

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalu Kalaima
a Ho'oponopono Ola*
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Pamela J. Sturz
Deputy Director
Correctional Institutions

Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 3094, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS.

By

Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

House Committee on Human Services
Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 12, 2024; 9:15 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & via Videoconference

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **supports the intent** of Senate Bill (SB) 3094, Senate Draft (SD) 2, which proposes to establish a working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists.

DCR supports the intent of this measure for the following reasons:

- As the newly redesignated DCR, our focus is to shift from what historically has been a punitive model, to a rehabilitative, restorative, and reentry-focused system. In making this paradigm shift, peer support specialists, especially those with lived experiences, will play an integral role in the delivery of effective mental and behavioral health treatment.
- Research has shown that peer support is effective in reducing, among other things, substance use and depression. Many in our custody could benefit from peer support specialists who have lived through similar social, behavioral, and economic challenges. Creating a safe environment to share similar experiences will help to establish trust in others.

- Studies have also shown that peer support increases social functioning and social support. For those in our facilities, this type of assistance is key to successful reentry into the community. Such success may empower those released from our custody to become productive members of our community, thereby reducing recidivism.

The establishment of a working group to develop and make recommendations for a standardized framework for peer support specialists is a step in the right direction to serve individuals in need. However, this measure should not be allowed to negatively impact the priorities as outlined in the Governor's Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 3094, SD 2.



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

March 12, 2024

The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services
The Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Marten and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: SB3094 SD2 RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities is in **SUPPORT OF SB3094 SD2**, which establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Appropriates funds for hiring an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support for the peer support specialist working group in carrying out its duties and compensation for peer support specialists on the working group for time spent on working group meetings and related work and travel expenses. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. Effective 7/1/2112. (SD2)

My journey has shown me just how crucial trauma-informed care and peer-to-peer support are, especially for individuals like me with developmental disabilities navigating systems like Child Welfare Services (CWS). I've been through multiple placements in CWS foster homes while trying to cope with overwhelming grief and trauma. It's crystal clear to me now that what's needed most is a compassionate and understanding approach to care.

Trauma-informed care has been a game-changer for me. It's all about recognizing how trauma affects every aspect of our lives and creating spaces that prioritize safety, trust, and empowerment. Given my past, understanding the roots of my trauma and knowing what might trigger it is absolutely vital for providing support that truly helps. Trauma-informed approaches don't just acknowledge what I've been through—they actively work to prevent any further harm by fostering environments of empathy and understanding.

Now, as a Grief and Trauma Facilitator at Kids Hurt Too Hawaii, I get to share my own journey of healing with others who are going through similar struggles. By opening up about my experiences with grief and trauma, I not only validate what others are going through but also

show them that there's hope and resilience on the other side. Peer support creates this incredible space where we can connect on a level that's deeper than words, sharing insights, coping strategies, and endless encouragement.

Bringing trauma-informed care and peer-to-peer support into organizations like Kids Hurt Too Hawaii is not just a nice to have, it is an absolute must. These principles don't just enrich the support we provide to individuals with developmental disabilities; they also create a sense of belonging and understanding that's so desperately needed. My dedication to this cause is fueled by the belief that these approaches can truly make a difference in nurturing healing and resilience, even in the face of the toughest challenges.

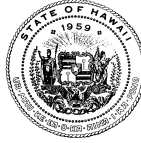
Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of SB3094 SD2**.

Sincerely,

James Labrie
Chair



Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



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 S.B. 3094 SD2
RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**

Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Members of the Human Services Committee

March 12, 2024, at 9:15 a.m. Room Number: 329

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** S.B. No. 3094 SD2, Relating to Peer Support Specialists.

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.

Peer support specialists are people who have lived experience receiving services from systems of care that assist others experiencing similar situations. Peer support is one of the six guiding principles to a trauma-informed approach; through shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment, peer support specialists help people in their healing process. OWR strongly believes that increasing opportunities for peer support specialists to provide assistance in the healing journey of trauma-survivors is *an integral piece* of making Hawai'i a trauma-informed state.

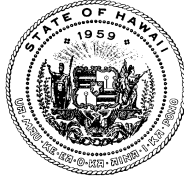
S.B. 3094 SD2 establishes a working group that will develop a framework for peer support specialists in the State. Department of Health (DOH) currently administers the Hawai'i Certified Peer Specialist (HCPS) program that supports the recovery of people with mental illness. If this measure is passed, the State will have an opportunity to create a framework that will expand peer support beyond mental health. The bill proposes to do so by creating a working group consisting of State departments, community partners, and peers to collectively identify what they need to onboard peer support specialists in their departments, including training and certification. The OWR will be honored to assist with the creation of a framework that incorporates the voices of lived experience and expertise, including how the state can support peers support specialists in a trauma-informed, healing-centered way.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

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



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 SB3094 SD2
RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**

REPRESENTATIVE LISA MARTEN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Tuesday, March 12th, 2024, 9:15 am, House Conference Room 329 and via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The fiscal implications are unknown.

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) supports this measure and
3 offers the following comments.

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

6 The Department supports SB3094 SD2, which proposes the creation of a working group
7 that will consist of state department decision-makers, community organizations, and people
8 with lived experience to create a statewide framework for standardizing peer specialist roles,
9 ethics, training, and data measurements that demonstrate peer specialists support as an
10 invaluable and proven evidenced-based model of care. In addition, the Department supports
11 this bill's intention to identify supervision standards, develop a state inventory of certified peer
12 specialists, and develop a sustainability plan to ensure current and future peer support
13 expansion and opportunities.

14 The AMHD offers two peer specialist training tracks: Hawai'i Certified Peer Specialist and
15 Hawai'i Certified Forensic Peer Specialist. The training is provided for adults with lived mental
16 health experience. Many also have lived experience with homelessness and forensic
17 involvement, and most have been in long-term recovery from substance abuse issues. There

1 are 27 newly certified Hawai'i Certified Peer Specialists and 17 Forensic Peer Specialists
2 throughout the Islands. AMHD is the only program in Hawai'i that certifies adults with mental
3 illnesses as peer specialists. The Department of Child and Adolescent Division (CAMHD) trains
4 and certifies youth and parents with lived experience working with children with early serious
5 mental illness. The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) trains and certifies peer specialists
6 with lived experience recovering from drug abuse issues. This unique certification status allows
7 any peer specialist hired by any Medicaid-qualified agency to bill for their services. Until
8 recently, the Department was unaware of other peer specialist training programs in
9 communities throughout the State. The proposed working group would assist with ending this
10 disconnect. The Department would be honored to participate and collaborate with the listed
11 participants in this measure.

12 The Department recognizes the following key points in SB3094 SD1 that ensure the
13 working group's efficacy:

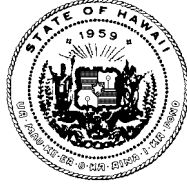
- 14 • The working group includes a representative from MedQUEST. Medicaid billing for peer
15 specialist services is an enigma that only a few providers have figured out. This working
16 group would support the sharing of this knowledge. Being able to bill Medicaid for peer
17 support, rather than relying on temporary grants and special project state monies,
18 would bring in funding for expanding peer specialist positions, allow for sustainability,
19 and save State funds for other needed projects.
- 20 • Provides an avenue to discuss and adopt supportive methods for supervision, self-care,
21 and continuing education, creating peer specialists.
- 22 • Creates peer specialist empowerment, prevents professional fatigue, and encourages
23 employment effectiveness and tenure.
- 24 • Identifies best practices for expanding and documenting peer support opportunities in
25 all state agencies, not just those in mental and behavioral health.

- 1 • Creates a framework to expand peer support collaboratively, allowing state
2 departments, community partners, and peers to collectively identify what they need to
3 onboard peer support specialists and standardize training and certification.
- 4 • Stimulates collaboration on how the State can best sustain peer support programs by
5 collectively identifying funding streams.
- 6 • Allows reasonable compensation of working group members who are not State workers,
7 thus engaging peer specialists with limited means to participate fully.
- 8 • Peer support is one of the six guiding principles of trauma-informed care and has
9 numerous positive behavioral outcomes. (Learn more about the benefits of peer
10 support specialists at [https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-](https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers.)
11 [tools/peers.](https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers.))

12 **Offered Amendments:** The Department suggests the addition of representation from
13 the Veteran’s Administration and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Both the
14 Administration and organization have organized peer support programs.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 10, 2024

To: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 3094 SD2– RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS.**

Hearing: March 12, 2024, 9:15 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) strongly supports this administration measure. DHS defers to the Office of Wellness & Resilience and the Department of Health.

PURPOSE: This bill establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Appropriates funds for hiring an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support for the peer support specialist working group in carrying out its duties and compensation for peer support specialists on the working group for time spent on working group meetings and related work and travel expenses. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. Takes effect 7/1/2112. (SD2)

The Committee on Government Operations (SD1) amended the measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the chairperson may invite as members of the working group, two caregivers with lived experience as the caregiver of a child or youth in behavioral health, child welfare, or the juvenile justice systems;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2112, to encourage further discussion; and

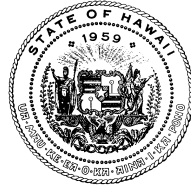
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The Committee on Ways and Means (SD2) amended the measure by changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount to facilitate further discussion.

The Department supports strengthening peer support specialists. DHS's Med-QUEST Division (MQD) recognizes the value of peer support specialists for many people whom the Medicaid program serves, including individuals suffering from mental health or substance use disorders, homelessness, or involvement with the justice systems. Peer support specialists can offer a level of acceptance, validation, and hope by sharing their own lived experiences. Thus, MQD welcomes the opportunity to participate in such a workgroup to make recommendations for a framework to expand and sustain peer support specialists in the State.

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

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



KATHERINE AUMER, PhD
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
LUNA HO'OMALU O KA PAPA

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378, Room 256
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

**WRITTEN
TESTIMONY
ONLY**

**STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
Testimony to the House Committee on
Consumer Protection and Commerce
SUPPORTING SB 3094 SD2
RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**

CHAIRPERSON

Katherine Aumer, PhD

1st VICE CHAIRPERSON

Kathleen Merriam, LCSW CSAC

2nd VICE CHAIRPERSON

John Betlach

SECRETARY

Eileen Lau-James, DVM

MEMBERS:

Antonino Beninato

Naomi Crozier, CPS

Jon Fujii, MBA

Heidi Ilyavi

Jackie Jackson, CFPS

Lea Dias, MEd

Jean Okudara, CSAC

Ray Rice, MEd

Mary Pat Waterhouse

Kristin Will, MAEL, CSAC

Fern Yoshida

IMMEDIATE PAST

CHAIRPERSON:

Richard I. Ries PsyD, MSEd

EX-OFFICIO:

Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director
Behavioral Health Administration

WEBSITE:

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EMAIL ADDRESS:

doh.scmhchairperson@
doh.hawaii.gov

March 12, 2024 at 9:15 a.m. in Rm 329 and via video

Chair Marten, Vice-Chair Amato, 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 Hawai'i State Council on Mental Health continues to strongly support SB3094_SD2. Current reports within the Council and published literature have demonstrated the effectiveness of peer support specialists in improving quality of life and engagement of clients as well as reducing stigma and direct costs. This legislation represents a critical step forward in enhancing mental health services in Hawai'i by establishing a working group tasked with creating a comprehensive framework for peer support specialists.

We particularly commend the bill's focus on developing a framework that includes clear definitions, ethical guidelines, standardized training, and effective

supervision for peer support specialists. This comprehensive approach will ensure consistency and quality in peer support services across the state.

By appropriating funds for hiring an administrative facilitator for their time and expenses related to working group meetings, SB3094_SD2 ensures the working group can effectively carry out its duties. This investment will lead to the development of strong guidelines that prioritize the well-being of those seeking peer support services. **We also recommend considering the role and service that could be provided to this working group by the Hawai'i State Council on Mental Health.** Many of our members and attendees are experienced with the needs and challenges facing peer support specialists in Hawai'i.

This proactive approach not only strengthens our mental health infrastructure but also reaffirms our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for individuals on their journey towards recovery. We urge the Legislature to pass SB3094_SD2

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

VISION: A Hawaii where people of all ages with mental health challenges can enjoy recovery in the community of their choice.

MISSION: To advocate for a Hawaii where all persons affected by mental illness can access necessary treatment and support to live full lives in the community of their choice.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

March 11, 2024

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB3094 SD2

Re Peer Support Specialists

EPIC 'Ohana is a non profit organization serving families and children in the child welfare system, and youth experiencing social and emotional challenges. We employ Parent Partners and Makua Allies. These are birth parents with lived experience in the child welfare system, and/or with perinatal substance use disorder. We also employ Youth Partners who work with the young people served by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the Department of Health, with foster youth served by Child Welfare Services, and youth served at the Youth Outreach Center for Homeless youth. What we have learned in the last few years is incredible power of lived experience to engage peers in services, and provide hope in ways that no one else can. The impact is tremendous. We also support the efforts of the Pū'ā Foundation to establish a culturally based certification and training program for peer support specialists in many arenas including justice involved men and women, and parents. And we partnered with the Early Childhood Action Strategy network and the Association for Infant Mental Health, Hawai'i, and Zero to Three Court to find ways to collaborate and integrate the services of peer support specialists into these services.

Peer support is an anchor in the articulated guiding principles of trauma-informed care. (Learn more about the benefits of peer support specialists: <https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers>.) What we realize is that the tremendous impact of this work needs both champions and support. There are obstacles to the utilization of peer support in state agencies and in contracts with the state. There are nationally articulated standards for peer certification and training, that EPIC follows, but should be discussed across agencies. Employers, including state agencies, must have an understanding of how to effectively work with peer support specialists and integrate them into programs in ways that are trauma informed. Community based organizations and state agencies employing peer support specialists need sustainable funding sources. At this time, many of our programs are funded by short one, two, three, or at best six year demonstration or pilot project funding.

This bill proposes to identify best practices to expand peer support opportunities across the continuum of care, creates a framework for the collaborative expansion of peer support, allowing us all to work together to enrich our community with this vital service.

Please pass SB3094 SD2.

Laurie Arial Tochiki, JD, Ph.D

Executive Director

Testimony in Support of Bill 3094 SB - Importance of Peer Support Specialists

Aloha,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Bill 3094 SB, emphasizing the crucial role that Peer Support Specialists play in our community. My name is Kimmy Takata, and I reside in Kaneohe, Hawaii. As a supporter of the Pu'a Foundation and someone passionate about the criminal justice system, I recognize the significance of initiatives like this in creating positive changes.

Over the past years, our community has witnessed the transformative impact of peer support. With over 50 men and women trained as Peer Support Specialists across the island, the positive influence on individuals seeking guidance and a path forward is undeniable. Peer support goes beyond mere assistance; it provides a sense of purpose, a lifeline for those navigating challenges and striving to rebuild their lives.

Lived experience is a unique and valuable gift, and individuals who have been through the criminal justice system bring a profound understanding to the support they provide. These trained Peer Support Specialists have become catalysts for change, witnessing tangible improvements in the lives of those they assist.

I am particularly excited about the Pacific Peer Connection, a burgeoning nonprofit dedicated to training individuals to offer support in various aspects, including resources and housing. This initiative aligns with the spirit of Bill 3094 SB, as it seeks to empower individuals to become pillars of support for their communities.

Supporting this bill is not just about endorsing a piece of legislation; it's a commitment to fostering a more compassionate and resilient community. By officially recognizing the importance of Peer Support Specialists, we acknowledge the potential for positive change and the invaluable contributions they make to the well-being of our fellow men and women.

Mahalo for considering my testimony, and I urge you to support Bill 3094 SB for the betterment of our community.

Mahalo,

Kimmy Takata

Pacific Peer Connection - CEO

LATE

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 5:46:52 PM
Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Jackson	Pacific Peer Connection	Support	In Person

Comments:

Subject: Strong Support for Bill 3094 SB: Recognizing the Crucial Role of Peer Support Specialists

Aloha,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Kimberly Jackson, and I am writing to express my strong support for Bill 3094 SB. As a Peer Support Specialist, I have witnessed firsthand the invaluable role that individuals with lived experience play in our efforts to decrease recidivism and crime rates in Hawaii.

Peer Support Specialists bring a unique perspective and connection to our communities that has been overlooked for far too long. It is through our shared experiences and understanding that we are able to bridge the gap and provide much-needed support to individuals within the criminal justice system.

Having spoken with numerous Youth Correctional Officers (YCOs) and Adult Correctional Officers (ACOs), both current and retired, I have consistently heard the same sentiment: what is missing is the connection. The high turnover rate among case managers, psychologists, and psychiatrists underscores the need for individuals who can relate on a deeper level, who have walked similar paths and faced similar challenges.

Peer Support Specialists offer that connection. We have navigated the system, experienced trauma, and grappled with the consequences of our choices. Our shared experiences enable us to offer guidance and support without judgment, instilling hope and empowering individuals to chart a path towards success.

For too long, we have adhered to the same approaches, expecting different outcomes. Peer Support Specialists with lived experience offer a fresh perspective and the potential for positive change. Who better to provide assistance with resources and housing than someone who has walked the same journey?

With each connection we make, we have the opportunity to cultivate growth within our community and drive meaningful reductions in recidivism and crime rates. There is immeasurable value in witnessing hope return to eyes that had once lost it, in nurturing self-confidence, and in witnessing the transformation of individuals as they embrace a brighter future.

I urge you to support Bill 3094 SB and to recognize the vital role of Peer Support Specialists in our ongoing efforts to foster positive change within our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Much Mahalo,

Kimberly Jackson



LATE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB3094, SD2

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
DATE: March 12, 2024; TIME: 9:15 A.M.
Via Video Conference - Conference Room 329
State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Aloha e Representative Lisa Marten, Chair, Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee on Human Services:


This testimony is in support of SB 3094, SD2 - RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS - which establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Appropriates funds for hiring an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support for the peer support specialist working group in carrying out its duties and compensation for peer support specialists on the working group for time spent on working group meetings and related work and travel expenses.

By way of background, the Pū'ā Foundation is a community-based non-profit organization that focuses on trauma, healing and justice work. We were created out of a powerful act of justice - through an apology, redress, reconciliation initiative of the United Church of Christ for their complicity in the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian government. We drive, 'Trauma to Transformation' programs for justice-involved women, girls and their families, especially Hawaiians. Our strategy to support women, and girls, especially Native Hawaiians that are dealing with system involvement, recovery issues, and trauma challenges is to start inside the prison or facility pre-transition, then connect resources post-transition - creating a seamless continuum of care. We have established key strategic public/private, faith-based, and community partnerships, and we incorporate peer support as a key trauma-informed care element. We currently lead the Peer Support Kōkua Project, which focuses on developing the peer support workforce. The program includes the following components: leadership development, internship, certification, employment placement, continued support, and professional development. We've been working with the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) since 2007; we were on the leadership team for the Trauma Informed Care Initiative at WCCC - 2011 & 2012; we led the Trauma Informed Care Initiative at Family Court, involving Kapolei Juvenile Detention Center, Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility & Home Maluhia Shelter - 2013, and we've been working at the Federal Detention Center since 2016. Through our experience in this area, Peer Support has become a focal point in our efforts to effectively connect resources to need for those exiting system involvement and reentering the community whether it be from prison, the youth facility, the detention center, court ordered programing, etc...

Establishing a working group to study this area would bring much needed attention to our Hawaii community about the effectiveness of peer support, all the while putting resources toward building up this identified area of best practice advocated for by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), as they have identified peer support as one of its six guiding principles of a trauma informed approach.

Thank you for your consideration, and the opportunity to provide testimony to support the passage of **SB3094, SD2**. Please contact me if there is anything else that I can provide.

Mahalo,



Toni Bissen, Executive Director Pū'ā Foundation
P.O. Box 11025, Honolulu, Hawaii 96828
Email: toni.bissen@puafoundation.net
Websites: www.puafoundation.org



SB3094 SD2 Peer Specialists

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Tuesday March 12, 2024, 9:15 Room 329

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB3094 SD2:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR 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, prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

Peer Specialists are people who have been successful in the recovery process and now help others experiencing behavioral health conditions

- Substance abuse.
- Psychiatric disorders including PTSD and depression.
- Trauma. They can especially help to address trauma.
- They have been trained to counsel or assist others.

We note that DOH: AMHD and now ADAD too had peer specialists and training programs behavioral health as well as co-occurring disorders.

Peer Specialists in all forms of behavioral health services add value by contributing to others their shared experience of recovery and are exceptionally good at addressing diverse viewpoints. They can positively and constructively challenge individuals and groups to help them in their recovery journey to improve.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions

Opportunity Youth Action Hawai‘i

March 12, 2024

House Committee on Human Services

Hearing Time: 9:15 AM

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 329

Re: SB3094 SD2, Relating to Peer Support Specialists

Aloha e Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Opportunity Youth Action Hawai‘i hui, we are writing in **strong support** of SB3094 SD2, relating to peer support specialists. This bill establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. It appropriates funds for hiring an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support for the peer support specialist working group in carrying out its duties and compensation for peer support specialists on the working group for time spent on working group meetings and related work and travel expenses. The bill declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded, and takes effect on 7/1/2112.

The inclusion of peer support specialists in mental health care has been show to be immensely beneficial. These individuals bring unique perspectives and experiences that traditional mental health professionals may not possess. By establishing a statewide framework for peer support specialists, we are acknowledging the importance of lived experience in mental health recovery and fostering a system that is more holistic and inclusive. These experiences introduce a wealth of empathy and understanding into a system that often feels deeply isolating. Further, peer support specialists can foster deeper relatability and trust by offering the ear of someone who has walked a similar path, and can then help break down barriers and build trust more quickly than with traditional mental health professionals.

The appropriation of funds for hiring an administrative facilitator to support the peer working group is essential, as this individual will play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth functioning of the group and in providing necessary support for its members. Compensation is also vital to recognize the valuable time and expertise the team members will contribute to this important initiative.

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 SB3094 SD2.



Our Mission

Increase Hawai'i's investments in its youngest keiki by collaborating with elected officials and serving as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to Hawai'i's youngest keiki and families.



Steering Committee

Honolulu County

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Greg Auberry
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Sulma Gandhi
Kahi Moreman
Angela Thomas



Contact Info

700 Bishop Street, Suite 1701
Honolulu, Hawai'i 93813

info@committokeiki.org
CommitToKeiki.org

Date: March 10th, 2024
To: House Committee on Human Services
Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Committee Members

From: Commit to Keiki
Re: Support for **SB3094 SD2**, Relating to Peer Support Specialist Working Group

Commit to Keiki strongly supports passage of SB3094 SD2, which would establish a working group to develop and make recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in the State.

Commit to Keiki has three key priorities to support early childhood development and the health and wellbeing of Hawai'i's youngest keiki and their families. Priorities include

1. Child Care and Early Learning
2. Early Childhood Mental Health
3. Family Violence Prevention

Peer support specialists are critical for our `ohana with keiki prenatal to age five. Parents and caregivers may be experiencing parenting challenges which put keiki at risk for abuse, they may be struggling with intimate partner violence or they may be working through substance abuse issues.

Peer support specialists provide the lived expertise to come alongside parents and caregivers to provide encouragement, expertise and lessons learned. Peer support specialists impact behavioral outcomes and play a critical role in preventing family violence, mental health and substance use challenges. Please invest **early** in our `ohana so that they get off to the right start. Not only does this help our keiki but we will save valuable, finite, downstream taxpayer dollars! What makes Peer-support Specialists so special is that they are trusted and are one of the most helpful strategies in ensuring our young families access the supports that they need. We strongly urge you to support **SB3094 SD2**.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

To: House Committee on Human Services
RE: SB3094 SD2 in support
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 329
March 12, 2024; 9:15 am

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT of Senate Bill 3094 SD2** relating to Relating to Peer Support Specialists.

SB3094 SD2 proposes the creation of a working group that will consist of state department decision-makers, community organizations, and people with lived experience to create a statewide framework to expand the role of peer support specialists within our state systems. The bill proposes to identify best practices to expand peer support opportunities in all state agencies, not just in the field of mental and behavioral health.

Peer support is one of the six guiding principles of trauma-informed care that has numerous positive behavioral outcomes. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA](#)) cites peer support as effective workers who provide non-clinical, strengths-based support in non-judgmental practices that advance recovery for those in similar situations. This would also create a framework to expand peer support in a collaborative manner, allowing state departments, community partners, and peers to identify collectively what they need to onboard peer support specialists in their departments, including training and certification.

Establishing a working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience would elevate the voices of those experts with lived experience in the child welfare system to lend their voices to the state in a trauma-informed, healing-centered way. It is time we listen to our community voices. Mahalo for your support for our community.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Mai Hall, M.Ed.

Children's Health Coordinator

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:52:19 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather Lusk	Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Committee on Human Services

Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, March 12, at 9:15 am

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 3094

From: Heather Lusk, Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

Dear Chair Martin and Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee,

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) **supports SB 3094** which would establish a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Peer support specialists have been shown to be very effective when properly trained and supported – and that is what SB 3094 would do, is create a standard across the islands and across disciplines.

HHHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

HHHRC has been hiring peers since our inception as we know that those who have walked the path previously can be the most effective supporters for those facing challenges. Over 80% of our workforce identifies as having lived experience and there are unique issues to supervising and empowering peers, getting paid for their services, and providing training and support that meets their needs. SB 3094 would, for the first time, create standards, best practices and collaboration amongst all of the entities supporting peer work in the islands and is much needed to support this growing field.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, LCSW, MSW

Executive Director

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

House Committee of Human Services
Friday, March 12, 2024
Conference Room 329.

IN SUPPORT
SB3094 Relating to Peer Support Specialist

Aloha Chair Lisa Marten, Vice Chair Terez Amato, and members of the Committee:

I am Caesare Santiago, a BSW Student at the University of Hawaii. I am testifying in **support of SB3094 Relating to Peer Support Specialist**

Peer Support Specialist provides opportunities to highlight the resilience and strengths of those who have been there, lived it, and seen it. This would allow effective role modeling through mentoring those with similar mental and/or behavioral health situations. Establishing a working group to collaborate in building the framework with intersectionality would give a diverse look to support the cause for both Peer Support Specialist and mentees with mental and behavioral health concerns. It is important to highlight that every situation is unique, but it is also very important to never feel alone, singled out, or excluded. Peer Support Specialist compensation would help those already oppressed populations. Appropriating funds are needed to help sustain programs aimed at improving health and well-being.

As a parent who has raised a child with mental and behavioral health concerns, the help and guidance I received helped my mental health. On the other hand, my child's concern then and now is, "You don't understand what it feels like". Peer Support Specialists can make a difference in that gap of understanding, and this is why I am in support of SB3094 Relating to Peer Support Specialist.

Thank you for this opportunity,
Caesare Santiago

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 7:22:37 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Derwin Teranishi	Hawaii Clubhouse Advocacy Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Derwin Teranishi, a member of the Hawaii Clubhouse Advocacy Coalition at the WAC. I'm in support of SB3094 SD2, which will give our peers the necessary guidance as a unified group, focussing on consistency in the attempts to service those in need towards a more fulfilling recovery process.. Establishing this working group will be encouraging to those in this field of service, allowing collaboration to further our individual growth. For myself, this gives more meaning to the role of service that I currently participate in, being a Certified FPS, PS and a trainer at this time. I believe this component is a needed piece to solidify all the efforts that the organizations with PS services are providing. I would appreciate your consideration to pass this bill, and allow this State of Hawaii to support all our Peers!

God Bless

Thank You,

Derwin Teranishi

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 8:48:24 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kacie Lambert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB3094 because I am currently a peer support for many of our Hawai'i youth involved in different systems such as foster care, mental health, criminal justice, and homelessness. I see the impact firsthand of having someone that has been through similar experiences being there to support you through hard times. The youth are heard and validated through peer support and are shown a different kind of support that other providers can not provide because they do not have that lived experience. Peer supports have the combination of training and first hand experience, making us a key and necessary factor in healing. Thank you for your time and consideration.

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 6:18:51 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Kaneshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am encouraged that a bill is advancing to set up a peer specialist working group.

I am a Hawaii Certified Peer Specialist. I have lived experience with a mental health condition and have gone through focused training to provide support to others who have similar challenges. I use my own experience to offer hope to others that it is possible to overcome labels tied to mental-health issues.

Since I am on Kauai, I went through peer specialist training online that was provided by the state Department of Health, Adult Mental Health Division. I also set up an internship at the Kauai Community Mental Health Center Branch.

While at the center, I was held to the same confidentiality standards as everyone else, and I passed the mandatory Health Department HIPAA training.

I am trained to inspire individuals to regain control of his or her own life, while at the same time I realize that I am not a replacement for case managers, social workers and psychiatrists. Instead, I collaborate with mental health professionals to see the person and not the diagnosis.

I would like the working group to explore Medicaid reimbursement rates for peer support services. That way, grants or other state monies could be used for other projects and programs.

Additionally, I would like the working group to explore how to best get peers paid for the work that they do. For example, should peers be onboarded as employees, or should they be vendors?

Big Mahalo for looking into a bill to start up a peer specialist working group.

Cynthia Kaneshiro

Kapaa, Kauai

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 1:45:21 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the House Committee on Human Services,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB3094 SD2. I meet with the Hawai'i Clubhouse Advocacy Coalition weekly and am a board member of Friends of Ko'olau Clubhouse. These members are very special and I have witnessed how supportive and caring they are towards their peers **ALL** the time. It's incredible- we need more of this in our society.

As people who are challenged with mental illness, it is imperative that they have the resources they need to support each other emotionally. Some of our members are currently serving as Peer Support Specialists and truly make a difference in their peers' lives. We need more of them and this bill would be an important step in making that happen.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 8:58:34 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janae Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Peer Support Specialist is very important in our Islands and communities for various reasons. We are here to ensure that our youth's and young adult's voices are being heard, acknowledged, and valued. In our society today, we have kids within systems, and not, that have had their voices "taken" or abused. By us peer specialist being able to walk alongside our youth and young adults, will make a bigger impact than any of us can imagine.

God bless and thank you for your time,

Janae Davis

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:09:40 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daysha-Lynn Morris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A lot of people dont understand how important peer support really is. During a vulnerable time in a youths life the last person they want to hear from is an adult and them telling the youth what to do. Having peer support is having someone around the youths age with there own personal expereince relating to the youth or something that is similar. When I was in foster care I wish I had peer support someone who actually understood how I was feeling in the moment. All the feelings of being alone and feeling like no one truly understands you and your situation. Peer support is starting to be looked into more throughally and it needs to be nationwide. Peer support needs to be professionalized and looked up on. Having a peer support as a young adult or youth can build confidnce and encouragment.

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:54:37 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinna Sosa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

This testimony is in support of SB 3094, SD2 - RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS - which establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. As a supervisor of youth peer support staff, I've witnessed both the power of peer support work in our communities and of having lived experience voices in decision-making spaces. Youth peer support staff are able to connect and engage with youth in ways that often no one else on their service team is able to do. By sharing their own experiences with services and encouraging the youth in a safe and nonjudgmental way, peer supports are able to inspire hope for the young people they work with. The establishment of a working group will help ensure that our peer supports have the needed structure and support to do their work effectively.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Corinna Sosa

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 10:03:51 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Ramos-Duh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Tiffany Ramos-Duh and I am writing to humbly ask you to pass SB3094 Relating to Peer Support Specialists.

I feel that it is important to have a statewide framework for peer support. Peer Support is so much more than just a friend, a support group or a therapist. Peer support is sharing experiences and making people feel heard.

I currently work as a Youth Peer Partner and youth that I have worked with often feel like they are not heard and that their feelings with that they are going through don't matter. It is important to keep Peer Support growing strong and creating a framework because it allows more people to use their experiences to help others. I truly believe that hurt people, hurt people. And that healed people can heal people. In my work, I have healed so tremendously with my mental health while helping young people heal through their traumas and their mental health as well. Please pass SB3094, it will positively impact the generations to come and those who currently can benefit from this framework.

Mahalo,

Tiffany Ramos-Duh

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 3:36:58 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erica Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. No. 3094 SD2 Relating to Peer Support Specialists

My name is Erica Wilson and my current role is serving as a Coordinator to a program that employs Peer Support Specialists. Prior to that, I have worked as a Community Health Worker serving individuals and families statewide who were experiencing circumstances such as homelessness, substance use, perinatal substance use disorder (PSUD), domestic violence, and other social determinants of health. I have also served in previous healthcare administrative and social service roles gaining knowledge ranging from medical billing, medical office management, working for a health plan (Medicaid MCO), and also on the frontline as a MedQuest Kokua for the state assisting individuals and their families in accessing care. I have seen firsthand the efficacy of Peer Support Specialists in our community. I have also experienced how individuals being served have a natural gravitation and are more receptive to accepting assistance and information from someone who has once been in their shoes. I have also witnessed how much effort and funds have been invested into our communities from multiple government agencies and then witness how a Peer Specialist's lived expertise in navigating these systems alleviate financial burden leading to multi-system cost avoidance. If this bill is passed, it would be a great start to explore ways to sustain this work, scale down duplicate efforts across agencies, and work upstream.

I have personally witnessed lives transformed, lives repurposed into the greater good of the community, families thriving in unity, and hearts healed through the work of Peer Support. I firmly SUPPORT SB 3094 SD2 and encourage the legislature to support Peer Support Specialists in Hawai'i.

LATE

SB-3094-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 4:40:03 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammi Gumban	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha My name is Tammi Kahookele, testifying in support of this bill. As a lived experience individual and working experience as a Social Worker in a Youth Correctional Facility. We have recognized the critical issues many of our youth face today built on the lack of family support, life skills, social skills, mental, physical and emotional well-being.

Considering, the many recent influx of violent crimes hitting our streets with young adults averaging ages from 18-25- it is obvious a bill like peer support services can play a critical role in care.

Peer support specialists do the work based on real life experiences, passion for those in need of support and because they care. Please support this bill and encourage you to be apart of the solution.

Mahalo!