



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2467
RELATING TO THE HAWAII STATE HOSPITAL

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

Monday, January 29, 2024, 1:00 PM, Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) supports this measure and
2 requests it be considered as a vehicle to enhance security at the Hawaii State Hospital provided
3 it does not supplant the requests outlined in the Governor's executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure and offers comments.

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

7 The Department supports this measure which appropriates funds for safety and quality
8 improvements at the Hawaii State Hospital (HSH) in the aftermath of the tragic incident at an
9 outpatient group home on the hospital campus. The recommended improvements are a result
10 of the comprehensive safety review that was conducted. The quality improvements will help
11 bolster the safety of the hospital’s staff, patients, and visitors. Such improvements include
12 security-related enhancements to the physical plant, upgrades to the camera surveillance and
13 overhead PA systems, and the reinforcement of control over entrance and exit points.

14 Leadership organizational changes including the addition of an associate administrator for
15 safety and security and a Security Director are urgently needed. Also, the creation of a safety

1 team to work in conjunction with contracted security contractors to enact improved safety
2 procedures is planned.

3 The burgeoning hospital census has created overcrowded conditions at the HSH.
4 Repurposing of treatment areas into patient dorms is an ongoing process. These converted
5 areas require additional staff.

6 The hospital is grappling with another significant challenge, namely, the shortage of beds in
7 supervised group homes and residential substance abuse facilities throughout the state. The
8 HSH is just one point in a serious mental illness (SMI) treatment continuum. For the HSH to
9 discharge a patient, there must be a designated destination; discharging patients to the streets
10 is not permitted. Most, if not all, patients discharged from the HSH require ongoing intensive
11 supervision and care. The most common placements are supervised group homes and
12 residential substance use disorder programs. These beds are in short supply. Increasing the
13 capacity of supervised group home beds and updating contracted rates is imperative before the
14 HSH can effectively alleviate the current issue of overcrowding.

15 Additionally, patient transition also heavily relies on timely and accurate evaluations by
16 court appointed examiners. Many patients remain at the HSH because there are not sufficient
17 examiners to complete evaluations. Additional positions and increased recruitment and
18 retention efforts will help alleviate the backlog.

19 **Offered Amendments:** The Department respectfully offers the following amendments to
20 section 3 of the bill:

- 21 • Purchase equipment (\$920,000)
 - 22 ○ installation of new cameras;
 - 23 ○ integrate and upgrade the PA system;
 - 24 ○ metal detector wands;
 - 25 ○ urinalysis testing and supplies
- 26 • reinforce control of entry and exit points (\$700,000)

- 1 • increase staffing: 14 positions (\$2,745,000) and pay increases for existing forensic
- 2 psychologists and;
- 3 • support the mental health continuum of care (\$10,000,000).

- 4 Support for the mental health continuum of care includes:

- 5 • Pay adjustments for existing group homes;
- 6 • 2 new 24-hour group homes;
- 7 • 2 new LCRS group homes and;
- 8 • Enhanced contracted security for the HSH campus

- 9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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Submitted on: 1/26/2024 6:21:52 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/29/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support any needed additional funding for the Hawaii State Hospital.

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Submitted on: 1/26/2024 7:14:09 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/29/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I urge the committee to pass this bill on the basis that the State Hospital needs all the help and assistance that we can give them. I would argue that they should also be provided with personal protection equipment similiar to a correctional environment. Thank you for your consideration.