



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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February 28, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

House Bill 1830 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1830 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health.

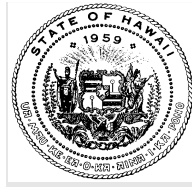
This bill establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances. Requires psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination. Authorizes insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances.

Hawaii residents find it challenging to obtain vital mental health services. The issue needs to be addressed in a variety of ways, and this bill is a positive step toward solving the problem.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



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

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1830 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE KYLE T. YAMASHITA, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE LISA KITAGAWA, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: February 28, 2024

Room Number: 308

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health supports this measure.

3 **Department Testimony:** There is a clear workforce shortage of mental health providers in the
4 country and particularly in the state of Hawai'i. In 2022 it was estimated that there were 284
5 providers per 100,000 individuals with a mental health concern in the state,¹ which falls within
6 the second worst quartile compared with other states nationwide. As of November 1, 2023,
7 findings indicate that the percentage of need for mental health professionals met in Hawaii is
8 14.1%.² This data suggests a broad need for additional mental health services across the state.

9 For Hawai'i to achieve behavioral health equity, more effective systems and policies are
10 direly needed to proactively address workforce shortages of mental health providers. When
11 individuals are unable to access needed care early on, their risk increases for escalating
12 symptoms that require high-level, restrictive, intensive, and costly mental health services.

13 This bill supports the ability of graduate students who provide mental health services to
14 remain in our state and provide these much-needed services, while completing their training and

¹ Hawai'i Health Matters, Mental Health Provider Rate. Mental Health Provider Rate, 2016-2021. Published April 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.hawaiihealthmatters.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=319&localeId=14>

² Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Published November, 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/mental-health-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Percent%20of%20Need%20Met%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

1 licensure requirements. Individuals trained at the doctoral level are difficult to recruit and retain
2 in the state. This bill provides a reasonable path, commensurate to national standards, for
3 doctoral level psychologists to obtain their license and while continuing to provide services for
4 the state. It is very clear that there is a need for additional mental health providers to support
5 vulnerable populations throughout Hawai‘i.

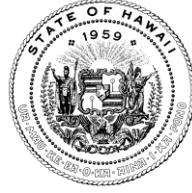
6 This bill also addresses provisions for retaining providers trained as master’s level
7 Marriage and Family Therapists, Mental Health Counselors, and Social Workers. The provisions
8 in this bill for each of these professions, including psychologists, will help retain mental health
9 providers trained in or working in the state of Hawai‘i so that needed services can be delivered to
10 the people that need and deserve to have access to these mental health supports.

11

12 **Offered Amendments:** None.

13

14 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA
SYLVIA LUKE
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DEAN I HAZAMA
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Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, February 28, 2024
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 1830, H.D. 1, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

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: (1) establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) require psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; (3) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances; and (4) appropriate funds.

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

H.B. 1830, 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 (HRS) 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 on to consumers.

Regarding part V of this bill, the Department expresses similar concerns that authorizing reimbursements to a currently exempted population: social worker interns, could have unintended consequences such as higher costs for services rendered. These costs could be passed on to consumers.

Should this bill advance, the Department respectfully requests the following amendments to facilitate provisional licensure:

- Pages 3 to 5, Part II

§451J- **Provisional license; associate marriage and family therapist; services reimbursable.** (a) The department shall grant, upon application and payment of proper fees, provisional licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist to an individual who:

- (1) Has received a master's or doctoral degree from an accredited educational institution in marriage and family therapy or an allied field

~~related to the practice of mental health counseling; that includes or is supplemented by, graduate level course work comprising a minimum of thirty three semester hours or forty four quarter hours in the following course areas:~~

~~(A) — Marriage and family studies -- nine semester hours or twelve quarter hours;~~

~~(B) — Marriage and family therapy studies -- nine semester hours or twelve quarter hours;~~

~~(C) — Human development -- nine semester hours or twelve quarter hours;~~

~~(D) — Ethical and professional studies -- three semester hours or twelve quarter hours;~~

~~(E) — Research -- three semester hours or four quarter hours;~~

~~(2) Has completed a one-year practicum that included three hundred hours supervised client contact; and~~

~~(3) Engages in practice under the clinical supervision of a licensed marriage and family therapist or any licensed mental health professional during the period of time necessary to fulfill the clinical experience requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist pursuant to section 451J-7(3); provided that the licensed marriage and family therapist or licensed mental health professional is in good standing with the department.~~

- Pages 15 to 19, Part III

§453D- Provisional license associate mental health counselor; services reimbursable. (a) The department shall grant, upon application and payment of proper fees, provisional licensure as an associate mental health counselor to an individual who:

(1) Has received a master's or doctoral degree from an accredited educational institution in counseling or in an allied field related to the practice of mental health counseling. that includes, or is

~~supplemented by, graduate level course work in counseling comprising a minimum of forty-eight semester hours or seventy-two quarter hours in the following course areas, with a minimum of three semester hours or five quarter hours in each course area as indicated below:~~

~~(A) Human growth and development, including the study of life span development; strategies to facilitate that development and transitions; theories of learning and personality development; and human behavior to include crisis, disabilities, addictive behavior, and environmental factors;~~

~~(B) Social and cultural foundations, including the study of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society, including ages; races; religious or sexual preferences; physical disabilities; ethnicities and cultures; genders; socioeconomics; intellectual abilities; and individual, family, and group strategies of diverse groups;~~

~~(C) Counseling theories and applications, including counseling and consultation, including both individual and systems perspectives; interviewing; assessment; and counseling skills; and applying principles, methods, and theories of counseling, treatment and counseling of mental and emotional disorders, and educational techniques aimed at preventing these disorders with individuals and families;~~

~~(D) Group theory and practice, including principles of group dynamics, group process, group leadership styles, theories and methods of group counseling, and the application of theory to the group processes;~~

~~(E) Career and lifestyle development, including the study of vocational development theories; decision-making models; assessment instruments; and techniques, types, sources, and uses of occupational and educational information systems, career~~

~~development applications, and career counseling processes, techniques, and resources;~~

~~(F) Appraisal of human behavior, including assessment and diagnosis of disorders with an emphasis on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders' categories and an understanding of these disorders relative to the counseling context;~~

~~(G) Tests and measurements, including theoretical and historical bases for assessment techniques, and assessment methods, including analysis of various types of tests to select, administer, interpret, and use assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling;~~

~~(H) Research and program evaluation, including research design and methods, statistical analysis, principles, practices, and application of needs assessment and program evaluation;~~

~~(I) Professional orientation and ethics, including the history of the helping profession, professional roles and functions, ethical standards, confidentiality, professional organizations, and public policy process, including advocacy on behalf of the profession and its clientele; and~~

~~(JA) Has at least two academic terms of supervised mental health practicum intern experience for graduate credit of at least six semester hours or ten quarter hours in a mental health counseling setting, with a total of three hundred hours of supervised client contact. The practicum experience shall be completed under the clinical supervision of a licensed clinical supervisor; and~~

~~(2) Engages in practice under the clinical supervision of a licensed clinical supervisor during the period of time necessary to fulfill the requirements for licensure as a mental health counselor pursuant to~~

section 453D-7(a)(2), provided that the licensed clinical supervisor is in good standing with the department.

Regarding Part VI, the Department appreciates the consideration of personnel and appropriation for funding. However, the Department requests appropriation of general funds upon implementation to ensure the division can hire staff and update our system to accommodate the new licensure as revenues supporting these expenses will not be collected until a later timeframe. Consequently, the Department respectfully requests that the following general fund amounts be inserted in the bill to ensure proper implementation:

1. General fund appropriation to allow the Division:
 - a. To establish, recruit, and hire an office assistant V (OA-V) to process provisional license applications expeditiously. The sum of \$73,406¹ 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. The sum of \$75,000 or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this request.

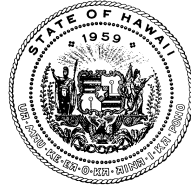
The Department may, as done with other professions, assess a fee to the applicant, to pay back the general fund. If the Committee is inclined to this, it may consider adding the following language to Part VI, Section 32, page 48:

- (3) Fees assessed shall defray costs incurred by the department to support the operations of the licensing programs. Fees collected shall be managed in accordance with section 26-9(l).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

¹ OA-V: \$44,760 (salary) + \$28,656 fringe = \$73,406

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
SUPPORTING HB 1830 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

February 28, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. in Rm 308 and via video

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1st VICE CHAIRPERSON

Kathleen Merriam, LCSW CSAC

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Kristin Will, MAEL, CSAC

Fern Yoshida

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@
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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.

The State Council on Mental Health strongly supports H.B. 1830 HD1. One of the most pressing issues in the field of mental health is the shortage of qualified professionals, particularly in underserved areas throughout the islands of Hawaii. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure requirements, this measure will facilitate the entry of new professionals into the workforce while ensuring that they receive appropriate supervision and support. This not only addresses the shortage of mental health providers but also enhances the quality of care by allowing new practitioners to gain valuable experience under supervision.

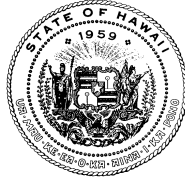
Furthermore, by authorizing insurance reimbursements for services provided by supervised interns removes barriers to entry into the mental health

profession. This is particularly important in areas where there is a high demand for services but a limited number of licensed providers. Additionally, the provision that allows the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists is a sensible measure that recognizes the diverse backgrounds and experiences of individuals entering the field. This flexibility enables qualified professionals to obtain licensure more efficiently without compromising public safety or the integrity of the profession.

This measure represents a balanced approach to addressing the challenges facing the mental health workforce. By streamlining licensure requirements, authorizing insurance reimbursements, and providing flexibility for licensure waivers, this bill ensures that individuals in need of mental health services can access timely and high-quality care. The members of this Council unanimously urge you to support SB1444 SD1 and help improve mental health outcomes for our community.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



TIA L.R. HARTSOCK, MSW, MSCJA
DIRECTOR OF OFFICE AND RESILIENCE

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE
KE KE'ENA KŪPA'A MAULI OLA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
415 S.BERETANIA ST. #415
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B.1830 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Representative Yamashita, Chair
Representative Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

February 28, 2024, at 10:00am

Room Number: 308

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** H.B.1830 HD1.

Established through Act 291 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022) the overall aim of the OWR is to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. OWR is focused on breaking down barriers that impact the physical, social, and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people. OWR explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support.

Reflecting on the Maui Wildfires, the long-lasting effect this traumatic event has placed on the lives of our families and our communities, coupled with the preceding unresolved traumatic events like the pandemic, a new type of trauma phenomenon called cascading trauma is occurring. Prioritizing access to mental healthcare is crucial to address cascading trauma.

H.B.1830 HD1 increases access to mental health professionals (MHP) and assures individuals, couples, and families can acquire their services and support, regardless of their financial situation. This bill also provides support and removes barriers for our mental health professionals. Allowing provisional licensures ensures our next generation of MHPs are adequately trained and prepared to provide high-quality service, in addition to relieving potential financial burdens for them and their clinical supervisors.

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is an approach to understanding and responding to the widespread impact of trauma. By passing this bill, the State would be upholding the TIC principles of Safety, Peer Support, Empowerment, and Voice and Choice, which strengthens our pathway towards a trauma-informed state. As such, the OWR supports H.B.1830 HD1.

Mahalo

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tia L R Hartsock".

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



HB1830 HD1 Provisional Licensure for Mental Health

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Wednesday, Feb 28, 2024: 10:00 : Room 308 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition supports HB1830 HD1:

ALOHA CHAIRS, VICE CHAIRS, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

Having an associate licensing structure makes sense given the workforce shortage that will only get worse over the next decade. While the behavioral health workforce is shrinking, the percentage of Americans with chronic illness is rising to about 50%, depression has now become the number one disability in the U.S., and all this while many people are suffering from the lingering effects of the pandemic as well as the emotional trauma of the wildfire disaster.

Our community needs more support in behavioral health in all areas and is even more desperately needed in underserved rural areas.

We must increase access to critical mental health conditions that include co-occurring disorders (substance use disorders and mental health conditions). We must rise above limiting stigma because we have the behavioral technology to effectively address trauma and how it manifests in behavioral health conditions - if we just had more workforce.

We appreciate this bill to increase our workforce development because providers, and the community we serve, are in dire need of more help.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 3:43:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will help our capacity to treat mental health issues.

Helping Hawai'i Live Well

**Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
February 28th, 2024, 10:00am
HB1830 HD1 Relating to Mental Health**

ADVISORY BOARD

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Timothy Johns
Edward Kubo
Patti Lyons
Sherry Menor-McNamara
Jerry Rauckhorst
Roy Sakuma
Jeffrey Watanabe

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Finance.

We write in strong support of HB1830 HD1 which establishes provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists.

Mental Health America of Hawai'i (MHAH), an affiliate of the renowned national organization, is a highly regarded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the State of Hawai'i. For nearly 80 years, MHAH has been fulfilling its mission "to promote mental health & wellness through education, advocacy, service, and access to care" through its vision of 'mental wellness for all.' We endeavor to reduce the shame and stigma of mental illness and improve the overall care, treatment, and empowerment of those with or at risk for mental health challenges across all stages of life in Hawai'i.

PRO BONO LEGAL COUNSEL

Paul Alston

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As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i. This is particularly critical given the existing youth mental health crisis and ongoing trauma for those who were directly and indirectly impacted by the Maui fires.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation, and we are grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,



Bryan L. Talisayan
Executive Director



**Parents And
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1830 HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

TO: Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Sayama, & Members,
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: February 14, 2024 at 2:00 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1830 HD1 Relating to Mental Health, which establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists. This bill also clarifies the ability of a licensed social worker to bill under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Several of PACT's programs provide counseling in their areas of focus and we are painfully aware of the mental health workforce shortage that is coinciding with a growing need for services. The passage of this bill will help to increase access to mental health services and decrease time spent on waiting lists when people are most in need of help. Provisional licensure can allow organizations like PACT to assist entry-level mental health professionals complete their training requirements and retain them in the local workforce while they provide competent and closely supervised clinical services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



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

We know systems.
We know relationships.
We know FAMILY MATTERS.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

February 28, 2024 1 A.M. – Rm 308 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1830 HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports **HB1830 HD1** 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, **HB1830 HD1** 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 the pandemic, as well as in response to the Maui Wildfires. The consequences of these events, 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.

Circumstances call for a change in the paradigm and practices of mental health care in Hawai'i. Our current model of mental health care fails to 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 should not be an afterthought.

SUGGESTED REFINEMENTS AS BILL ADVANCES

We would be delighted to see this measure pass as is; as the lion share of its contents will have tremendous impact in meeting the crisis-level demand for mental health services. However, we take this opportunity to note a few finer details; and if this committee would be so inclined, **we respectfully request that in the interest of speed and facility, the following matters be noted in its committee report as details that may need refinement as this measure advances.**

First, we note an **erroneous reference to “mental health counseling”** on p. 4, line 4 in the proposed amendment to the Marriage & Family Therapists chapter in HRS 451J; and believe what is meant is “marriage and family therapy.”

Second, we are mindful of testimony from the DCCA concerned with the grandfathering of certain interns. To be specific: except for Social Workers, **this bill removes trainee exemptions from licensure** [for Marriage & Family Therapists: p.8, lines 5-9; p.12, lines 1-3; for Mental Health Counselors: p. 26, line 19 – p. 27, line 2; for Psychologists: p. 34 lines 17 – p. 35, line 3, p. 36, lines 20-21]. We understand that repealing this language forces these post-graduate/pre-licensed mental health providers to get an Associate License if they stay on their path to full licensure.

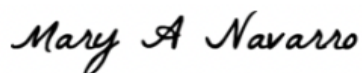
This may be desirable for the DCCA in their efforts to monitor the profession, institute greater consumer protection measures, and collect more licensing fees to aid in their operations - considerations to which we defer to the legislature and the DCCA. **However, in our view, the aim of this bill should be to CREATE, NOT REQUIRE an Associate License which** allows supervised clinical work to be compensated - because licensure is required for insurance reimbursement. If the Associate License is treated as an option; not a requirement, many of the concerns presented by the DCCA would no longer apply – providing greater simplicity in execution.

Third, we support reinstating language from original iterations of this proposal to **allow post-doctorate trainees in psychology to take their full licensure exam before completing their post-doctoral supervised training** requirements. We believe this is consistent with the Board of Psychology's current position.

Fourth, we support the **clarifying language offered by the NASW – Hawaii Chapter to avoid confusing student social work interns for M.S.W.s seeking licensure as an L.C.S.W.**

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

Sincerely,



Mary A. Navarro, MA, LMFT, President
The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy



Subject: HB1830 HD1-- Support

To the Honorable Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB1830. The Hawai'i Counselors Association (HCA) Executive Board and members support HB1830. HCA currently has over 100 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 HB1830 HD1. This does not include recent graduates who are currently working on their post-graduate experience. The HCA Executive Board and the majority of members (who have provided feedback) expressed strong support for HB1830 HD1. 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. These benefits are seen in over 20 other states that have already established associate-level licensure for mental health professionals.

The intent of HB1830 HD1 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. HB1830 HD1 will help to 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.

Additionally, the HCA Executive Board offers comments in acknowledgment and support of the requests from the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) to fund necessary personnel and improvements to database infrastructure, which are crucial to the implementation of this bill. Funding to the DCCA is essential to carry out associate licensure and advancements in the mental health profession. Investing in the DCCA and the Hawai'i licensing system will go a long way in the implementation of improvements in professional services across the State.

Overall, HB1830 HD1 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 HB1830 HD1.

Sincerely,

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



To: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

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

Hearing: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:00 AM, Conference Room 308

RE: **HB1830, HD1 Relating to Mental Health**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB1830, HD1**. This measure establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; requires psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; and authorizes insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 84,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 40 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

Hawai'i's high demand for mental health services, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastation from the August 2023 fires, 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 licensure 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 this opportunity to testify in **support of HB1830, HD1**.



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 FINANCE

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

February 28, 2024 10 A.M. – Rm 308 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

The Hawaii Psychological Association (HPA) strongly supports **HB1830HD1** as a critical tool in meeting the burgeoning demand for quality mental health services – which is especially timely as the emotional and mental toll of the Maui Fires, as well as the lingering effects of the pandemic and associated hardships continue to be felt by all our residents, prolonged now for several years. These events have exacerbated the chronic shortage of mental health providers in Hawaii.

Of 37 states recently surveyed, 21 already have a licensing structure for Associate-level Psychologists in place.

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.

SUGGESTED REFINEMENTS AS BILL ADVANCES

We would be happy to see this measure pass as is; as the lion share of its contents will have tremendous impact in meeting the crisis-level demand for mental health services. However, we take this opportunity to note a few finer details; and if this committee would be so inclined to pass it unamended, **we respectfully request that in the interest of speed and facility, the following matters be noted in its committee report as details that may need refinement as this measure advances.**

First, **the most immediate issue we believe needs to be addressed in this proposal** is the financial hardship and delay during a psychologist's post-doctoral phase, and the timing of the license and examination application processes; namely – the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP). The American Psychological Association recommends that license applicants take this exam as soon as they can after graduating, and clearly states on its website that **“In most jurisdictions, you're qualified to sit for the test once you complete the educational requirements for your doctoral degree.”**¹ (Emphasis added.)

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 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.**

Prior iterations of this proposal required the board to allow full licensure candidates to take their EPPP exam as soon as they complete their doctorate, consistent with the purpose of this proposal in removing barriers to licensure. We believe this is consistent with the current Board of Psychology's view after the discussion at their last board meeting on February 2, 2024. Accordingly, we anticipate the Board of Psychology will offer an amendment similar to what they offered in prior hearings, which we support as one option to achieve this flexibility.

Second, we are mindful of testimony from the DCCA concerned with the grandfathering of certain interns. To be specific: except for Social Workers, **this bill removes trainee (intern) exemptions from licensure** [for Marriage

¹<https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2007/09/eppp#:~:text=In%20most%20jurisdictions%2C%20you're,requirements%20for%20you%20r%20doctoral%20degree>

& Family Therapists: p.8, lines 5-9; p.12, lines 1-3; for Mental Health Counselors: p. 26, line 19 – p. 27, line 2; for Psychologists: p. 34 lines 17 – p. 35, line 3, p. 36, lines 20-21]. We understand that repealing this language forces these post-graduate/pre-licensed mental health providers to get an Associate License if they stay on their path to full licensure.

This may be desirable for the DCCA in their efforts to monitor the profession, institute greater consumer protection measures, and collect more licensing fees to aid in their operations - considerations to which we defer to the legislature and the DCCA. **However, in our view, the aim of this bill should be to CREATE, NOT REQUIRE an Associate License which** allows supervised clinical work to be compensated - because licensure is required for insurance reimbursement. If the Associate License is treated as an option; not a requirement, many of the concerns presented by the DCCA would no longer apply – providing greater simplicity in execution.

Third, we support the **clarifying language offered by the NASW – Hawaii Chapter to avoid confusing student social work interns for M.S.W.s seeking licensure as an L.C.S.W.**

MORE BACKGROUND:

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.

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 move to mainland states where associate-level licensure is established.

This bill 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. Practitioners at the state hospital and in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division were terminated. 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill.

Sincerely,



Alex Lichton, Ph.D.
Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

February 28, 2024 10:00 A.M. – Rm 308 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1830 HD1

The National Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) strongly supports HB1830 HD1 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 – along with several other measures introduced during this legislative biennium (SB343, HB1300, HB1242, HB776, and SB1444) 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 – creating 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 open up more clinicians in supervision to see clients in the very near future, which is vital given the ongoing stressors resulting from Maui Fires, as well as the pandemic; and will immediately address 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 Refinements as Bill Advances:

We would be delighted to see this measure pass as is; as the lion share of its contents will have tremendous impact in meeting the crisis-level demand for mental health services. However, we take this opportunity to note a few finer details; and if this committee would be so inclined to pass it unamended, we respectfully request that in the interest of speed and facility, the following matters be noted in its committee report as details that may need refinement as this measures advances.

Remove confusing language relating to “Social Work Interns”:

First, for clarification, since the term “social work intern” can be confused for students and not M.S.W.s seeking their L.C.S.W., we suggest that the language on **page 47, line 19- p. 48, line 6** of this bill be revised as follows:

“Services provided by a supervised licensed social worker or L.S.W. [~~social work intern~~] obtaining post-masters clinical social work experience under the supervision of a Hawaii-licensed clinical social worker or individual identified in subsection (a)(3)(D) ; . . . provided further that the billed rate for the licensed social worker or L.S.W. [~~social work intern~~] is commensurate with the requisite level of training.

Accordingly, we also request the language in the purpose section on p. 3 line 13 be revised to delete the word intern and use instead “supervised licensed social worker”; and similarly, HRS 467E-6(8) should be revised to replace the phrase relating to “clinical social work interns” to reflect the current practice, which is to use the phrase: **“under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker L.C.S.W.”**

We believe these amendments make 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.

In this effort, we emphasize the **“clinical”** nature of these associate licenses – which would allow insurance reimbursement for the services provided by supervisees/trainees gaining the required training, skills, and guidance necessary to independently perform one-on-one *clinical* therapy.

Consider Retaining Exemptions for Trainees:

Second, we are mindful of testimony from the DCCA concerned with the grandfathering of certain interns. To be specific: except for Social Workers, this bill removes trainee exemptions from licensure [for Marriage & Family Therapists: p.8, lines 5-9; p.12, lines 1-3; for Mental Health Counselors: p. 26, line 19 – p. 27, line 2; for Psychologists: p. 34 lines 17 – p. 35, line 3, p. 36, lines 20-21]. We understand that repealing this language forces these post-graduate/pre-licensed mental health providers to get an Associate License if they stay on their path to full licensure.

This may be desirable for the DCCA in their efforts to monitor the profession, institute greater consumer protection measures, and collect more licensing fees to aid in their operations - considerations to which we defer to the legislature and the DCCA.

However, in our view, the aim of this bill should be to CREATE, NOT REQUIRE an Associate License which allows supervised clinical work to be compensated - because licensure is required for insurance reimbursement. If the Associate License is treated as an option; not a requirement, many of the concerns relating to interns and definitions of “clinical supervision” presented by the DCCA would no longer apply – providing greater simplicity in execution.

Support Flexibility in License Examinations

We also support recommendations from psychologists that the requirement they finish *all* their post-doctorate experience before being eligible to take their licensing exam be removed; as this incentivizes them to move to the mainland where they are given much more flexibility – thus depriving Hawaii residents of their much needed, culturally-cognizant expertise. This unnecessary requirement creates another financial and logistical burden to potential providers. Removing these testing requirements would be consistent with the purpose of this measure and in keeping with recommendations from the American Psychological Association.

We thank you for your support of this critical mental health access bill and are available for further questions and clarifications.

Sincerely,

 MSW, LCSW

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LCSW

Executive Director, National Association of Social Workers- Hawai'i Chapter



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

We know systems.
We know relationships.
We know FAMILY MATTERS.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

February 28, 2024 10 A.M. – Rm 308 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1830 HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports **HB1830 HD1** 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, **HB1830 HD1** 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 the pandemic, as well as in response to the Maui Wildfires. The consequences of these events, 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.

Circumstances call for a change in the paradigm and practices of mental health care in Hawai'i. Our current model of mental health care fails to 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 should not be an afterthought.

SUGGESTED REFINEMENTS AS BILL ADVANCES

We would be delighted to see this measure pass as is; as the lion share of its contents will have tremendous impact in meeting the crisis-level demand for mental health services. However, we take this opportunity to note a few finer details; and if this committee would be so inclined to pass this bill unamended, **we respectfully request that in the interest of speed and facility, the following matters be noted in your committee report as details that may need refinement.**

First, we note an **erroneous reference to “mental health counseling”** on p. 4, line 4 in the proposed amendment to the Marriage & Family Therapists chapter in HRS 451J; and believe what is meant is “marriage and family therapy.”

Second, we are mindful of testimony from the DCCA concerned with the grandfathering of certain interns. To be specific: except for Social Workers, **this bill removes trainee exemptions from licensure** [for Marriage & Family Therapists: p.8, lines 5-9; p.12, lines 1-3; for Mental Health Counselors: p. 26, line 19 – p. 27, line 2; for Psychologists: p. 34 lines 17 – p. 35, line 3, p. 36, lines 20-21]. We understand that repealing this language forces these post-graduate/pre-licensed mental health providers to get an Associate License if they stay on their path to full licensure.


This may be desirable for the DCCA in their efforts to monitor the profession, institute greater consumer protection measures, and collect more licensing fees to aid in their operations - considerations to which we defer to the legislature and the DCCA. **However, in our view, the aim of this bill should be to CREATE, NOT REQUIRE an Associate License which** allows supervised clinical work to be compensated - because licensure is required for insurance reimbursement. If the Associate License is treated as an option; not a requirement, many of the concerns presented by the DCCA would no longer apply – providing greater simplicity in execution.

Third, we support reinstating language from prior versions of this proposal to **allow post-doctorate trainees in psychology to take their EPPP exam before completing their post-doctoral supervision.** We believe this is consistent with the Board of Psychology's current position and the American Psychological Association recommendations.

Fourth, we support the **clarifying language offered by the NASW – Hawaii Chapter to avoid confusing student social work interns for M.S.W.s seeking licensure as an L.C.S.W.**

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

Sincerely,



Mary A. Navarro, MA, LMFT, President
The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy



February 28, 2024

The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Re: HB 1830 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health

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

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1830 HD1 which will establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, while authorizing insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances.

HMSA recognizes that Hawaii is currently in need of greater access to behavioral health care services. We've been working with provider and health care stakeholders to address the issue through various efforts including recent telehealth legislation, additional health care workforce growth initiatives, and the delivery of integrated primary care.

While we strongly support access to care, we also want to prioritize high quality care for all members. We are concerned that the scope services and circumstances under which they will be eligible for reimbursement are not clearly defined for those with provisional or associate-level licensure and believe that more clarity is needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on HB 1830 HD1.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations

Testimony of the Board of Psychology

Before the
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, February 28, 2024
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 1830, H.D. 1, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Fernandez, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Psychology (Board). The Board supports the intent of and offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) require psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; (3) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social worker intern in certain circumstances; and (4) appropriate funds.

The Board limits its comments to Part IV of the bill:

This bill is substantially similar to S.B. 1444, S.D. 1, which was deferred by the Senate Committees on Commerce and Consumer Protection and Judiciary. Currently, H.B. 1830, H.D. 1, maintains that only applicants for licensure as a psychologist are authorized to sit for the licensing examination. The Board suggests that an amendment be made that would allow all applicants *approved* for the provisional license to take the exam prior to completing their postdoctoral degree as follows:

Starting on page 39, line 20 remove:

~~“[.]; provided that to be eligible to take the examination, all other requirements of this subsection must first be met.]”~~

Starting on line page, 39, line 19 add:

“(3) The applicant for licensure has passed an examination as may be prescribed by the board[.]; provided that those issued a provisional license

pursuant to 465- shall be authorized to take the examination upon the license being issued. Authorization for associate psychologists to take the examination shall terminate on the date the provisional license expires, or if disciplinary action is taken on the license.”

Regarding page 34, line 17 to page 35, line 3, the current language appears overly general for the purpose of the exemption. The current language could allow students of other professions related to the practice of psychology to successfully argue for exemption from the requirements of chapter 465. The Board requests the following amendment:

“(4) Any person who is a student of psychology ~~[, a psychological intern, or a resident in psychology preparing for the profession of psychology under supervision in a training institution or facility and who is designated by a title as "psychology trainee", "psychology student", "psychology intern", or "psychology resident", that indicates the person's training status]~~, or enrolled in a professional psychology training program as defined by this chapter; provided that the person shall not identify the person's self as a psychologist or associate psychologist or imply that the person is licensed to practice psychology;”

Finally, the Board is concerned with the language on page 40, lines 11 to 17, which provides the Board the authority to grant a waiver for State employed psychologists who have not obtained a license to practice, and whose 2-year time frame to obtain licensure has expired. The Board is concerned that the phrase “circumstances beyond the psychologist’s control” does not clearly outline or define what circumstances would qualify for the waiver. Additionally, the current language does not provide a time limit on the waiver; as written the waiver could be used to retain an unlicensed psychologist indefinitely which is also very concerning to the Board. The Board requests that the waiver be limited to a maximum of one (1) year, and offers the following amendment:

Starting on page 40, line 5:

“§465-7.6 Licensure of state employed clinical psychologists. (a) A psychologist employed in a civil service clinical psychologist position in this State after January 1, 1988, shall be licensed subject to:

- (1) Meeting the requirements of section 465-7; and
- (2) Obtaining licensure within two years from the date of employment[.];

provided that, if the psychologist is not able to obtain licensure pursuant to subsection (a)(2), the board may grant a waiver of up to one year to complete the requirements for licensure, if the psychologist is able to demonstrate that the inability to meet the requirements for licensure was caused by circumstances beyond the psychologist's control.

(b) [~~After~~] Absent a waiver obtained pursuant to subsection (a), or upon the expiration of the time period in subsection (a), paragraph (2) [~~has expired~~], a psychologist, employed in a civil service clinical psychologist position rendering diagnostic or treatment services, who has not obtained a license, shall immediately cease and desist the practice of psychology until a license is obtained pursuant to this chapter.”

Finally, the Board acknowledges the appropriations request by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and its Professional Vocational Licensing Division. If passed, this bill will represent the development of at least (4) new license-type administration operations. This will include the need to develop the license-type database infrastructure, and to be staffed by individuals hired and trained to ensure the success of these new license-types in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 1:15:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Betlach	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of this bill.

This bill addresses the need for professionals in our community with the provisional license and insurance billing

as a professional in the community I could only find a supervisor for 100 an hour and thousand hours required . This high cost was not affordable fore me with a family and a house. Some go for unrelated hours toward their license but this does not prepare you . Also many government , and clinics can not bill for unlicensed professionals, this means they provide services out of state funds that are limited or not at all. It is my belief that part of the insurance can pay for supervision , and part can pay for my bills or salary of state or nonprofit workers , this would make it possible to provide more services in an under served area .

there is a shortage of organizations that provide services , they do not have enough therapists , this would make more available to them and when they take the state money and close down the state program , individual therapists could step in and provide services on a provisional license as well.

I am a mft therapist , have been a case manager as well, the lack of services available on the big island adversely effects ohana, let's pass this bill and help our ohana

TO: Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection & Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Amber Drake
Clinical Mental Health Counseling Graduate Student,
University of Hawaii at Hilo

RE: SB1830 ESTABLISHING ASSOCIATE LICENSURE FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

POSITION: In support of HB1830

Aloha Honorable Members of the Hawaii Legislature,

I am writing to express my support for HB1830, which aims to provide provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawaii at Hilo studying Clinical Mental Health Counseling and this bill would have a direct positive impact on my future career as a mental health counselor.

This legislation is vital for enhancing access to mental health services and would help ensure the professional development and support of our community. As I am learning more about the field within my graduate program, I have become more aware of the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. We have a growing need for more mental health professionals statewide, but especially for our community in Maui.

Furthermore, HB1830 will help address these crucial issues by creating pathways for emerging professionals and enhance accessibility to mental health services. By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential steppingstone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids in their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i. The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population. Nearly half of the states in America already have this program in place, and by passing this bill, Hawaii will be modernizing our practices to meet our contemporary needs.

Our community needs culturally responsive, local mental health providers, so as a state we need to incentivize providers to stay here and practice here. It is crucial to keep our talented mental health professionals in Hawai'i. This has become more apparent after the Lahaina fires, with many people coming from the mainland attempting to provide mental health services to survivors. Though these clinicians have good intentions, they are not multiculturally competent enough for our community's needs. Though I am submitting testimony as an individual, I also sit on the State Board of Directors for NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and I know that NAMI emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive care, which this bill supports by growing local professionals. This process will help ensure pre-licensed therapists adhere to

professional standards and complete their licensure hours effectively, and would promote better supervision and mentoring, all of which are vital for quality mental health care.

The current expectation for therapists to work extensive unpaid hours post-degree is discriminatory and unsustainable, especially in Hawai'i's economic climate. As a Lahaina fire survivor, I am worried how I will be able to make it financially after I graduate if I must work extensive unpaid hours. Affordable housing is difficult to come by in Maui, and many of us who lost everything in the fire are having a hard time financially with additional unexpected expenses associated with rebuilding. I am not the only aspiring mental health professional that is facing these unforeseen challenges. We need to be creative, follow the example of other states who have passed similar legislation and do our best to help improve the mental health of our state. HB1830 will help people like me, so that I can in turn, help our community.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We understand the urgency of this request and appreciate your swift action to support this crucial legislation. I respectfully urge you to vote in favor of HB1830 and help mental health professionals enhance our mental health treatment in Hawaii. Your efforts play a significant role in shaping the future of mental health care in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Amber Drake

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 4:33:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charles Prentiss	Keep It Kailua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Given the housing crisis, this bill deserves full support. It could be improved by adding a phrase to the effect that "residential uses do not include transient accommodation uses."

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 5:33:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. John Souza, Jr., LMFT, DMFT	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; *it's a lifeline* to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 6:13:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Colin Moore, LMFT

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 6:25:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Thornburg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343 (HB1830), which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 (HB1830) addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 (HB1830) will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Shannon Thornburg, Intern Therapist at UH-Hilo Counseling Services,
sthornbu@hawaii.edu 971-320-9082

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

Shannon Thornburg

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 6:43:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 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 Hawai'i. 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 Hawai'i so volunteering hours is not feasible. Passing this Bill will allow for direct supervised access to retain our well-trained providers in Hawai'i rather than requiring them to relocate to the continent for their hours and hope they return a few years later.

As a coordinator of the Maui Strong Mental Health Response, we could have (and still could) greatly expand services accessible to those affected by the disaster if this bill was passed. We continue to rely on overextended licensed providers and well-intentioned but uninformed providers from the continent to attempt to meet the increased need. Even before this tragedy, waitlists and provider shortages created unacceptable delays in mental health care in our state.

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 utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Diane Logan, Ph.D., ABAP, CSAC, ICDAC

Clinical Psychologist

Board Certified in Addiction Psychology

Past-President, Hawai'i Psychological Association

Past-President, Hawai'i Island Psychological Association

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 6:51:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander Seto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by:

Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals: By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.

Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services: The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.

Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery: Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, HB1830 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Alexander Seto, MSCP

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 6:57:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MARIAN MILLER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I strongly support Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate level licensure for marriage and family, therapist, mental health, counselors, and psychologists in Hawaii.

I strongly believe that the passage of SB343 would have a major impact on our community. It would not only benefit our mental health professionals, but have a profound effect on all our citizens seeking mental health services.

Thank you for supporting this vital piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Dr Marian Miller Clinical Psychologist and Marriage and Family Therapist

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 7:06:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Kocik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Andrew N. Kocik

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 7:13:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Andrade	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field within the state.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing loss of our local talent to the mainland.
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Andrade

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 7:38:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tatum Marcus, LMFT	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Tatum Marcus, LMFT

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:16:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
nancy sidun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:23:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830 which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name] [Your Title/Position] [Your Contact Information]

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:39:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Ishihara	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,

Emma Ishihara

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:58:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KRISTIN AIONA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Kristin Aiona

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 9:40:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Lehn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Rachel Lehn, Master of Social Work Graduate (specialization in Behavioral Mental Health),



HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 9:41:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dante 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.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services. We have a great opportunity to support the already overworked and understaffed mental health practices in Hawaii. There are many of us who are eager to get into the field and would be better off learning from an experienced professional with hands on practice.

Thank you for your consideration,
Dante Johnson

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 9:55:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 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

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 11:18:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
YiLin Fang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

YiLin Fang

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:12:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leslie Gonzales	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Leslie Gonzales, a graduate student in the University of Hawaii at Hilo's MA in Counseling Psychology program. I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Leslie Gonzales

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities. Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Diana Kilguss
MFT Graduate Student



HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 5:45:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalia Werkoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Natalia Werkoff and I am writing in support of HB1830. I received my Master of Social Work in 2016. It took me 4 years to obtain my clinical license (LCSW received in 2020) due to often being unable to afford clinical supervision while trying to manage Hawaii's high cost of living and being underpaid working at non-profits.

As a psychotherapist, I am receiving referrals for new clients almost daily which I do not have the capacity to take. Allowing for associate level therapists to meet with those in need and bill insurance will greatly expand accessibility to mental health care, improve individuals, families, our communities, work performance, and decrease suicide and overdose.

I am personally committed to help other Master level graduates improve their clinical skills by providing clinical supervision towards licensure and am looking forward to the day that their services are reimbursed by insurance. I know from experience the benefits it will have on them, myself, those in need, and underfunded non-profits.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Natalia Werkoff. LCSW, CSAC

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 6:14:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Francoise Acra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Caroline Françoise Acra, Ph.D.

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

PSY-1901

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 7:47:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Ferguson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Rachel Ferguson

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 7:58:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerri Okamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1830 HD1 which would enhance access to much needed mental health care and authorize insurance reimbursements which would make mental health services more accessible and affordable.

CHAIR OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE

Associate-Licensing Bill

HB1830 HD1

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

10:00 A.M.

IN SUPPORT

I am testifying in favor of establishing Social Workers for Associate-Licensing HB1830 HD1 Mental Health Services. My strong support for this Bill represents a crucial step towards improving access to licensure for individuals seeking to enter the workforce as Therapist Interns, working towards Clinical Licensure by completing the required 3000 hours of practice, or as Human Services Professionals in their chosen specialty.

Associate-Licensing Bill HB1830 HD1 will bring significant benefits to our community and industry, including:

- Providing a clear pathway for individuals to gain valuable experience and training, essential for professional growth and development.
- Enhancing the quality of services provided to clients and the public by ensuring that associates meet specific standards and requirements.
- Addressing workforce shortages in Mental Health Services by streamlining the licensure process and attracting more individuals to pursue careers in our honorable field.

Moreover, Associate-Licensing HB1830 HD1 aligns with our shared values of an equitable pathway to licensure by removing barriers. It ensures that all aspiring professionals, regardless of background or circumstances, have a fair chance to access the resources and support needed to succeed in their chosen profession. This principle is consistent with the broader goal of promoting diversity, inclusion, and social justice within the workforce and the communities we serve. I urge you to support this bill and help make licensure more accessible for associates.

D. Sales-Luis, MSW

████████████████████
████████████████████

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 8:11:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Emily Polk

Graduate student of Counseling Psychology at UH at Hilo

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

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- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Akiko Taira



HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 8:22:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Culten Arroyo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is culten arroyo I am a licensed clinical social worker and certified substance abuse counselor in the state of Hawaii.

there is a tremendous shortage of mental health therapist in our state, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, it has been even harder to find a therapy provider. Part of what I do in my full-time job is help people establish care with a therapist. Even with the best insurance, a highly motivated patient can take weeks to secured an appointment. With not so great insurance and in more rural areas it can easily take months. I've have patients tell me that they have called multiple therapist just to be told that they are unable to schedule an appointment because the providers caseload is full. This can be extremely discouraging and I have seen patients give up on searching for a therapist because of this.

This bill will add more therapist in our community. By creating an associate license where they would be reimbursed by insurance, the cost won't be passed onto the patient. At times supervisee therapists must provide free or very low cost services while obtaining appropriate clinical hours. With this bill therapists can obtain important clinical experience while also being compensated fairly.

Culten Arroyo, LCSW, CSAC.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 8:36:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jesse Hutchison	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,

Jesse Hutchison, PhD

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:03:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lucas Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB1830 HD1

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830 HD1, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. HB1830 HD1 addresses these crucial issues by:

- 1. Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
- 2. Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
- 3. Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, HB1830 HD1 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 HD1 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Lucas Morgan, PhD, Licensed Psychologist and concerned community member



HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:19:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tira Kamaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Tira Kamaka

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:26:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cleveland T. McQueen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Associate Licensing Bill HB1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. Associate Licensing Bill HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, Associate Licensing Bill HB1830 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of Associate Licensing Bill HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Cleveland T. McQueen, CSAC, LMFT student intern

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i. As a Masters student in Counseling Psychology at University of Hawaii at Hilo, this issue is very important to me and affects me as a future counselor.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Victoria Trevino

Warm regards,

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:37:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

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- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Emily Powers, Hilo HI

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:41:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vishwani Ram-Souza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

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- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Dr. Vishwani Ram-Souza, LMFT, Ph.D.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:46:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Andrea Manzana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 is a bill that will help progress Hawaii and it's people to greater mental stability and care. As a clinical mental health MA candidate, I have been working for almost a year of internship in our schools and in our outside communities and can attest the struggles our people are experiencing to the lack of mental health providers on our islands. Our future generations are to be hindered by this lack of support, especially those who are in need of emotional and mental regulation and development. There is also the issue of burn out. There are countless mental health workers who leave the field due to burn out and many times, that burn out can start in the beginning of their internship. The lack of opportunity for career growth without licensure and the decrease in pay for 2 (maybe even more) years post masters/doctorate is defeating. The people who enter this field came in determined, interested, even invested in their education and drive to help those around them but whats the sense of effort if they are unable to survive economically? Some may even leave the islands in pursuit of their careers.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Diane Manzana

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:51:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sadea Campbell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

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- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
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I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Sadea Campbell

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express **my strong support for Senate Bill 343**, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

In my roles as a psychologist serving rural and underserved communities, faculty for a psychology training program, and director of behavioral health at a community health center, I have witnessed the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

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

Sid Hermosura, PsyD
Licensed Clinical Psychologist

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:57:54 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Marina Sternthall

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:05:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anthony Papa, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB1830 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

As the director of the clinical psychology Ph.D. program at UH Mānoa, I have first-hand experience with the barriers that recent graduates from our program have in establishing themselves professionally in the State of Hawai'i. One of the largest barriers is completing one year of post-degree clinical practice under the supervision of a licensed psychologist before they can qualify for licensure and independent practice.

Because Hawai'i does not offer provisional licensure for these early career psychologists, there is no pathway for the services that they provide to be billed to insurance companies. Thus, providing opportunities to accumulate these supervised hours for licensure is an often unaffordable financial drain on agencies and practices that could otherwise provide these opportunities. It leaves many of these budding professionals having to work pro bono, at much reduced salaries, or even at times having to pay potential supervisors out of their own pocket to get the supervised hours necessary to begin independent professional practice. Moreover, because this is a post-degree requirement and they are no longer students, they do not have access to any educational financial support.

Needless to say, this represents a substantial barrier to any but those who have substantial financial resources available. Because of this barrier, many states have instituted provisional licensure for these emerging professionals to help fix this financial conundrum. This is particularly relevant for Hawai'i because of the high cost of living, many of our students cannot afford to stay and go to other states to practice professionally contributing significantly to the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i by providing a pathway for recent graduates who were trained to address the specific mental health needs of our communities to stay in Hawai'i and

thus addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i, increasing access to mental health care, and increasing the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Anthony Papa, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Director of Clinical Training, Clinical Studies Program, Department of Psychology, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:29:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Britt Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. HB 1830 addresses these crucial issues by:

- 1. Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
- 2. Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
- 3. Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, HB 1830 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Britt Young, M.A., LMFT

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:32:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Blechman	Board Member of Hawaii Service Area Mental Health Board	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed program aimed at approving provisional licensing for trained professionals to prescribe psychotropic medications. As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, with extensive experience in the mental health field, I believe that this initiative is a crucial step toward addressing the growing demand for mental health services and improving access to care for individuals in need.

The shortage of mental health professionals, particularly psychiatrists, has become a pressing issue in our state. This shortage contributes to long waiting times for individuals seeking mental health services, exacerbating the severity of their conditions. Provisional licensing for trained professionals to prescribe psychotropic medications would serve as a viable solution to mitigate this problem.

Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of various mental health professionals, including psychologists, and advanced practice nurses, in providing competent and safe mental health care. With proper training and oversight, these professionals can play a pivotal role in expanding the accessibility of psychotropic medications, enhancing the overall mental health landscape.

The proposed program would involve rigorous training and education, ensuring that licensed professionals possess the necessary skills and knowledge to prescribe psychotropic medications safely. Additionally, a system of ongoing supervision and evaluation would be implemented to guarantee the highest standards of care.

Provisional licensing for trained professionals has been successfully implemented in several states and countries, yielding positive outcomes in terms of increased access to mental health care and improved patient outcomes. This evidence supports the feasibility and effectiveness of such a program.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:43:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
louise drayer	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

Louise Drayer

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:45:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i am in strong support of HB1830. the events of august 8th here on maui created a strong need for mental health support... and just yesterday, all the maui schools with threats of violence also emphasized that need

aloha

mary drayer

██████████

████████████████████

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:03:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naghum Alfulajj	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Naghum Alfulaij, Ph.D.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 1:03:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Goodyear	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for psychologists, marriage and family therapists, and mental health counselors in the State of Hawai‘i.

As a clinical psychologist, I am very much aware of the shortage of mental health providers across the state and the resulting lack of availability of mental health services for many members of our communities, as well as the challenges faced by recent graduates who are entering the mental health field.

HB1830 will directly address the shortage of mental health providers by expanding the pool of available providers. By authorizing insurance reimbursements for services provided by provisional or associate-level professionals, HB1830 will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to our population.

In addition, HB1830 will help to expedite the professional development of recent graduates who are entering the mental health field.

Thank you for considering this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Brian Goodyear, Ph.D.

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HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 3:10:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taryn Itagaki	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,

Taryn Itagaki

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 3:50:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey A Drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need this!! Mental health providers are needed more than ever.

Thanks