
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 research on health
2 and safety reveals that mental illness is one of the most
3 pressing challenges humanity is facing today. The prevalence of
4 both acute and chronic mental illnesses has been on the rise in
5 the State and globally over the past two decades. Untreated
6 mental illness is one of the top predictors of suicide,
7 substance abuse, incarceration, and adult disability. This is
8 especially concerning for historically marginalized and
9 under-resourced communities, which are at significantly higher
10 risk of mental illness and also have more limited access to
11 mental health education, resources, and support. Mental illness
12 at the individual level compounds across communities and leads
13 to negative statewide outcomes, including increased joblessness,
14 homelessness, domestic violence, violent crime, and school
15 dropout rates.

16 The legislature further finds that research conducted over
17 the past fifty years in the fields of psychology, public health,



1 neuroscience, and organizational development demonstrate the
2 critical importance of a tiered approach to comprehensively
3 address statewide mental health concerns and provide every
4 individual with the skills and resources they need to take care
5 of themselves, their families, and their broader ecosystems.
6 Tier 1 mental health support services provide skills training,
7 curricula, and programming to all stakeholders of an
8 organization such as schools, community centers, police and fire
9 departments, medical institutions, and other first responder
10 facilities. Tier 1 mental health support services provide a
11 common vocabulary and set of wellness practices that members of
12 the organization collectively share to promote a safe and
13 healthy organizational culture for everyone. Tier 2 mental
14 health support services recognize that certain populations
15 within an organization may be at higher risk for certain mental
16 illnesses than others, and so these groups require specialized
17 training, support, and skill-building that is culturally
18 contextualized to best support the specific needs of the high-
19 risk group. Tier 2 mental health support services therefore
20 exist to provide additional specialized group support
21 interventions. Taken together, these tiers of mental health



1 support cover the core mental health needs of individuals,
2 groups, organizations, and communities.

3 The legislature further finds that a comprehensive system
4 of mental health support services on a statewide level requires
5 the seamless integration of tier 1 and 2 mental health support
6 services. Tier 1 mental health support services benefit public
7 institutions through whole-organization tier 1 mental health
8 support training for students, school staff, firefighters,
9 police officers, medical staff, and other first responder
10 groups. Higher risk groups within each of these organizations
11 benefit from tier 2 mental health support services that use
12 culturally responsive approaches. Overall, mentally well
13 individuals create safe and healthy communities, which further
14 promote a safe and healthy state for all citizens.

15 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

16 (1) Establish the state of well-being project and a
17 timeline for the project to:

18 (A) Assess current tiers of mental health support
19 services; and

20 (B) Enhance existing well-being programming and, when
21 non-existent, build out culturally grounded and



1 community-informed well-being programming to
 2 establish mental health support services for key
 3 stakeholder communities across the State; and
 4 (2) Appropriate funds for mental health specialist
 5 positions within the office of wellness and
 6 resilience.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 27, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
 8 by adding a new section to part IX to be appropriately
 9 designated and to read as follows:

10 "§27- State of well-being project; established. (a)
 11 There is established within the office the state of well-being
 12 project to assess and enhance tier 1 mental health support and
 13 tier 2 mental health support services for key stakeholder
 14 communities across the State. The project shall:

15 (1) Assess and enhance existing tier 1 mental health
 16 support and tier 2 mental health support training and
 17 ongoing support services to public schools, public
 18 community centers, first responder groups, police
 19 departments, fire departments, hospitals, and medical
 20 staff and, when non-existent, build out culturally



1 grounded and community-informed well-being
2 programming;
3 (2) Track and measure aggregate mental health trends
4 across all populations served by the project; and
5 (3) Hire and train mental health specialists and work with
6 approved partner organizations identified by the
7 office to lead project execution across tier 1 mental
8 health support and tier 2 mental health support
9 services in each stakeholder community.
10 (b) The office shall administer the state of well-being
11 project in accordance with the following timeline:
12 (1) Beginning in 2024, initiate a landscape assessment of
13 existing tier 1 mental health support and tier 2
14 mental health support services by December 31, 2025;
15 and
16 (2) Beginning in 2025, initiate the enhancement of
17 existing tier 1 mental health support and tier 2
18 mental health support services and, when non-existent,
19 build out culturally grounded and community-informed
20 well-being programming, with statewide implementation
21 to be achieved by December 31, 2027.



1 (c) For the purposes of this section:
2 "Tier 1 mental health support" means well-being service
3 provisions that are aimed at the entire system and population
4 within an organization. "Tier 1 mental health support" includes
5 but is not limited to services that:

- 6 (1) Focus implementation on whole-organization tier 1
7 mental health support services that offer continuous
8 care and year-round learning for all stakeholders;
- 9 (2) Are culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of
10 the communities that the service is serving;
- 11 (3) Are evidence-based in the psychological and medical
12 sciences, with published, peer-reviewed scientific
13 evidence of service efficacy;
- 14 (4) Include age-differentiated lesson plans designed to
15 support children and adults across all developmental
16 phases of life;
- 17 (5) Include delivery methodology that offers multiple
18 channels of learning, including but not limited to
19 asynchronous digital learning capabilities;
20 synchronous digital learning capabilities in cohorts



1 or groups; and live in-person training and onsite
2 implementation;
3 (6) Include tracking, measuring, and reporting of the
4 service's impact and implementation fidelity across
5 all sites; and
6 (7) Scales implementation that centers on community cohort
7 learning rather than individual learning.
8 "Tier 2 mental health support" means well-being service
9 provisions that are aimed at populations within an organization
10 that are at higher risk of mental health challenges. "Tier 2
11 mental health support" includes but is not limited to services
12 that:
13 (1) Use tier 1 mental health support as a baseline;
14 (2) Provide a deep understanding of a particular
15 population within a community and are designed to
16 support systems to uplift well-being and prevent
17 illness for that group;
18 (3) Offer additional context and support to tier 1 mental
19 health support services; and
20 (4) Connect individuals to providers who offer one-on-one
21 clinical counseling for individuals with conditions



1 that require special attention when acute care is
2 needed."

3 SECTION 3. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to part XXI to be appropriately
5 designated and to read as follows:

6 "§346- State of well-being project; established. (a)

7 There is established within the office the state of well-being
8 project to assess and enhance tier 1 mental health support and
9 tier 2 mental health support services for key stakeholder
10 communities across the State. The project shall:

11 (1) Assess and enhance existing tier 1 mental health
12 support and tier 2 mental health support training and
13 ongoing support services to public schools, public
14 community centers, first responder groups, police
15 departments, fire departments, hospitals, and medical
16 staff and, when non-existent, build out culturally
17 grounded and community-informed well-being
18 programming;

19 (2) Track and measure aggregate mental health trends
20 across all populations served by the project; and



1 (3) Hire and train mental health specialists and work with
2 approved partner organizations identified by the
3 office to lead project execution across tier 1 mental
4 health support and tier 2 mental health support
5 services in each key stakeholder community.

6 (b) The office shall administer the state of well-being
7 project in accordance with the following timeline:

8 (1) Beginning in 2024, initiate a landscape assessment of
9 existing tier 1 mental health support and tier 2
10 mental health support services by December 31, 2025;
11 and

12 (2) Beginning in 2025, initiate the enhancement of
13 existing tier 1 mental health support and tier 2
14 mental health support services and, when non-existent,
15 build out culturally grounded and community-informed
16 well-being programming, with statewide implementation
17 to be achieved by December 31, 2027.

18 (c) For the purposes of this section:

19 "Tier 1 mental health support" has the same meaning as in
20 section 27- .



1 "Tier 2 mental health support" has the same meaning as in
2 section 27- ."

3 SECTION 4. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of
4 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,
5 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the
6 appropriations contained in Act 164, Regular Session of 2023,
7 and this Act will cause the state general fund expenditure
8 ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be exceeded by
9 \$ or per cent. This current declaration takes
10 into account general fund appropriations authorized for fiscal
11 year 2024-2025 in Act 164, Regular Session of 2023, and this Act
12 only. The reasons for exceeding the general fund expenditure
13 ceiling are that:

- 14 (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to
15 serve the public interest; and
- 16 (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs
17 addressed by this Act.

18 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
20 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 to
21 establish the state of well-being project and



1 fund full-time equivalent (.0 FTE) mental health
2 specialist positions within the office of wellness and
3 resilience.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of
5 wellness and resilience for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 6. New statutory material is underscored.

7 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000;
8 provided that:

9 (1) Section 2 of this Act shall be repealed on June 30,
10 2025; and

11 (2) Section 3 of this Act shall take effect on July 1,
12 2025.



Report Title:

OWR; State of Well-Being Project; Tier 1 and Tier 2 Mental Health Support Services; Appropriation; Expenditure Ceiling

Description:

Establishes within the Office of Wellness and Resilience the State of Well-Being Project to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services for all key stakeholder communities across the State. Appropriates funds to establish full-time equivalent mental health specialist positions within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. Effective 7/1/3000.
(HD2)

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