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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that children are facing  
2 a mental health crisis in Hawaii. According to the 2022 Kids  
3 Count Data Book, published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation,  
4 approximately 2,200 more children in Hawaii struggled with  
5 anxiety and depression in 2020, a twenty-three per cent increase  
6 compared with 2016. According to the state department of  
7 health, from 2016 to 2020, suicide was the fourth leading cause  
8 of fatal injury for children aged fifteen years old and under.

9           The legislature additionally finds that rural communities  
10 face severe challenges in meeting mental health care needs  
11 because of a lack of access to critical mental health  
12 facilities. On the southwestern part of Hawaii island,  
13 communities like Ocean View, Miloii, Naalehu, and Pahala lack  
14 access to basic health care infrastructure. The Ocean View  
15 region in particular is one of the fastest growing areas in the  
16 United States, with the 2010 United States Census reporting a  
17 population of 4,437 persons in the region, more than double the



1 2,178 population as reported in the 2000 census. Despite the  
2 growing community, however, the lack of health care  
3 infrastructure has not been addressed, as there are no health  
4 care facilities in Ocean View and the nearest hospitals are in  
5 Kona and Kau, both a significant distance from Ocean View.

6 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the  
7 department of health to conduct a feasibility study for the  
8 establishment of an outpatient mental health facility for  
9 children and adolescents living in the Ocean View region of  
10 Hawaii island, including in the communities of Ocean View,  
11 Milolii, Naalehu, and Pahala.

12 SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall conduct a  
13 feasibility study for the establishment of an outpatient mental  
14 health facility for children and adolescents in the Ocean View  
15 region of Hawaii island.

16 (b) The study shall examine ways to efficiently address  
17 mental health service gaps for children and adolescents living  
18 in the Ocean View region of Hawaii island, including in the  
19 communities of Ocean View, Milolii, Naalehu, and Pahala.

20 (c) The department of health shall submit a report of its  
21 findings and recommendations, including any proposed



1 legislation, to the legislature and governor no later than  
2 twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of  
3 2024.

4 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 17 2023



# H.B. NO. 81

**Report Title:**

Mental Health Services; Outpatient Services; Children and Adolescents; Department of Health; Study; Ocean View; Hawaii Island

**Description:**

Requires the department of health to conduct a feasibility study for the establishment of an outpatient mental health facility for children and adolescents living in the Ocean View region of Hawaii island, including in the communities of Ocean View, Milolii, Naalehu, and Pahala.

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