

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



JORDAN LOWE
DIRECTOR

MICHAEL VINCENT
Deputy Director
Administration

JARED K. REDULLA
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

SYLVIA LUKE
LT GOVERNOR
KE KE'ENA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai

715 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2345
RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION

Before the Senate Committees on
Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
and

Health and Human Services

Friday, February 2, 2024; 3:00 p.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 225, Via Videoconference

Testifiers: Michael Vincent, or Jared Redulla

Chairs Wakai and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Elefante and Aquino, and members of the Committees:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) **strongly supports** Senate Bill 2345.

This bill 1) requires the DLE to coordinate crisis intervention training for state and county law enforcement agencies and crisis intervention officers, 2) requires the Department of Health to certify crisis intervention officers, 3) defines "crisis intervention officer," 4) authorizes crisis intervention officers to order persons determined to be imminently dangerous to themselves or others to be transported to a designated behavioral health crisis center, and 4) establishes positions and makes an appropriation.

The law enforcement goals of this bill are significant to all sectors of our community. Courts and legislative bodies have made it clear that our law enforcement officers are required to take a closer look when they arrive on scene, if they can safely do so, with the goal of better understanding any interaction, encounter, or response for the purpose of helping those who may be in crisis, suffering from some form of crisis or

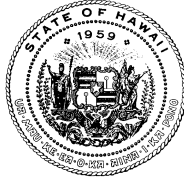
impairment whether physical, developmental, cognitive, psychological, mental health, or substance disorder influencing their behavior. When they can safely do so, officers do their best to look at the entire picture of the encounter when formulating what action needs to be taken. Training like this is a vital component to safe community-oriented policing.

The DLE strongly supports this bill but recommends that this bill be amended to address the subject of SB2552 Relating to Dementia which is being heard later in this hearing. To accomplish this, we are recommending that SECTION 3 of this bill be amended to read as follows:

SECTION 3. Section 334-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new definition to be appropriately inserted and to read as follows:

"Crisis intervention officer" means a law enforcement officer who has been trained to recognize and communicate with a person in crisis or suffering from some form of impairment whether from dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, or any physical, developmental, cognitive, psychological, or substance disorder influencing their behavior and certified by the department of health as a specialized first responder for calls involving persons in crisis."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.



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 S.B. 2345
RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION

SENATOR GLENN WAKAI, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

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

Friday, February 2, 2024, 3:00 PM, Room 225/VIDEO

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (Department) supports this measure and
2 offers comments and amendments.

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

5 The Department supports this measure which proposes to establish the role of crisis
6 intervention officers within state and county law enforcement agencies and requires the
7 Department of Law Enforcement to coordinate their crisis intervention training with other
8 services agencies as appropriate. Officers who are trained in crisis intervention are equipped
9 with additional knowledge, empathy, and improved de-escalation techniques that allow them
10 more effectively and safely respond to behavioral health emergencies. However, Section 4 of
11 this bill requires the Department to coordinate the certification of crisis intervention officers
12 and the trainers. As this responsibility will place a burden on our workforce, given ongoing
13 recruitment challenges and staffing shortages, we kindly request to omit this requirement.

1 AMHD already contracts with The Queen’s Medical Center for the Mental Health
2 Emergency Worker (MHEW) program, designed to comply accordance with Section 334-59(1),
3 HRS, to provide consultative support for law enforcement officers and promote timely
4 assessments of individuals who may have mental health issues, offering treatment options
5 rather than incarceration. MHEWs authorize involuntary transportation and hospitalization
6 (also referred to as “MH-1”), where an LE officer or ambulance will transport the client to a
7 designated psychiatric receiving facility. In 2023, MHEWs made a total of 2,280 MH-1
8 authorizations for law enforcement statewide. All county police departments in Hawaii have
9 successfully begun offering crisis intervention training to their officers and should serve as
10 models for implementing this type of training among state law enforcement.

11 The Department requests that both county and state law enforcement agencies
12 continue to consult with a MHEW. MHEWs are trained in emergency mental health assessment
13 including signs and risks associated with SMI, substance abuse, suicide, trauma, domestic
14 violence, and problems and risks unique to juveniles and elderly, as well as other issues
15 relevant to the interaction between the person in crisis (also known as PIC) and law
16 enforcement. MHEWs are trained in de-escalation/disarming techniques, have a working
17 knowledge of case law with respect to civil rights protections related to involuntary evaluation
18 and treatment, have completed training in police culture, police psychology, Assisted
19 Community Treatment (ACT), police assisted diversion (PAD), and best practice standards
20 regarding interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals experiencing mental
21 health and substance use related crises. MHEWs are licensed in the state of Hawaii and have
22 practical supervised experience during the onboarding process that includes supervised MHEW
23 calls.

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

25 **Offered Amendments:**

1 The Department respectfully requests the deletion of the Department certification. In
2 Section 3, delete in lines 4-6, “and certified by the department of health as a specialized first
3 responder for calls involving persons in crisis” and delete section 4 in its entirety.

4 In Section 5, the Department respectfully requests the addition of “crisis intervention
5 officer” be deleted.

SB-2345

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 5:50:41 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Louis Erteschik | Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center | Support | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

There is no doubt that trained crisis officers would be better equipped to handle these situations. While we mean no disrespect to "regular" police officers, they are frequently not as well trained to deal with individuals with a mental illness. This has tragically led to many needless injuries and deaths. Trained crisis officers would be a significant improvement. We also think transporting people to a behavioral crisis center is a much preferred option than an emergency room at a hospital.



STATE OF HAWAII ORGANIZATION OF POLICE OFFICERS
" A Police Organization for Police Officers Only "
Founded 1971

January 31, 2024

Via Online

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Hawaii State Capitol, Rooms 407, 217
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol, Rooms 213, 204
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **SB 2345 – Certified Crisis Intervention Officers**

Dear Chairs Wakai and San Buenaventura, Vice-Chairs Elefante and Aquino, and Honorable Committee members:

I serve as the President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers (“SHOPO”) and write to you on behalf of our Union in **support** of SB 2345. This bill will enhance community response to those experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis by allowing certified crisis intervention officers specially trained to recognize and communicate with a person suffering from a mental health or substance use disorder crisis to serve as first responders.

In particular, this bill requires the Department of Law Enforcement to coordinate crisis intervention training for state and county law enforcement agencies and crisis intervention officers. The bill also requires the Department of Health to certify crisis intervention officers and authorizes such officers to order persons determined to be imminently dangerous to themselves or others to be transported to a designated behavioral health crisis center. The bill also allows for the establishment of three (3) full time crisis intervention coordinator positions.

Main Office & Honolulu Chapter Office
1717 Hoe Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819-3125
Tel: (808) 847-4676 "84 SHOPO"
www.shophawaii.org Fax: (808) 841-4818

Hawaii Chapter Office
688 Kinoole Street, Room 220B
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-3877
Tel: (808) 934-8405
Fax: (808) 934-8210

Kauai Chapter Office
3176 Oihana Street, Suite 104, Lihue
Mailing Add: P. O. Box 1708
Lihue, Hawaii 96766-5708
Tel: (808) 246-8911

Maui Chapter Office
1887 Wili Pa Loop, Suite 2
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793-1253
Tel: (808) 242-6129
Fax: (808) 242-9519

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair, and Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, and Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
January 31, 2024
SHOPO Testimony Page 2
Re: SB 2345 – Certified Crisis Intervention Officers

As you are aware, our community is struggling to adequately respond to an unprecedented wave of individuals experiencing homelessness, mental health and substance abuse. Police officers regularly must respond to calls involving persons experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis, who are often struggling with rational decision making and clear communication. Law enforcement officers are not specifically trained for such encounters nor do they have the skill set and adequate resources to assist these individuals as compared to crisis intervention officers, who will be certified to have the training, expertise and authority needed to provide appropriate assistance.

We support this bill as it offers critical crisis intervention support on calls where rehabilitative assistance, and not just law enforcement response, may be beneficial. Having certified crisis intervention first responders may also help to avoid any potential miscommunication during such encounters that can put the individual, the officer, and the community at risk, and to help to lower arrest, incarceration, and recidivism rates.

For our community, it is imperative that emergency calls involving a mental illness or behavioral health crisis be addressed humanely and efficiently. Certifying specially trained crisis intervention officers as first responders is one step in that direction.

We thank you for allowing us to be heard on this very important issue and we hope your committee will unanimously support SB 2345.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT “BOBBY” CAVACO
SHOPO President



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

TO: Honorable Sen. Glenn Wakai
Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental
and Military Affairs

Honorable Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura
Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

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

RE: SB2345 - RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION.

HEARING: Friday, February 2, 2024 at 3:00 PM

POSITION: IHS supports the passing of SB2345.

The Institute for Human Services supports the passing of SB2345 and the coordination of intervention training for state and county law enforcement agencies and crisis intervention officers based on our experience working with chronically homeless persons who are afflicted with serious and persistent mental illness, requiring mental fitness assessments.

SB2345 requires that if a law enforcement officer(s) has reason to believe that **a person is "imminently dangerous to self or others,"** the **officer shall call for assistance from a mental health emergency worker or crisis intervention officer.**

We have seen an increase in the need for specialized care for individuals struggling with mental illness, which often results in, often repeat, engagement with law enforcement. As such, NAMI Hawaii and Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction have coordinated crisis training for the Honolulu Police Department and Hawai'i County. So far, over two hundred officers have received such training to equip them with de-escalation skills, trauma response, and how to assist while protecting themselves. SB2345, as proposed, would empower law enforcement officers across the state to intervene in crisis situations with resources to de-escalate situations and better direct the individuals for additional mental health evaluation or assistance.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2345

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 10:41:14 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dara Carlin, M.A. | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

PLEASE include advanced & basic training on DOMESTIC VIOLENCE esp Post-Separation Violence as part of this crisis training!

SB-2345

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:44:21 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Alan Urasaki | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support passage of this measure. Thank you for your consideration.

SB-2345

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 11:30:05 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Shana Wailana Kukila | Individual | Support | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

RE: SB2345 Relating to Crisis Intervention

POSITION: Support

I will share my testimony at the hearing about my experience with the Crisis Intervention Training on the Big Island.

It is with much appreciation for this bill and for the legislature hearing our testimonies that I submit my full support for SB2345.

Mahalo,

Shana W. Kukila

Hilo, HI

LATE



SB2345 Crisis Intervention Training for Law Enforcement

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY
AFFAIRS

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Friday, Feb 2, 2024: 3:00 : Room 225 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB2345:

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 strongly supports a mental health first aid and crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers to be able to transport to crisis intervention services or if imminently dangerous to self, transported by ambulance to licensed psychiatric facility or designated behavioral health crisis center.

It's important to change the law to include designated behavioral health crisis center because crisis centers are not licensed psychiatric centers, which the current laws only allow transport to the licensed facility.

- This training would enable officers to divert patients with mental illness to health providers and services instead of to criminal justice system.

Summary

HSAC commends the legislature for training law enforcement to augment developing the diversion and crisis stabilization alternatives for people subject to their mental health or co-occurring substance use disorder disease.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.