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GOVERNOR



LEANNE GILLESPIE
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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
1010 Richards Street, Suite 314
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 26, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Leanne Gillespie, Executive Director

SUBJECT: HB 2042 HD1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.
Hearing: February 28, 2024, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 328 & Videoconference, State Capitol

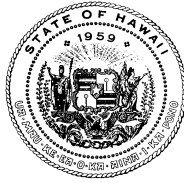
DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Office of Youth Services (OYS) supports this measure, provide additional comments, and respectfully requests that any appropriation in this measure not replace or adversely impact priorities identified in the OYS executive budget request.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to provide funding for the provision of youth mental health and wellness services to help address mental health challenges faced by youth in the State.

The Office of Youth Services (OYS) is responsible for providing services to at-risk youth to facilitate optimum service delivery, prevent delinquency, and reduce recidivism through prevention, rehabilitation, and treatment. OYS shares concerns for youth mental health impacted by COVID-19 and is in alignment with this measure by taking community-based

approaches to youth mental wellness. Separately from this measure, OYS is requesting additional funds to increase mental health services to high-risk youth, LGBTQ+ youth, and youth who are not eligible for services provided by the Department of Health (DOH) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD). More resources are necessary to meet the needs of youth. This measure and OYS budget request, if approved, will be complementary to support youth in Hawaii to address their mental and behavioral well-being early and build their resilience.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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 HB2042 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:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests funding for this
2 measure be considered as a vehicle to expand services, including staff support, provided it does
3 not supplant the requests outlined in the Governor's executive budget request.

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

5 **Department Testimony:** The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) provides
6 the following testimony on behalf of the Department.

7 The Department supports this measure which proposes an appropriation to the Child and
8 Adolescent Mental Health Division to contract for the provision of community-based child and
9 adolescent mental health services that will promote resilience and wellness. It is in alignment
10 with the Department’s vision that all Hawai’i residents have a fair and just opportunity to
11 achieve optimal health and well-being.

12 Recent disasters in Hawaii have highlighted the importance of protective factors for our youth,
13 and community-based mental health promotion plays an important role in increasing protective
14 factors and healthy behaviors. Psychoeducation and skill building can provide children and

1 adolescents with the tools they need to take care of their mental health and well-being in the
2 face of adversity.

3 **Offered Amendments:** While the Department supports the opportunity to award a contract
4 that promotes mental health, we suggest an amendment that clarifies that any contract award
5 would be the result of a competitive process, as required by Hawaii state procurement laws.

6

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



HB 2042 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH
House Committee on Finance

February 28, 2024

10:00 am

Conference Room 308

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides testimony in **SUPPORT for HB 2042 HD1**, which would appropriate funds to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State. **This crucial piece of legislation addresses the pressing need for enhanced mental health resources for Hawai‘i’s youth, especially focusing on at-risk populations such as Native Hawaiians.**

This legislation underscores the dire need that OHA wishes to highlight. We understand that our Native Hawaiian youth are three times less likely to receive treatment for mental health services.¹ This is despite 2021 State Department of Health data that noted that Hawaiian high school students lived with depression at a nearly comparable level as the general student population. The issue is especially critical for Native Hawaiian students though as they are more likely to attempt suicide according to the same Department of Health data. Thus, the need for our youth to get mental health support can be a matter of life and death for Hawaiian families.

OHA supports the funding increase proposed in HB2042. We believe that the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) can help make a difference to address the very real needs of our community. We are especially hopeful that CAMHD will use the increased funding to support community-based and culturally relevant programs and services to the youth they serve. We appreciate that the bill mentions the dire need of our community and look forward to CAMHD’s work to support our youth. By prioritizing the mental health and wellness of our youth, especially Native Hawaiians, this legislation aligns with the core values of compassion, community, and collective responsibility.

¹ *Mental and behavioral health - Native Hawaiians/pacific islanders. Office of Minority Health. (2019).*
<https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/mental-and-behavioral-health-native-hawaiianspacific-islanders>



HB 2042 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH
House Committee on Finance

OHA defers to the Department of Health on costs and implementation. We believe that supporting the mental and emotional well-being of our keiki is a worthy investment. However, we recognize the constraints of our state budget given the costs borne from the Maui fires.

OHA would also support the amendment DOH previously requested to include a provision ensuring any contract awards be done through a competitive process.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** HB2042 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

JON N. IKENAGA
STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

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STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

February 27, 2024

H.B. 2042, HD1: RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

The Office of the Public Defender strongly supports H.B. 2042, HD1:

The Office of the Public Defender submits that there is an ongoing need for mental health services for our youth across the State of Hawaii. We are in full agreement that the “best approach to youth mental wellness is community-based, which meets youth where they are” as stated in Section 1 of this measure. Our office works with youth in the juvenile justice system, and we consistently see the need for mental health services, including counseling, therapy, and access to information and services to help youth manage their mental health challenges. We work with youth all along the spectrum of need. Youth who are in a severe mental health crisis and contemplating suicide or engaging in acts of self-harm. Youth struggling with serious depression. Youth in need of help to process trauma. Youth in need of help with anxiety disorders. Youth in need of grief counseling. These are just a few examples of the need in our communities. Funding for this measure would greatly benefit our youth in need and would be another tool to help keep youth out of our juvenile justice system and help keep youth engaged in mental health education, engagement, and services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

February 28, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

House Bill 2042 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 2042 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health.

This bill appropriates funds to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State.

DCAB urges the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the Department of Health to use the appropriated funds on proven strategies and programs that serve as many youths as possible.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Aloha Members of the Hawaii State Legislature,

My name is Kyle Ishizaka; Executive Director of the YMCA of Honolulu – and I am responsible for leading our Mental Health Wellness Initiatives for Teens.

The Y has a long history and heritage of working with teens and receiving Government funds to provide services for youth.

In the past 60 years, the Y has provided outreach, prevention, intervention, mentoring, and substance abuse treatment services to youth in Hawaii.

This work continues today with the Y providing substance abuse treatment services to the island of Kauai and also to 14 High Schools and 15 Middle Schools on Oahu, Lanai, and Molokai.

Our work with youth who are dealing with substance abuse crosses over to the work we do with mental health. It is addressing the root cause of what is happening in the lives of our youth. The most important elements of the work is listening, caring, providing support, resources, and direction. All of our work is backed by research and supported by experts in the field. We know that mental and behavioral health is connected to all dimensions of wellness. We are complex humans and solutions need customization, especially when we provide interventions.

The request of this bill is to support mental health screening, prevention, and intervention programs for teens. Our initial delivery of the program has been through 9 DOE middle and high schools on Oahu. This bill would provide resources to expand that across the state to provide screening for 1,200 youth and provide prevention or intervention programming to 725 of them. The program consists of sessions, both group and individual, to teach and practice skills on anger and stress management, crisis intervention, building protective factors, building a support network, and social prescribing. All effective methods recommended by licensed therapists. The delivery of these programs take place where youth are at, either in school or in the community.

The plan is to collaborate with the DOE and have the support of the Department of Health in this delivery; which is a similar model that has been effective for decades with substance abuse treatment.

Our initial results from working with the 9 DOE schools demonstrate all youth in prevention programs became more aware of their mental health condition, learned socialization/communication skills, learned a new coping skill, and increased their positive support network. The positive results are evident.

Our intervention program participants identified in our screening demonstrate higher levels of need and experience loneliness, depression, excess levels of stress, or anxiety.

In addition to all of the learnings I just spoke about with the prevention program, all of these teens have also learned and practiced skills in group settings or role-play, and almost all of them have used those skills in real life situations with the support of their counselors and their individualized plans.

The last outcome that is promising is that the majority of these teens have joined clubs, started new hobbies, or started to improve their physical health. All healthy habits that will help them sustain their mental health and social connections.

These types of programs work. We are stepping forward to be part of the solution that requires a variety of tools to help our teen's mental health wellness. We owe this to our next generation, they are asking for our help, and we need to step up and respond.

Through HB 2042, I hope community based organizations will be able to provide Mental Health Prevention and Intervention Services to teens throughout the State of Hawaii.

Please support and fund HB 2042. The time is now, and the opportunity is yours to help our teens.

Thank you.

Kyle Ishizaka
Executive Director
YMCA of Honolulu



HB2042 HD1 Funds for Youth Mental Health

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

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

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB2042 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.

HSAC noticed that the YMCA pilot project last year was highly successful, which is needed due to the dramatic rise in youth behavioral health needs following COVID's isolation.

- The pilot screened a large number of youths to help them be more aware of their mental health status, needs and preventive factors.
- Enrolled some of them in either a one-week prevention program or a 13-week intervention group program depending upon need.

With such a high number of youths having positive results, this funding to go to CAMHD would be well worth an investment into our youth's mental health.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.



HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

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Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Vonnell Ramos, President
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive
Director

Network Membership

*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i
Big Island Substance Abuse
Council*

*Bobby Benson Center
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i
Collins Consulting, LLC
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC `Ohana, Inc.*

*Family Programs Hawai`i
Family Support Hawai`i
Friends of the Children's Justice
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*Get Ready Hawai`i
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Hawai`i Children's Action
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*Hawai`i Health & Harm
Reduction Center
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*Ho`ola Na Pua
Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i
Ka Hale Pomaika`i
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Kokua Kalihii Valley
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*Maui Youth and Family Services
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*P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together
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*PFLAG—Kona, Big Island
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Great Northwest, Hawaii
Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana
Residential Youth Services
& Empowerment (RYSE)*

*Salvation Army Family
Intervention Services
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community
Center
The Catalyst Group*

February 26, 2024

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
And members of the Committee on Health and Homelessness

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2042 HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) strongly supports HB 2042 HD1
Relating to Mental Health.

According to the 2021 Surgeon General's Advisory on Youth Mental
Health, recent national surveys of young people have shown alarming
increases in the prevalence of certain mental health challenges.

35% of middle and high school youth in Hawai`i experience persistent
depression; 7% of high school and 11% of middle school students in
Hawai`i reported having attempted suicide.

23% of middle school students report that their mental health was
most of the time or always "not good" in the prior 30 days. Youth
mental health issues are a risk factor for high-risk substance use.

The TeenLink Hawai`i website continues to get 2,000 site visits on
average each month. The top topics/pages visited included Suicide;
Health and Wellness Toolkit; Sleep; Stress; Mental Health; and Self-
Care.

A Hawai`i Department of Health report using 2020 data estimates that
11,000 of Hawai`i's youth experienced at least one major depressive
episode in the prior year. Of those who experienced a major
depressive episode, approximately 6,000 did not receive mental
health services in the prior year.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Helping Hawai'i Live Well

Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

February 28th, 2024, 10:00am

HB2042 HD1

ADVISORY BOARD

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

Mental Health America of Hawaii is in strong support of HB2042 HD1 which appropriates funds to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State.

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.

Considering the ongoing youth mental health crisis resulting from the global pandemic, and now, the traumatic events of the Maui fires, the need to address youth mental health, wellness, and resilience has never been more critical. Youth are especially impacted by disasters of this scale with the most manifested conditions being trauma, depression, anxiety, and substance use, with further impact trickling down from those who take care of them. In addition to the impacts of the fire, youth were already, and continue to be, severely impacted by the pandemic, with the CDC noting that COVID-19 created traumatic stressors for youth mental wellbeing. *Evidence has demonstrated that there is a critical need for mental health and resilience education and suicide prevention programs for all youth.* Late last year, the SAMHSA released its *National Guidelines for Child and Youth Behavioral Health Crisis Care* to express the need to improve prevention efforts and crisis response for children and youth. Earlier that same year, the US Surgeon General declared a youth mental health crisis in the U.S. According to the Hawaii Department of Health's Injury Prevention and Control Sections EMS & Injury Prevention System Branch, death by suicide was the leading cause of fatal injuries in Hawaii between 2016 and 2020.

PRO BONO LEGAL COUNSEL

Paul Alston

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Helping Hawai'i Live Well

During the same period, suicide was the 4th leading cause of fatal injury for those 0 – 15 years of age, and the 1st leading cause for those between the ages of 16 and 29.

We urge your positive review of this measure and are grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,



Bryan L. Talisayan
Executive Director
bryan.talisayan@mentalhealthhawaii.org



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2042 HD1:
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

TO: House Committee on Finance

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

**Hearing: Friday 02/28/2024; 10:00 AM;
State Capitol Conf Rm 308 & via videoconference**

Chair Yamashita and Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members, Committee on Finance

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 2042 HD1**, which appropriates funds to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has a long history of providing services for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD).

There is a critical demand for improved mental health services, particularly for the younger generation. The repercussions of the pandemic have compounded the already daunting hurdles faced by today's youth, leading to a surge in mental health concerns. Allocating more resources to youth mental health services would empower organizations such as Catholic Charities Hawaii to broaden our initiatives, recruit additional skilled professionals, and introduce services aimed at fostering the mental well-being of our young population.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division and their efforts to increase services throughout the state.

We urge your support for this bill and ask for your assistance in its passing during this legislative session.

Please contact our Director of Advocacy and Community Relations, Shellie Niles at (808) 527-4813 if you have any questions.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813



Opportunity Youth Action Hawai‘i

February 28, 2024

House Committee on Finance

Hearing Time: 10:00 am

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 308

Re: HB 2042, HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Opportunity Youth Action Hawai‘i hui, we are writing in **strong support** of HB 2042, HD1 relating to mental health. This bill appropriates funds to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in Hawaii.

Amid growing mental health issues for Hawaii’s youth, investing funds to raise awareness for youth mental well-being and providing the necessary tools to combat adverse mental health is essential to long-term youth development.

Opportunity Youth Action Hawai‘i is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth houselessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

Please support HB 2042, HD1.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

February 27, 2024

TO: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair Committee on Finance
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair Committee on Finance

FR: Greg Waibel
President and CEO
YMCA of Honolulu

RE: TESTIMONY-HB2042, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH – SUPPORT

In a study conducted as part of the Global Burden of Disease¹, mental health experts from across the country expressed a very high level of concern that we are in a second pandemic of mental health problems with not enough resources and approaches to help people. The voice of people who are seeking help include feelings of being stuck, empty, uncertain, anxious, overwhelmed, burned out, stressed, isolated, done, and depressed. The surveyed mental health professionals think the state and federal government must provide more resources.

The need is demonstrated daily in our communities and if it continues unaddressed will cause permanent damage to youth mental health. People who have a clinical diagnosis have access to care through Medicare/Medicaid/private insurance. We know that we task our schools to do so much more than academics and students have needs that go well beyond their academics into their social/emotional supports, physical health, etc.

The mental health crisis is not one that can be solved by one organization and one strategy alone. Just as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted many aspects of our community, the solution to this crisis will also need to be multifaceted, collaborative, and innovative. As a community-based organization that provides critical services to thousands of youth in our state, we are well positioned to meet youth “where they are” in ways that are comfortable and are relevant to the unique cultural identities of those who will be served. We approach our work with trained professionals and evidence-based practices to support the mental wellness support that our youth need. The YMCA has a track record of success in working with youth and can offer a community-based approach, providing programs to help youth at various points in their mental wellness pathway. We have been working in the mental wellness pathway in prevention and intervention for 2 years. The program that we are seeking support from the legislature has been initiated through a Federal earmark through Congressman Case in 9 DOE middle and high schools. Our DOE schools have embraced our help and we have found where our program fits within their behavior health supports. This bill would expand our reach across the state and allow us to serve additional teens in a variety of experiential and therapeutic activities to help participants develop self-awareness, self-esteem, social skills, appropriate coping mechanisms

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)02143-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)02143-7/fulltext)

and stress management tools to address their mental health and wellness needs. The program is conducted in person in Department of Education Schools and other community based locations where services are easily accessible and take place outside normal school hours. Program staff will conduct pre- and post-program surveys to measure participant outcomes and help them develop strategies and start habit formation for managing their mental health after completing the program. We also do social prescribing to connect participants with their passions and other youth who share their passions and interests. Participants will be referred to clinically appropriate care and resources if determined necessary. We track the outcomes to ensure effectiveness. We will use pre- and post-evaluation data, participation data, along with feedback from participants and those making referrals or working with the youth in the schools, homes, and other programs to help inform improvements to the program. We have developed this curriculum and outcome measures in conjunction with mental health experts for age appropriate delivery.

Since the Y began to deliver specific mental wellness programs we have served over 1,000 youth in the prevention space. Our curriculum and protocols are developed with the help of qualified mental health professionals and in consultation with schools on best practices and proven techniques. We understand assessment and treatment models, and we are partnering with licensed clinicians to guide our approach, tools, and curriculum. We are grateful for your consideration as we all work together to ensure the mental wellness of Hawaii's youth.

Written Testimony

Citizen: Claudia Crist
Date: February 27, 2024
Bill: HB2042 H.D.1
Position: In Support

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance,

As former CEO of the only hospital-based child and adolescent residential care facility in the entire state of Hawai'i, I vividly recall the impact physical and social isolation as well as lack of school routine and proactive wellness screenings had on the mental health of Hawai'i's youth. In addition to experiencing prolonged social and physical isolation, it quickly became clear that, some of the homes where children and teens were isolated were not always the safest places to be, adding additional stress.

The pandemic highlighted the stark effects of a combination of historic lack in community-based mental wellness programs and accessible resources, social and physical isolation, and extensive wait times for appropriate inpatient and outpatient mental health services. Subsequently, we have seen a sharp increase in morbidity and mortality of mental illness. This has caused our youth, and the youth throughout the United States, to suffer unnecessarily.

HB2042 H.D.1 would provide much-needed seed money to support professionally operated, community-based mental wellness programs. As in physical health, and with lessons taken from whole health, enhancing, and maintaining mental wellness and preventing illness is key. Furthermore, public health science and lessons teach us that investing in youth mental wellness programs is likely to yield long-term opportunity cost savings by promoting healthier and more productive individuals, reducing the economic burden on society, and fostering a positive and prosperous future.

The funding provided by HB2042 H.D.1 is critical in supporting a (small) test-of-change for the State of Hawai'i. The results will hopefully show an increase in the health and well-being of Hawai'i's keiki. After all, they are our future!

Thank you.

Claudia Crist, RN, MHA, FACHE, SHRM-SCP
Board Member, YMCA of Honolulu