and certificate program, and articulation of the certificates to increasingly higher qualifications. A Faculty Outreach position amplifies the scope of this program from Windward O'ahu to our entire state through outreach and recruitment at our sister community college as well as through the creation of partnerships with mental health related agencies and workplaces throughout the state. The provision of a scholarship program allows this training to benefit a large range of potential workers across our state, removing financial barriers to education.

This bill supports the Mental Health Tech certificate program at WCC to address an immediate, critical workforce need for preparing potential employees and upskilling existing employees. It builds the capacity of our State to implement effective, supportive care for those suffering from mental illness.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1826 HD1, as long as its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 1826 HD1.



The House Committee on Finance
February 23, 2024
10:00 AM
Room 308

RE: **HB 1826, HD 1, Relating to Education for Mental Health Professionals**

Attention: Chair Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa and members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support of HB 1826, HD 1**, Relating to Education for Mental Health Professionals.

HB 1826, HD 1, expands Windward Community College's mental health-related programs by establishing two temporary full-time faculty positions to develop and administer curriculum, as well as to provide outreach to onboard new cohorts, grant scholarships, and carry out other tasks.

The expansion of this certificate program will afford greater opportunities for students to both enter the field of mental health, and to create pathways into other needed degree programs such as social work and psychology. To ensure the recruitment and retention of the program positions, it is essential for the FTE appropriation to have a recurring, general funded designation.

UHPA supports and requests the passage of HB 1826, HD 1.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Fern'.

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 2:16:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| William R Smith | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am writing to offer my strong support for HB 1826, which supports and expands the mental health technician certificate of competence at Windward Community College (WCC) through the hiring of key personnel and establishing a scholarship program. As a resident of Hawaii and a mental health advocate, I believe that investing in these programs is crucial for addressing the shortage of mental health service providers in our state and providing access to mental health care for all.

The rising prevalence of mental health issues in Hawai‘i, including depression and anxiety, has created a significant demand for mental health services. However, our current mental health workforce is struggling to keep up with this demand, leading to Hawai‘i being designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

HB 1826 aims to tackle this issue by providing much-needed support for the education and training of mental health professionals at Windward Community College (WCC). By allocating additional resources to expand mental health programs, this bill will ensure that aspiring professionals are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective care. Investing in a stronger mental health education system will better prepare our future professionals to tackle the challenges that have long plagued Hawai‘i. Whether it's providing therapy to those dealing with trauma, working with children with behavioral disorders, or supporting individuals battling addiction, these professionals play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of countless individuals and families.

Additionally, HB 1826 has the potential to address mental health provider shortages in underserved areas. Many rural and low-income communities currently lack access to mental health services, creating significant disparities in care. This bill can help bridge this gap by encouraging professionals to serve in these underserved regions through loan forgiveness programs or scholarship opportunities, ultimately ensuring that everyone has access to quality mental healthcare.

In conclusion, HB 1826 presents a significant opportunity to strengthen our mental health system and meet the critical needs of our communities. By investing in the education and support of mental health professionals, we can improve the overall mental health of our society and provide better care to those in need. I urge you to support this legislation and help pave the way for a healthier, more resilient future.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Mahalo nui,

William R Smith

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 2:41:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tishalynn HHP Reed | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support HB 1826

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 3:12:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Cynthia Texeira | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

HB1826 - Relating To Education for Mental Health Professionals

I wholeheartedly endorse HB 1826, a crucial proposal to enhance the mental health technician certificate program at Windward Community College (WCC). The bill aims to bolster the program through strategic hiring and a scholarship initiative, addressing the shortage of mental health professionals in Hawaii. As a parent of a child struggling with mental health challenges and a mental health advocate, I believe this investment is vital to meet the increasing demand for mental health services in our state.

Hawaii faces a growing mental health challenge, leading to a shortage of professionals and the designation of a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). HB 1826 directly tackles this issue by providing support for education and training at WCC, arming future professionals with the necessary skills to address community needs.

In summary, HB 1826 presents a unique opportunity to strengthen our mental health system, preparing professionals to meet the urgent needs of Hawaii's communities. I urge your support for this legislation to contribute to a healthier, more resilient future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Me ka mahalo nui,

Cynthia Texeira

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 3:56:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Bonnie Beatson | Windward Community College | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

HB1826 - Relating To Education for Mental Health Professionals

I am writing to offer my strong support for HB 1826, which supports and expands the mental health technician certificate of competence at Windward Community College (WCC) through the hiring of key personnel and establishing a scholarship program. As a resident of Hawaii and a mental health advocate, I believe that investing in these programs is crucial for addressing the shortage of mental health service providers in our state and providing access to mental health care for all.

The rising prevalence of mental health issues in Hawai'i, including depression and anxiety, has created a significant demand for mental health services. However, our current mental health workforce is struggling to keep up with this demand, leading to Hawai'i being designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

HB 1826 aims to tackle this issue by providing much-needed support for the education and training of mental health professionals at Windward Community College (WCC). By allocating additional resources to expand mental health programs, this bill will ensure that aspiring professionals are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective care. Investing in a stronger mental health education system will better prepare our future professionals to tackle the challenges that have long plagued Hawai'i. Whether it's providing therapy to those dealing with trauma, working with children with behavioral disorders, or supporting individuals battling addiction, these professionals play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of countless individuals and families.

Additionally, HB 1826 has the potential to address mental health provider shortages in underserved areas. Many rural and low-income communities currently lack access to mental health services, creating significant disparities in care. This bill can help bridge this gap by encouraging professionals to serve in these underserved regions through loan forgiveness programs or scholarship opportunities, ultimately ensuring that everyone has access to quality mental healthcare.

In conclusion, HB 1826 presents a significant opportunity to strengthen our mental health system and meet the critical needs of our communities. By investing in the education and support of mental health professionals, we can improve the overall mental health of our society and provide

better care to those in need. I urge you to support this legislation and help pave the way for a healthier, more resilient future.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Mahalo nui,

Bonnie Beatson

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 5:11:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Hollister K Iwashita | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

HB1826 - Relating To Education for Mental Health Professionals

I am writing to offer my strong support for HB 1826, which supports and expands the mental health technician certificate of competence at Windward Community College (WCC) through the hiring of key personnel and establishing a scholarship program. As a resident of Hawai'i and a mental health advocate, I believe that investing in these programs is crucial for addressing the shortage of mental health service providers in our state and providing access to mental health care for all.

The rising prevalence of mental health issues in Hawai'i, including depression and anxiety, has created a significant demand for mental health services. However, our current mental health workforce is struggling to keep up with this demand, leading to Hawai'i being designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

HB 1826 aims to tackle this issue by providing much-needed support for the education and training of mental health professionals at Windward Community College (WCC). By allocating additional resources to expand mental health programs, this bill will ensure that aspiring professionals are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective care. Investing in a stronger mental health education system will better prepare our future professionals to tackle the challenges that have long plagued Hawai'i. Whether it's providing therapy to those dealing with trauma, working with children with behavioral disorders, or supporting individuals battling addiction, these professionals play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of countless individuals and families.

Additionally, HB 1826 has the potential to address mental health provider shortages in underserved areas. Many rural and low-income communities currently lack access to mental health services, creating significant disparities in care. This bill can help bridge this gap by

encouraging professionals to serve in these underserved regions through loan forgiveness programs or scholarship opportunities, ultimately ensuring that everyone has access to quality mental healthcare.

In conclusion, HB 1826 presents a significant opportunity to strengthen our mental health system and meet the critical needs of our communities. By investing in the education and support of mental health professionals, we can improve the overall mental health of our society and provide better care to those in need. I urge you to support this legislation and help pave the way for a healthier, more resilient future.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Mahalo nui,

HK Iwashita

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 6:19:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Desrae Kahale | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support HB 1826 due to the demands of mental health needs and lack of mental health professionals in the state of Hawaii.

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 6:52:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1826, which expands mental health technician certification at WCC, addressing Hawaii's mental health provider shortage. The bill invests in education and training, crucial for tackling rising mental health issues. It also aims to fill gaps in underserved areas through loan forgiveness and scholarships. Supporting HB 1826 will strengthen our mental health system and improve care accessibility. Thank you for your attention. Mahalo. Melanie Wilson EdD

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 8:42:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Mackenzie manning | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am writing to offer my strong support for HB 1826, which supports and expands the mental health technician certificate of competence at Windward Community College (WCC) through the hiring of key personnel and establishing a scholarship program. As a resident of Hawaii and a mental health advocate, I believe that investing in these programs is crucial for addressing the shortage of mental health service providers in our state and providing access to mental health care for all.

The rising prevalence of mental health issues in Hawai'i, including depression and anxiety, has created a significant demand for mental health services. However, our current mental health workforce is struggling to keep up with this demand, leading to Hawai'i being designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

HB 1826 aims to tackle this issue by providing much-needed support for the education and training of mental health professionals at Windward Community College (WCC). By allocating additional resources to expand mental health programs, this bill will ensure that aspiring professionals are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective care. Investing in a stronger mental health education system will better prepare our future professionals to tackle the challenges that have long plagued Hawai'i. Whether it's providing therapy to those dealing with trauma, working with children with behavioral disorders, or supporting individuals battling addiction, these professionals play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of countless individuals and families.

Additionally, HB 1826 has the potential to address mental health provider shortages in underserved areas. Many rural and low-income communities currently lack access to mental health services, creating significant disparities in care. This bill can help bridge this gap by encouraging professionals to serve in these underserved regions through loan forgiveness programs or scholarship opportunities, ultimately ensuring that everyone has access to quality mental healthcare.

In conclusion, HB 1826 presents a significant opportunity to strengthen our mental health system and meet the critical needs of our communities. By investing in the education and support of mental health professionals, we can improve the overall mental health of our society and provide better care to those in need. I urge you to support this legislation and help pave the way for a healthier, more resilient future.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Mackenzie Manning

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 9:09:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tara Severns | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1826. The proposal addresses the pressing issue of Hawaii's shortage of mental health professionals by expanding mental health care education at Windward Community College. I strongly urge you to support this investment in education and workforce development, which has the potential to significantly improve mental health services throughout the state.

Mahalo,

Tara Severns

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 10:09:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Justin Pagan | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

HB1826 - Relating To Education for Mental Health Professionals

Aloha,

I am writing to offer my strong support for HB 1826, which supports and expands the mental health technician certificate of competence at Windward Community College (WCC) through the hiring of key personnel and establishing a scholarship program. As a resident of Hawaii and a mental health advocate, I believe that investing in these programs is crucial for addressing the shortage of mental health service providers in our state and providing access to mental health care for all.

The rising prevalence of mental health issues in Hawai'i, including depression and anxiety, has created a significant demand for mental health services. However, our current mental health workforce is struggling to keep up with this demand, leading to Hawai'i being designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

HB 1826 aims to tackle this issue by providing much-needed support for the education and training of mental health professionals at Windward Community College (WCC). By allocating additional resources to expand mental health programs, this bill will ensure that aspiring professionals are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective care. Investing in a stronger mental health education system will better prepare our future professionals to tackle the challenges that have long plagued Hawai'i. Whether it's providing therapy to those dealing with trauma, working with children with behavioral disorders, or supporting individuals battling addiction, these professionals play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of countless individuals and families.

Additionally, HB 1826 has the potential to address mental health provider shortages in underserved areas. Many rural and low-income communities currently lack access to mental health services, creating significant disparities in care. This bill can help bridge this gap by

encouraging professionals to serve in these underserved regions through loan forgiveness programs or scholarship opportunities, ultimately ensuring that everyone has access to quality mental healthcare.

In conclusion, HB 1826 presents a significant opportunity to strengthen our mental health system and meet the critical needs of our communities. By investing in the education and support of mental health professionals, we can improve the overall mental health of our society and provide better care to those in need. I urge you to support this legislation and help pave the way for a healthier, more resilient future.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Mahalo nui,

Justin Pagan

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 10:20:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Mitchell Wong | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support HB 1826

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 11:21:35 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Terry Savage | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

HB1826 - Relating To Education for Mental Health Professionals

I am writing to offer my support for HB 1826, which supports and expands the mental health technician certificate of competence at Windward Community College (WCC). As a member of the Windward Community College Ambassadors advisory group, I believe that this program addresses the need for mental health service providers in our state and increased access to mental health care.

The many mentally ill homeless individuals throughout our communities, and higher rates of depression and anxiety among islands residents, has created a significant demand for quality mental health services. HB 1826 will provide increased support to educate and train more mental health professionals at WCC. It will ensure that developing professionals have the knowledge and skills to provide effective care and improve the daily lives of our friends and neighbors.

HB 1826 presents a significant opportunity to improve the overall mental health of our society and provide better care to those in need. I urge you to support this important legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Terry Savage

1223 Manu Aloha Street

Kailua, HI 96734

HB-1826-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2024 9:14:52 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sarah Hadmack | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support HB 1826.