

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2448  
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN &  
ADOLESCENTS**

REPRESENTATIVE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS  
REPRESENTATIVE LISA MARTEN, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: February 9, 2024

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH), Child & Adolescent Mental Health  
3 Division (CAMHD) strongly supports this bill. It has been 50 years since the Mental Health  
4 Services for Children and Youth statutes have been codified. The amendments proposed by this  
5 bill bring the statute up to date to reflect the current role of the Child & Adolescent Mental  
6 Health Division in addressing intensive mental health needs of children and adolescents in  
7 Hawaii.

8 Although originally a branch of the Adult Mental Health Division, Child & Adolescent Mental  
9 Health became its own Division of the Department of Health decades ago as research emerged  
10 about the distinct and specialized nature of child and adolescent mental health services. Today  
11 CAMHD is the state's Medicaid provider for intensive mental health services for children and  
12 adolescents with a serious emotional disturbance (SED). CAMHD works collaboratively with  
13 other child-serving agencies and has developed a comprehensive array of treatment services for  
14 youth with SED via Purchase of Service contracts. Mental health assessments, clinical oversight  
15 and care coordination are provided by employees at Family Guidance Centers on Oahu, Hawaii,  
16 Maui, and Kauai. In addition, the Family Court Liaison Branch on Oahu provides mental health  
17 services to youth who are incarcerated or detained. This system of care is based on core values to

1 provide child and family-centered, culturally sensitive, least restrictive and evidence-based  
2 mental health services. Over the past 30 years, CAMHD has leveraged federal system of care  
3 grants to actively develop and improve the child and adolescent mental health service system of  
4 care in Hawaii based on national standards and best practices.

5 In 2023, CAMHD partnered with the University of Hawaii, School of Public Health to conduct a  
6 statewide needs assessment of mental health services for youth. Once completed, this assessment  
7 will be used to develop a Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services Plan commencing in 2027.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

9 **Offered Amendments:** None.

10

**STATE OF HAWAI‘I**  
**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender, State of Hawai‘i**  
**to the House Committee on Health & Homelessness**  
**and House Committee on Human Services**

February 9, 2024

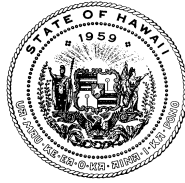
H.B. 2448: RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS.

Chair Au Belatti, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, Chair Marten, Vice-Chair Amato and Members of the Committees:

The Office of the Public Defender strongly supports H.B. 2448:

The Office of the Public Defender submit that there is an ongoing need for mental health services for our youth across the State of Hawaii. 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 managing 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. This measure would greatly benefit our youth in need who are involved in the juvenile justice system and would be another tool to help keep youth out of our juvenile justice system and to help keep youth engaged in mental health education, engagement, and services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



**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

**House Committees on Health and Homelessness and Humans Services**  
Friday, February 9, 2024  
8:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 309 & Videoconference  
**In Support of**  
**H.B. No. 2448, Relating to mental health services for children and adolescents**

Chair Belatti, Chair Marten, Vice Chair Takenouchi, Vice Chair Amato and Members of the Committees:

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** H.B. No. 2448, Relating to Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents.

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. The OWR is focused on breaking down barriers that impact the social, and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people. Under this umbrella, the OWR is dedicated to addressing adverse childhood experiences. Addressing mental health needs early in life is critical for better health and well-being in adulthood. Supporting programs and policies that address the mental health and trauma children and adolescent is a critical piece of creating a trauma-informed Hawai'i. The OWR supports efforts that would support the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the Department of Health to effectuate its obligations.

We look forward to continuing to work with departments and community partners to further strengthen the systems of support for our children and adolescents across the state. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Mahalo,

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



## DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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

February 9, 2024

### TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS, AND HUMAN SERVICES

House Bill 2448 – Relating to Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 2448 – Relating to Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents.

This bill amends the statutes pertaining to mental health services for children and adolescents provided by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the Department of Health to reflect the current mental health systems of care that address intensive mental health needs of children and adolescents.

COVID-19 exposed the importance of mental health services being accessible for youth and adolescents. This bill helps to ensure that access exists.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW  
Executive Director

To: The Honorable Representative Scott Saiki

Regarding: **HB2448 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

Aloha Scott Saiki,

My name is Julie Shinsato and I am currently a student of the University of Hawaii at Manoa in the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work . I also have 12+ years of work experience in the field of social work providing services to the homeless physically and/or mentally disabled population. I am in **support** of HB2448 as this bill would provide an efficient and effective streamline of referral services to our most vulnerable population.

I firmly agree that the pandemic has significantly impacted the social, emotional, and mental well being of youth globally especially in those adolescent who are in and out of the judicial system; however, may I also suggest including Pediatricians to be involved in the screening and referral process as we know that the pandemic affected every family and oftentimes for those families who are not aware of mental health services and/or educated on mental health may have the potential to fall between the gaps, in doing so will bridge the gap for all adolescents across our state by providing the utmost care for all our adolescents with having positive outcomes when these youths become adults.

Again, I am in **support** of HB2448, I strongly believe if we want to see or make a difference in our community we must address the underlying issues of mental health and collaborate with all medical personnel in order to achieve a safer and better community. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,



Julie Shinsato