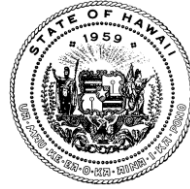


JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA
MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I



RICHARD RIES, Psy.D., M.Ed.
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
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
in SUPPORT of H.B. 1300 H.D. 2 S.D. 1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.

CHAIRPERSON

Richard I. Ries PsyD, MSEd

1st VICE CHAIRPERSON

Katherine Aumer, PhD

2nd VICE CHAIRPERSON

Kathleen Merriam, LCSW CSAC

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Jean Okudara, CSAC

Ray Rice, MEd

Mary Pat Waterhouse

Kristin Will, MACL, CSAC

EX-OFFICIO:

Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director
Behavioral Health Administration

WEBSITE:

scmh.hawaii.gov

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doh.scmhchairperson@
doh.hawaii.gov

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii law, HRS §334-10, establishes 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 SCMH strongly supports efforts to sustainably increase the pool of qualified mental health providers in Hawaii. This measure would not only increase the number of mental health providers in Hawaii during a time when mental health needs are growing, but also provide the necessary training and oversight important for those graduating from programs in Hawaii.

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.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
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JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, April 4, 2023
10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 211 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 1300, H.D. 2, S.D. 1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rochelle Araki, and I am the Executive Officer for the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division's (Division), Marriage and Family Therapy Program, Mental Health Counselors Licensing Program, and Social Worker Licensing Program. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) beginning July 1, 2024: establish a provisional or associate level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) require psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; (3) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances; and (4) appropriate funds.

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

H.B. 1300, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, requires the Department to grant, upon application and payment of proper fees, provisional licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist and mental health counselor to those who meet certain requirements to obtain reimbursement for services rendered. While the Department appreciates the intent of this measure, the creation of this new license type appears contrary to the provisions of Hawaii Revised Statutes section 26H-2, which provides, in part, that “the regulation and licensing of professions and vocations shall be undertaken only where reasonably necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of consumers of the services; the purpose of regulation shall be the protection of the public welfare and not that of the regulated profession or vocation.” A new licensure scheme should not be implemented solely for the purpose of reimbursement. There may be unintended consequences of regulating or requiring licensure of a currently exempted population of professionals who provide mental health services. For example, the cost of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed to consumers.

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

The Department is unclear whether the requirement for provisional licensure in Part II and III only applies to new applications received beginning July 1, 2024. Currently interns are exempted from licensure; those practicing under the exemptions of licensure would automatically be subject to license requirements on July 1, 2024, thereby, causing possible disruptions in patient care.

Accordingly, as noted in the prior Committee’s decision making, the Department was asked to propose language for consideration by this Committee regarding interns currently practicing. Should this measure be enacted, the Department proposes the that section 35, subsection (2) be amended to read “Parts II, III, IV, and V shall take

effect on July 1, 2025.” This will ensure that currently practicing interns have ample time to secure licensure without disruption in patient care.

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

- a. To establish, recruit, and hire an office assistant V (OA-V) to process provisional license applications expeditiously. The sum of \$67,876 or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this position.
- b. To make the appropriate updates to its internal database. The required updates may take upwards of 500 support hours to create these new license types and the associated requirements. These hours would be added onto the already extensive daily work of the Division’s developer, program analyst, and others outside of the division. Note that these updates would require additional support and maintenance outside of the budget request being made through Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs’ request. The sum of \$75,000 or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this request.

Should the Committee consider passing this bill, the Department respectfully requests further a delayed implementation date of July 1, 2025, to ensure that the Division has the appropriate time to: (1) establish, recruit, and hire the personnel granted by this measure; (2) create the necessary applications and make appropriate updates to its database; and (3) to ensure that those individuals currently participating in internships obtain licensure timely without disruption to patient care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

April 4, 2023 10:30 A.M. - VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE – Rm 229

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1300 HD2 SD1

The National Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) strongly supports HB1300 HD2 SD1 Relating to Mental Health, which establishes associate level licenses for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists; and clarifies the ability of a Licensed Social Worker to bill under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

This bill does several important things. It creates an Associate level of Licensure for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists, based on the current LSW level of licensure for social workers, which will allow for a mechanism by which clinicians who have completed their graduate school courses can be compensated while they are receiving their required period of supervised practice.

It also clarifies that a LSW social worker can bill insurance under the clinical license of the supervising LCSW.

These steps will create the opportunity to open up more clinicians in supervision to see clients in the very near future, which is vital given the ongoing pandemic and the current shortage of clinical level mental health providers, and long wait times to get in to therapy as a client.

It also opens the door to more diverse candidates in the field of mental health. Few people can afford to work for two years either unpaid or underpaid, as they complete their clinical supervision, which leads to an overrepresentation in our profession of people from affluent backgrounds and an underrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the fields of social work, Psychology, Mental Health Counseling, and Marriage and Family Therapy.

This bill can help encourage people who have completed their graduate education in Hawai'i to stay and work here, if they can receive a living wage. We strive to educate students in cultural competency and the importance of understanding the community in which they practice, to create clinicians who will thrive here, then do very little to help keep them in state, after graduation.

It also provides the opportunity for those in supervision to get experience working in private practices and doing more direct therapy, under supervision, which serves to strengthen them as clinicians when they reach the level of independent practice.

Suggested Amendments to Strengthen Purpose/Legislative Intent

The only black-letter amendments we suggest is to clarify the language on page 45-46 of this bill relating to the supervision of social workers seeking licensure as a “Licensed Clinical Social Worker.” We prefer the language of a substantially and substantively similar bill - **HB1242, on page 47, line 12 – page 48, line 4** – which makes clear that billing must be done through the supervising Licensed Clinical Social Worker. This is important as there is currently confusion in insurance billing practices.

*“Services provided by a supervised social worker who is working to obtain post masters clinical social work experience under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker or individual identified in section 467E-7(a)(3)(D) in order to qualify for a license as a licensed clinical social worker shall be eligible for insurance reimbursement **through the insurance of the applicable client through reimbursements of claims submitted by the supervising licensed clinical social worker while listed under the supervising licensed clinical social worker's treatment authority and supervision; provided that the licensed supervising clinical social worker's services shall be eligible for reimbursement as a contracted provider; provided further that the billed rate for the licensed social worker shall be commensurate with the requisite level of training.**”*

We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in HB1242, explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. We therefore **respectfully request that HB1242's purpose language be included in an HD1**, in addition to two additional enumerated purposes:

- *Clarifying in law that Associate Level practitioners would not be allowed to do anything they aren't already permitted to do now, except have their services billed through the insurance covering their supervisor's treatment and supervision; and*
- *Enabling and encouraging post-degree, pre-licensed mental health practitioners to stay in Hawaii to complete the required hours of supervised work for full licensure – thereby promoting a diverse pool of homegrown providers that can best meet the needs of Hawaii's people.*

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

Sincerely,

 , MSW, LCSW

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LCSW

Executive Director,

National Association of Social Workers- Hawai'i Chapter



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

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

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

April 4, 2023 10:30 A.M. - VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE – Rm 229

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1300 HD2 SD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports HB1300 HD2 SD1 as a critical tool in improving access and meeting the overwhelming demand for quality mental health services, particularly during and following the prolonged pandemic. Here's a snapshot of recently recorded ratios of clients/patients to mental health providers in Hawai'i:

Hawai'i 320:1
Honolulu 370:1
Kauai 480:1
Maui 550:1

Moloka'i has no registered providers.

Obviously, this demand far exceeds the viable supply of mental health providers. Among other provisions to remove administrative barriers and increase the speed with which trained and qualified practitioners can enter the workforce, HB1300 HD2 SD1 would establish provisional/associate-level licensure requirements for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs), Mental Health Counselors, and Psychologists. This would ensure a regulatory framework that would encourage relevant and quality training to associate-level providers by authorizing insurance reimbursement for supervised care provided by these post-degree/pre-licensed mental health professionals during the 12 to 24-month period in which they are completing required supervised practice hours under the mentorship and guidance of an independently licensed mental health professional.

In 23 other states, associate-level licensure is already established as common practice. This regulatory approach not only expands clients' access to providers, it also creates a viable career path for would-be providers: Hawai'i residents interested in pursuing careers as mental health professionals (of which there is a 10,000-15,000 shortage), but who might otherwise not be able to actualize such a career due to outdated statutes that often force post-graduate/pre-licensed providers to work for sub-par wages or even pro bono (while also paying a supervisor to oversee their work, costing MFT supervisees anywhere from \$10,000-\$30,000 for 1,000 hours of supervised direct care during their 2-year post-degree period) and/or in contexts that do not provide sufficiently relevant clinical experience (e.g., prisons, substance abuse centers, case management, etc.) to ensure providers are ready for independent licensure.

Phone: (808) 291-5321 **Email:** hawaiianislandsmfts@gmail.com **Address:** PO Box 698 Honolulu, HI 96709 **Website:** www.hawaiimft.org **Social Media:** FB - @mfthawaii, IG - @hawaiimft

This bill would update Hawai'i's licensing statutes in ways that would not only modernize our processes, but ultimately improve the quality and utilization of mental health care provided in our state by creating a more robust system of clinical accountability/training and a financially viable career path for local would-be providers who have a deep understanding of local cultures/customs and who in turn, may be better able to connect with clients, who in turn will be more likely to actually utilize available mental health services.

Moreover, this bill will reduce the loss of potential future mental health professionals to other careers or one of the other 23 states that have already modernized their licensing laws. In turn, this will contribute to the state economy through associate licensing fees, taxes from wages earned by associate-level licensees, and local purchases made by these licensees.

Overall, many aspects of our mental health system are deeply flawed, understaffed, and are in no way prepared to manage the onslaught of mental health issues that the general population are experiencing during and after this pandemic. The consequences of this pandemic, both short- and long-term, in terms of mental health, could be significant and could weaken the Hawai'i health care system.

If we don't develop the means to stave off and/or treat these mental health issues, individuals and families will suffer even more than they already have/do. In all areas of life, untreated mental health issues can become chronic and with crippling, long-term effects – for individuals, families, and communities.

These circumstances call for a change in the paradigm and practices of mental health care in Hawai'i. Our current model of mental health care does not adequately address the complex challenges of modern living. Let's re-vision current models of mental health care delivery by learning from other states and being creative and flexible in how we provide mental health services. To protect our community now and in the future, let's take appropriate action now. Mental health care cannot be an afterthought.

The only amendments to this bill we would recommend is to incorporate the **purpose language of HB1242**, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawaii, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already allowed to do; as well as **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing.**

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Souza, Jr., LMFT, DMFT". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. John Souza, Jr., LMFT, DMFT, President
The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy



Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521-8995

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

April 4, 2023 10:30 A.M. - VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE – Rm 229

The Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) strongly supports HB1300 HD2 SD1 as a critical tool in meeting the burgeoning demand for quality mental health services – and is especially timely as the emotional and mental toll of the pandemic and its associated hardships is felt by all our residents, prolonged now for three years. The aftermath effect on our public behavioral health systems is immeasurable.

This bill expands access to much-needed high quality mental health services provided by local practitioners, and will significantly increase the speed with which trained, qualified, credentialed, and culturally cognizant practitioners can enter the workforce and meet Hawaii's demands. There is a critical shortage of mental health professionals in Hawaii, particularly in rural areas; and this bill helps to reduce some arbitrary and/or administrative obstacles to practicing here.

To become licensed as a psychologist, Hawaii Revised Statutes requires candidates to have completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) in psychology including practicum experience comprised of a full time one-year psychology internship; followed by at least one year of supervised practice experience after completing the degree; and then a passing score on a rigorous national examination.

This proposal helps to alleviate several financial hardships psychology trainees in Hawaii typically face while on this path. New professionals seeking to complete their hours of supervised practice are having tremendous difficulty managing financially - due to Hawaii's very high cost of living.

The associate licensing framework in this bill will authorize insurance reimbursement for work done by pre-licensed, "post-doc" psychology trainees. Post-docs often work in an agency or other setting where they are supervised closely by a licensed psychologist, but insurance plans vary greatly on whether they will reimburse the agency or supervisor for services provided in this way. Some post-docs end up working for free, while maintaining other jobs to survive. Many leave the state – where associate-level licensure is already in place.

Another issue that causes financial hardship and delay during this post-doctoral period is the timing of the license application process. Currently, according to the Board of Psychology's administrative rules, applicants must complete their 1-year post-doctoral experience; apply for licensure; then be "seated" for the required examination (the EPPP); then pass it before they can be licensed. This process can lead to a many-month delay before they are allowed to practice as a psychologist. Many licensure candidates apply to take the exam in another state (incurring further personal expense) so that they can expedite the board of psychology review process by having their passing grade in hand when their application is reviewed by the Hawaii Board. Accordingly, the HD2 of this proposal required the board to allow

licensure candidates to take the exam as soon as they complete their doctorate. We therefore respectfully ask the legislature to continue considering that approach as this measure advances.

This bill also addresses unnecessary administrative barriers experienced by state-employed psychology post-docs. Current law allows non-licensed individuals who have earned their doctoral degree to be hired into state psychologist positions before licensure; however, these employees must obtain licensure within two years of hire, and then cease practicing if the license is not obtained in that time period. The state has interpreted this to mean they must be terminated from their state position if this occurs.

During the pandemic, the Board of Psychology did not meet for a prolonged period to approve several candidates' licenses, and several state-employed psychologists lost their jobs due to no fault of their own. Of those terminated included practitioners at the state hospital and in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division. This is a wholly avoidable hardship for these individuals, and the clients they were serving. The language proposed in this bill would allow the board to give a state-employed psychologist more time to obtain their license under such extenuating circumstances; and would also help others who may need more time due to, for example, the need for maternity or other medical leave.

The only amendments to this bill we would recommend is to incorporate the **purpose language of HB1242**, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawaii, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already allowed to do; as well as **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing**.

The pandemic has had devastating effects not only to our public health system and economies, but to our collective mental health. The disruptions, anxieties, depression, substance abuse, and chronic stress that COVID has created in our lives have brought many in our community to the brink of emotional collapse. The need for mental health services could not be more apparent or pressing; and we must all do what is necessary to improve access to professional treatment. We all deserve access to quality mental health treatment – and this bill is a highly effective, low-cost way of addressing this need which is in keeping with modern regulatory approaches in other jurisdictions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill, and for your commitment to Hawaii's mental health.

Sincerely,



Alex Lichton, Ph.D.

Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee

Testimony of the Board of Psychology

**Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, April 4, 2023
10:30 a.m.**

Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

**On the following measure:
H.B. 1300, H.D. 2, S.D. 1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Fernandez, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Psychology (Board). The Board offers comments on Part IV of the bill only.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish a provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) require psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; (3) allow the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists; (4) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances; and (5) appropriate funds.

The Board offers the following comments:

1. The Board appreciates the S.D.1's amendments made to page 37, lines 18-21, and the removal of other unnecessary language as requested.
2. The Board acknowledges the time and funds required to implement the license types created by this bill. The Board supports funding and positions for the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to hire necessary personnel and update its internal database as crucial to implement this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2023 6:08:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wilson Ho Yin Cheh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Wilson Ho Yin Cheh, MFT-651

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2023 10:27:23 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heidi Smoot	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,
Heidi Smoot

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2023 1:00:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jillian Lommori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jillian Lommori

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2023 2:53:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kresta Kay Painter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As an MFT associate I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. **The fact I am not currently able to work and bill insurance is financially devastating on many levels. Not to mention the hundreds of community members I could be helping if I were able to bill insurance.** This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighboring islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. **I live on Kauai and more therapists are desperately needed!** This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging the utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kresta Painter

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2023 6:46:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Kay Lowe, LMFT

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2023 7:20:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Anderson- Leonard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide my written testimony supporting **HB 1300 HD2 SD1**, which will establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances. Requires psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination. Authorizes insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances.

All the Hawaiian Islands have struggled for years with a shortage of mental health practitioners/professionals, especially after COVID-19. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly neighboring islands, to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

This bill will help support those seeking mental health care instead of being placed on a waiting list by improving available services. This can be life-saving. Please support this bill.

Thank you for your time.

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2023 8:20:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thelma Heath	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

04/01/2023

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighboring islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

[Thelma Heath a Veteran, A single Mother]

BACKGROUND

Help improve access to quality mental health services by supporting legislation for Associate-level Licensure, and insurance reimbursement for supervised services provided by trainees in Psychology, Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling.

HB1300 HD2 establishes provisional or associate level licensure requirements for early career mental health professionals and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances, among other provisions that remove administrative barriers and increase the speed with which trained, qualified, and credentialed practitioners can enter the workforce.

Former Congressional Candidate, Beth Fukumoto, authored [this piece in Civil Beat](#) where she highlights HB1300 as the bill that "**would provide the most immediate relief**" to our mental health crisis

MAHALO!!!

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 7:22:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik Acuna	Testifying for Erik E Acuna, LCSW LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services. As a private practice clinician, I see firsthand how difficult access is to our community. Regularly, I have difficulty referring to other clinicians because everyone is completely full and unable to serve our community any further. We need a system that increases our pool of providers.

Thank you for your consideration,

Erik Acuna

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 8:41:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support passing bill HB1300 HD2 SD1. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker & Certified Substance Abuse Counselor currently working as the only psychotherapist at a non-profit agency. I have turned away 8 referrals in the past month due to not having the capacity to see more clients on my caseload. I am motivated to help other social workers move forward towards their licensure but funding their position is challenging since insurance cannot reimburse their services.

It has historically been a challenge to access mental health and substance use services in a timely manner. Many people have to wait over 1 month to be seen due to lack of providers. This leads to deteriorating mental health, relapses, giving up on searching for help, overdosing, and suicide. Passing this bill would help our so many people connect to services more efficiently by expanding the pool of trained providers. It would help decrease systemic barriers to our community in need and to those who want to provide therapeutic services as a career.

Thank you for your time and consideration on passing this bill,

Natalia Werkoff

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 10:32:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judi Steinman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of the bill to allow Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals HB1300 HD2 SD1 and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 10:32:19 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Juarez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Teresa Juarez

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 11:20:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anita Trubitt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am greatly in support of this bill which will significantly increase the number of mental health professionals to serve the increasing need for services throughout the community. I urge you to support and pass this much-needed bill!

Anita Trubitt

520 Papalani Street

Kailua, HI 96734

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 11:49:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. We mental health providers on Kauai are critically stressed with a level of demand never seen by me (I have practiced here for 22 years). This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Judith C. White, Psy.D.

HI Licensed Psychologist #665

Kapaa, HI

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 2:15:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy Rote	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to consider HB1300. Please support this critical piece of legislation for our community. For the past year and a half I have been part of the UH Hilo Mental Health Counseling graduate program working with a diverse graduate student population from across our state, including Maui, O‘ahu and the Big Island. I decided to pursue this second graduate degree after seeing the mental health needs of the students I work with increase yearly for the past 10 years. I already completed a doctorate degree and have over 25 years of working with young college aged adults.

Most recently I have been working with members of our community from all of the islands, of all ages and backgrounds, remotely and seeing the mental health issues our community faces daily. It has been enlightening to work in our community and hear first-hand the struggles so many Hawai‘i residents face. To say there is a dire need of mental health professionals is an understatement. The mental health struggles of our community members are real and alarming. The calls to request a therapist are daily with no openings with licensed professionals. Everyone I have shadowed and worked with have completely filled schedules with no openings. Most mental health professional share similar stories of having no openings and wait lists. The ability to find mental health professional is limited and greatly needed on every island.

HB1300 would help increase and retain mental health professional in Hawai‘i. The majority of the graduate students in the program are paying for their education in the counseling program and volunteering hours to gain the required counseling experience under licensed professionals. The soon to be graduates struggle to survive in Hawai‘i like so many of our residents. The fact is that some are looking to complete their licensing requirements in other states that are more affordable where they will be compensated for their time and work. Many other states already have similar bills as HB1300. This bill will allow private practices to employ provisional licensed individuals and keep mental health professional home where they are needed.

Let’s all work together to address the mental health needs of our community and the shortage of providers available to them. It is not easy for someone to ask for help when they are struggling. The last thing anyone should face when having the courage to seek help is a line to see a provider. Please support HB1300. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 3:59:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jessica Wong

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 5:00:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kendyl Oshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kendyl Oshiro and I am a third-year doctoral graduate student at the Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology (HSPP) at Chaminade University of Honolulu. I strongly support the Associate Licensing bill and respectfully ask the committee to pass this bill. This bill will not only increase the pool of service providers to meet the mental health needs of the community, but also encourage people to stay in Hawaii. Due to the high cost of living and high student loan debt, this bill will help to alleviate some of the financial burdens students have to face after graduation. This bill definitely would have helped me after I graduated with my masters degree and before I became licensed mental health counselor, so I know this bill will be highly applicable and beneficial to many people.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kendyl Oshiro

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 9:04:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tomoko Hotema	Testifying for Xplor Counseling	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support the Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands to meet the demands of mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training, cultivate local employment, and encourage postgraduate folks to remain here to provide services for the unique needs within Hawai'i.

Further, this measure will benefit more people seeking services by improving access to therapy services.

I appreciate your time reading my testimony and mahalo for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely, Tomoko Hotema

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 9:06:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allana Coffee, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

The last 3 years have shown us the importance of having skilled mental health providers. Now that folks are finally willing to seek therapy, we should make sure there a therapist available.

Thank you for your consideration,

Allana Coffee, Ph.D.

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 9:46:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Costello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of the Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighboring islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging the utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kevin M. Costello BSW

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 10:39:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mailani Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community. This proposal would definitely help pre-licenced future clinican like me who hope to service the people in our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mailani Chang

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 3:27:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan Peterson

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 7:17:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Fahy PhD PsyD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I hope you pass this bill, because it can change the opportunities for senior clinicians to teach, share and mentor younger clinicians into the mental health community here in Hawaii. I am a very senior clinician and would've loved to mentor, train and guide some younger clinicians. But it was not available here in Hawaii and I will be retiring soon. In California this has been available for 40 years! Please pass this bill, so that the many junior therapists here in Hawaii will have proper guidance and the State will gain more therapists who can help the patients here. This is critical to the development of our profession.

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 8:49:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacie M Burke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am submitting testimony in support of Associate Licensning of Mental Health Professionals and ask this committee to please pass this long overdue bill.

This proposal would expand access to all in need of mental health services, particularly to those on our neighbor islands, where providers are scarce.

This bill would also improve on the job training for locals who would like to remain on the islands. Homegrown talent is a vital resource when it comes to meeting the unique needs of our community.

Mahalo for your time

Stacie Burke

'Aiea, Hawai'i

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 8:55:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karin A Stoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. How else can we support our students, interns and newly graduated social workers to progress in their fields. In addition we are desperate for additional social workers to provide these much needed services. Much Aloha, Karin Stoll, LCSW, DCSW

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 9:28:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Akoni Kanaele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Akoni Kanaele, MFT 331

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 9:30:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. John Souza, Jr.	Testifying for Elemental Guidance, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would only serve to improve the care available to our community by expanding the pool of providers on all islands (particularly on neighbor islands) to help meet the incredibly high demand for mental health services.

This bill would also improve the training, cultivation, and retention of homegrown mental health professionals by giving them a viable career path.

In conclusion, this measure will benefit those seeking services, and those providing services, improving access to and encouraging utilization of critical mental health services in Hawai'i.

Thank you for your consideration,

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 9:59:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angelina Yamaguchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. As a recent graduate currently accruing hours towards licensure, I am already seeing clients and this bill would help provide further access for clients. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Angelina Yamaguchi

808-398-8284

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 10:00:49 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danni Sutana Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Danni Gardner

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 10:03:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean W. Scanlan, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sean

HB-1300-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 10:09:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Please help our community by opening space for more providers who are working on their full licensure. It's time!

Thank you for your consideration,

Dr. Vishwani Ram-Souza, LMFT

✧ Sharon K. Usagawa MSW, DCSW, LCSW ✧
970 N. Kalaheo Avenue Suite C201 Kailua, Hawaii 96734
ph: 808-386-8523 email: skulcsw@aol.com

February 22, 2023

Aloha,

I am in support of HB1300 HD1, Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals (MHPs) and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. As a practicing Clinician in Private Practice, I am constantly having to turn away clients seeking mental health support and it is heart-breaking. I hate turning people away in their time of need and I often hear the same sentiment from many of my colleagues. In addition, I also provide Supervision and Training for Graduate Student Interns as well as Professional Interns seeking their Clinical License. Given the lack of availability for many of these Interns to obtain their direct practice hours for Licensure; for years now, I have offered them as alternatives to clients that are unable to locate a Licensed MHP. It has helped to address the shortage of MHPs available as well as provide opportunity for Licensure Candidates to assist in obtaining their hours. This option is not very viable as most people are already having to work a full-time job, and it also takes up a lot of my voluntary and donated time where I could work with more clients as well.

This proposal would support those issues on many levels on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands where the need is often greater due to smaller resources. This bill would also improve and incentivize on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community. Lastly, this bill would also provide more relief for the Providers currently working to support the community. I have witnessed an increase in burn-out in some of my colleagues due to the burden of sometimes over-extending themselves or getting overwhelmed with the high need.

The demand for mental health services has risen to a record high, following our 3 years, going on 4 now of the pandemic, economic shutdown and slow recovery. It was predicted that mental health would be the ensuing "wave" of the pandemic. We've been in it and need to address this more quickly and efficiently to prevent even greater problems from developing.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this very important matter.



Sharon K. Usagawa LCSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

LATE

Aloha,

I am in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Joy Quick, MA, LMFT, CSAC