



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2024 Regular Session

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Friday, March 1, 2024, 9:55 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

by
Adriane Abe
Program Specialist
Office of the Deputy Chief Court Administrator, First Circuit

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 3094, S.D. 1, Relating to Peer Support Specialists.

Purpose: 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. (SD1)

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports Senate Bill No. 3094, S. D. 1 and appreciates the Legislature's recognition of the value Peer Support Specialists provide in the delivery of effective behavioral health services.

The Judiciary supports this bill for the following reasons:

1. This bill provides for a multidisciplinary working group to develop a framework for the inclusion of peer support specialists in the service array for the state.



Senate Bill No. 3094, S.D. 1, Relating to Peer Support Specialists
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, March 1, 2024
Page 2

2. This bill provides deliverables for the working group to develop a framework which includes role clarification and definitions for peer support specialists; and the development of a trauma informed model of supervision which will be important to ethically and effectively deliver services with the assistance of peer support specialists.
3. There are examples of jurisdictions across the country where peer support specialists have been successfully incorporated into the service array providing hope, encouragement, and support that a peer with lived experience brings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**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 01, 2024

The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Dela Cruz and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: SB3094 SD1 RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities is in **SUPPORT OF SB3094 SD1**, 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. Takes effect 7/1/2112. (SD1)

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 SD1**.

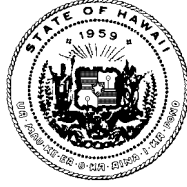
Sincerely,

James Labrie
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

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

February 29, 2024

To: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 3094 SD1– RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS.**

Hearing: March 1, 2024, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211, 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. (SD1)

The Committee on Government Operations 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 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.



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 SD1
RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Ways and Means Committee

March 1, 2024, at 9:55 a.m. Room Number: 211

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** S.B. No. 3094 SD1, 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 SD1 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.

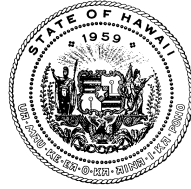
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

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

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 Senate Committee on Ways and Means
SUPPORTING SB 3094 SD1
RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**

CHAIRPERSON

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EX-OFFICIO:

Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director

Behavioral Health Administration

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doh.hawaii.gov

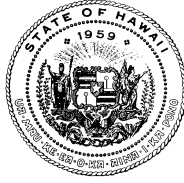
March 1, 2024 at 9:55 a.m. in Room 211 and via video

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, 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 State Council on Mental Health members unanimously support SB3094 SD1. In supporting this measure, the Council is looking for a continuum of care that can honestly respond to the treatment and recovery of individuals who have a mental illness. Evidence show that it is effective to have the qualified peers support specialists providing what they alone can do best in the right settings and right times in said continuum. We encourage said working group to promote best practices in increasing, tapping, and supporting peer support specialists across the State.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB3094 SD1
RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Friday, March 1, 2024, 9:55 a.m., Conference Room 211 and via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Fiscal implications unknown.

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

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

6 The Department supports SB 3094 SD1 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 the intention of this bill to identify standards for supervision; to develop a state inventory of
12 certified Peer Specialists, and a sustainability plan to ensure current and future peer support
13 expansion and opportunities.

14 The AMHD offers two Peer Specialist trainings: Hawaii Certified Peer Specialist and
15 Hawaii Certified Forensic Peer Specialist training. The trainings are offered to adults with lived
16 mental health experience. Many also have lived experience with homelessness, and forensic

1 involvement, and most have been in long-term recovery from substance abuse issues. There
2 are currently 27 newly certified Hawai'i Certified Peer Specialists and 17 Forensic Peer
3 Specialists throughout the Islands. AMHD is the only program in Hawai'i that certifies Adults
4 with Mental Illnesses as Peer Specialists. The Department of Child and Adolescent Division
5 (CAMHD) trains and certifies Youth and Parents with lived experience working with children
6 with mental illnesses. The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) trains and certifies Peer
7 Specialists with lived experience recovering from drug abuse issues. This unique certification
8 status allows any DOH Peer Specialist hired by any Medicaid-qualified agency to bill for their
9 services. Until recently, the Department was unaware there were other Peer Specialist training
10 programs in communities throughout the state. This workgroup would assist with ending this
11 disconnect and offer only benefits to the participants and the State. The AMHD would be
12 honored to participate and collaborate with the listed participants in this measure.

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

- 15 • The working group includes a representative from MedQuest. Medicaid billing for
16 Peer Specialist services is an enigma that only a few providers have figured out. This
17 workgroup would support the sharing of this knowledge. Being able to bill Medicaid
18 for peer support, rather than relying on temporary grants and special project state
19 monies, would bring in funding for the expansion of Peer Specialist positions, allow
20 for sustainability, and save State funds for other needed projects.
- 21 • Provides an avenue to discuss and adopt supportive methods for supervision, self-
22 care, and continuing education creating Peer Specialists.
- 23 • Creates Peer Specialist empowerment, prevents professional fatigue, and
24 encourages employment effectiveness and tenure.

- 1 • Identifies best practices to expand and document peer support opportunities in all
2 state agencies, not just in the field of mental and behavioral health.
- 3 • Creates a framework to expand peer support collaboratively, allowing state
4 departments, community partners, and peers to collectively identify what they need
5 to onboard peer support specialists and standardize training and certification.
- 6 • Stimulates collaboration on how the State can best sustain peer support programs
7 by collectively identifying funding streams.
- 8 • Allows compensation of workgroup members with lived experience and limited
9 income to participate.
- 10 • Peer support is one of the six guiding principles of trauma-informed care that has
11 numerous positive behavioral outcomes. (Learn more about the benefits of peer
12 support specialists: [https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-](https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers)
13 [tools/peers.](https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers))

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

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



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

Justina Acevedo-Cross
Greg Auberry
Chiyomi Chow
Kanoë Enos
JoAnn Farnsworth
Danny Goya
Alex Harris
Sakinah Harrison
Shawn Kana'iaupuni
Ryan Kusumoto
Ka'iulani Laehā
Lynelle Marble
Megan McCorrison
Mike Mohr
Marty Oliphant
Cherilyn Shiinoki
Eliza Talbot
Laurie Tochiki
Kerrie Urosevich
Ka'ano'i Walk
Carol Wear
S. Kukunaokalā Yoshimoto

Maui County

Ka'ina Bonacorsi
Kawika Mattos
Bobbie-Jo Moniz-Tadeo

Kaua'i County

Sarah Blane
Alice Luck

Hawai'i County

Sulma Gandhi
Kahi Moreman
Angela Thomas



Contact Info

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

info@committokeiki.org
CommitToKeiki.org

Date: February 28, 2024
To: Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

From: Commit to Keiki
Re: Support for **SB3094 SD1**, Relating to Peer Support Specialist Working Group

Commit to Keiki strongly supports passage of SB3094 SD1, 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. By investing in peer support specialists, our 'ohana can get the supports that they need, thereby saving the state millions of dollars in expensive ongoing treatments and interventions downstream. We strongly urge you to support **SB3094 SD1**.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony.



HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

SB3094 SD1 Peer Specialists

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Friday March 1, 2024, 9:55 Room 211

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB3094 SD1:

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 who help others experiencing behavioral health conditions such as substance abuse, and psychiatric disorders such as PTSD and depression. They can especially help to address trauma. They have been trained to counsel or assist others with that condition.

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



Helping Families Help Themselves

P. O. Box 1971
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HAWAII FAMILIES AS ALLIES

A chapter of the National Federation of
Families for Children's Mental Health

Phone: 808.797.4050
E-mail: hfaa@hfaa.net
www.hifamilies.org

February 28, 2024

To: Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Char

From: Shanelle Lum, Hawaii Families As Allies, Executive Director

Re: Support for SB 3094 – Relating to Peer Support Specialists Working Group


Simply put, peer support in Hawaii began here. Hawaii Families As Allies started in 1986 as a true grassroots organization, by families who knew that if they got together, networked and shared their knowledge with one another, they could do so much more to help themselves and other families find success in parenting their children with emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges. They recognized that navigating the system of care takes the help of experienced parents. At that time, a national movement to improve the way that families were served was underway. HFAA joined that movement and has been leading the charge since then. As the pioneer of Peer Support who built the foundation of Parent Partners in Hawaii, we've continued to elevate the need to ensure that peer support is provided both *authentically* and *responsibly*.

We built the Parent Partner program for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division as the family run organization providing Parent Partners to Family Guidance Centers statewide for 17 years and helped to build the CASSP principles and operationalize its inception throughout the state. HFAA also built Children's Mental Health Awareness Day to record-breaking engagement levels on behalf of CAMHD, ensuring that various stakeholders along with families were included in reducing the stigma of mental health and normalize conversations about needs. We've collaborated with many different state departments, organizations and stakeholders to introduce them to peer support as an alternative option or complement to other clinical interventions. We also built the foundations of peer support to supply Parent Partners to EPIC 'Ohana for families of youth served by Child Welfare services. We also currently work alongside the Office Of Youth Services as the Peer Support for families of youth who have or are at-risk for Juvenile Justice involvement. Lastly, we are the Statewide Family Network grantee family-run organization on behalf of SAMHSA, allowing us to collaborate, mentor and influence peer support programs at the federal level. As consultants, we have worked with multiple states to help build peer support programs for their behavioral health divisions.

HFAA serves as a founding organization of the National Federation of Families (for Children’s Mental Health), being one of the five ‘families as allies’ pillars that helped to build NFF and expand their national reach with data, outcomes and utilization metrics gained through the implementation of peer parent support with local Hawaii families. As the Statewide Affiliate of the National Federation of Families, HFAA is a trusted partner of NFF, having represented children’s mental health perspectives since the Federation’s inception more than 35 years ago. HFAA’s Executive Director became the first person in Hawaii to achieve the Certified Peer Support Program (CPSP) certification from NFF and our Program Administrator was the second in the state of Hawaii to achieve the CPSP certification. Additionally, both HFAA leaders were also the first and second, respectively, in Hawaii to achieve the Certified Family Peer Specialist (CFPS) certification—the current and updated national certification from NFF that has been improved to be consistent with the evidenced-based needs of peer support providers.

As a founding member of the Family-Run Executive Directors Leadership Association (FREDLA), a national organization focused on the growth and preservation of authentic peer parent support nationwide, HFAA receives ongoing mentoring and technical assistance/training and support in implementing best practices for peer parent support as a family-run organization and helps to reciprocate as well, providing valuable feedback and expertise.

The HFAA mission is simple - helping families help themselves. Through our unique lived-experience approach, we establish peer-based relationships to build rapport and trust with families and walk alongside them in their journey. This is the power of peers – and HFAA is in **strong support of SB 3094** which will continue to build the structure and sustainability for peer support in Hawaii.



Shanelle Lum

Executive Director,

Hawaii Families As Allies

Shanelle.lum@hfaa.net



National Alliance on Mental Illness Hawaii
A State Organization of NAMI

TO: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Trisha Chaung
Advocacy Manager, NAMI Hawaii

RE: SB 3094 SD1 – RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

HEARING: March 1, 2024 at 9:55 AM

POSITION: **NAMI Hawaii supports SB 3094 SD1**

NAMI Hawaii is the state organization for The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. Our national organization started as a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table in 1979; today, we are an alliance of 600 local affiliates and 49 state organizations who work within the community to raise awareness and provide support/education to those impacted by mental illness.

NAMI Hawaii has services and volunteers in all counties. Our free education programs and support groups are led by individuals with lived experience (individuals with mental illness and/or family members of individuals with mental illness) and the majority of our staff, board members, and volunteers have lived experience. We not only understand the worth and positive impact of peer support; it's our subject matter expertise and primary way of serving the people of Hawaii.

The mental health and substance use workforce must be sufficient in supply, diversity, and cultural competency to meet the needs of people with mental illness. By sharing their personal experiences, peer support workers build trust, connection, and understanding, which help current patients to become more hopeful for and engaged in their recovery journey. Considerable research demonstrates that peer support improves patient outcomes, including reducing the need for inpatient and emergency services and the frequency of recurrent psychiatric hospitalizations.

Peer support for a *patient's support system* also has the potential to improve patient outcomes. NAMI's flagship program, the evidence-based NAMI Family-to-Family, is a form of extended peer support for the loved ones of an individual with mental illness, and has demonstrated increases in problem-solving skills, coping skills, and feelings of empowerment, all of which aids in the navigation and utilization of an often labyrinthine mental healthcare system.

NAMI Hawaii writes in support of SB 3094 SD1, with one suggested amendment. We recommend that the peer support specialist working group also include an individual who is an *unpaid* caregiver (and the scope of "caregiver" can also extend beyond conservatorship and towards a holistic support system) of an *adult* who currently receives mental health services and lives in recovery. This inclusion will strengthen the working group's capacity to address the role of caregiver peer support specialists. **We submitted the same recommendation to the Senate Committee on Government Operations; although it was not adopted, we were grateful to the DOH for echoing us in their written testimony.** We hope that the Senate Committee on Ways and Means will consider our suggested amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 3094.

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 9:18:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlene	Testifying for Hawaii Families As Allies	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: February 28, 2024

To: Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

From:

R: Support for SB 304- Relating to Peer Support Specialists Working Group

Aloha, My name is Charlene Daraban and I am a parent/caregiver of child/youth/ young adult with challenges. I have worked to support families as a peer support specialist for the past 30 years. The role of peer support is unique, because it allows me to use my personal lived experience to help support others who are going through the same struggles. Our connection point is from the perspective of peer, who has been through these same struggles and can offer support, guidance and hope.

What I enjoy about my role is that each day is different and we structure our level of support specific to the needs of our peers, some peers need a little bit of support in the beginning to understand how systems work, such as IEP meetings. Who is on the care team, what they do, how they can help my child, etc. Other peers need a lot of hand holding because they are overwhelmed and are coming to terms with the reality of what all of this means for them and their child.

Among the challenges of this role include funding. Non-profits do not pay sustainable wages based on how state and federal contracts work, which means that I as a peer support specialist need to make tough decisions to do what I love each day. Whether that be picking up a PT job, or finding another means of income, we truly do this work because we believe in the power of peers helping each other in meaningful ways. Hawaii needs a sustainable way to hire, train and financially support more peers like me who are doing amazing work with families each day and I strongly support SB 3094 for this reason.

Sincerely,

Charlene Daraban

Date: February 28, 2024

To: Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Letter of Support for SB3094

Aloha,

I am writing to voice my support of SB3094 to establish a working group to develop and make recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in the State. Having worked as a Certified Family Peer Specialist in Juvenile Justice for the past 11 years. I can personally speak to the connections that are forged when someone with lived experience in the area you are seeking assistance in, comes into your life. Having someone who has literally “been in your shoes” makes a huge difference for families that may be feeling overwhelmed with the number of other professionals and judges that have suddenly come into their lives because of their children’s actions. Peer support is that vital key in keeping families engaged across all systems of care. Giving families the dignity of not walking into meetings feeling alone and outnumbered is priceless. Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on this very important issue.

Sincerely,
Jackie Jackson
Hawaii Families As Allies



To: Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing Date/Time: Friday March 1, 2024 9:55 AM

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 3094 SD1

From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports SB 3094 SD1** which would establish 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.

HHRC'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, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

HHRC 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, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
RE: SB3094 SD1 in support
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211
March 1, 2024; 9:55 am

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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 SD1** relating to Relating to Peer Support Specialists.

SB3094 SD1 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



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

February 29, 2024

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB3094 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.

And, 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.

Laurie Arial Tochiki, JD, Ph.D

Executive Director



LATE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB3094, SD1

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
DATE: March 1, 2024; TIME: 9:55 A.M.
Via Video Conference - Conference Room 211
State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Aloha e Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

This testimony is in support of SB 3094, SD1 - RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS - which establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists.

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, SD1. 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

Opportunity Youth Action Hawai‘i

March 1, 2024

LATE

House Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing Time: 9:55 AM

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 211

Re: SB3094 SD1, Relating to Peer Support Specialists

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Opportunity Youth Action Hawai‘i hui, we are writing in **strong support** of SB3094 SD1, 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 SD1.

LATE

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2024 6:39:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Takata	Testifying for Pacific Peer Connection	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Peer support can offer several benefits across various contexts, including mental health, addiction recovery, and chronic illness. Here are some of the key benefits associated with peer support:

- 1. Shared Understanding:**Peers often share similar experiences and challenges, leading to a shared understanding of each other's struggles. This shared experience can create a sense of empathy and connection that may be difficult to achieve with others who have not gone through similar situations.
- 2. Reduced Isolation:**Dealing with challenges such as mental health issues or chronic illnesses can be isolating. Peer support helps individuals feel less alone by connecting them with others who have faced similar circumstances, fostering a sense of community and understanding.
- 3. Empowerment:**Interactions with peers can empower individuals to take an active role in their own recovery or management of challenges. Seeing others who have overcome similar obstacles can inspire a sense of hope and motivation.
- 4. Role Modeling:**Peers who have successfully navigated similar challenges can serve as role models, demonstrating that recovery and positive change are possible. This can be particularly impactful for individuals who may lack positive examples in their immediate environment.
- 5. Increased Self-Esteem:**The support and understanding received from peers can contribute to improved self-esteem. Knowing that others value and appreciate one's experiences can have a positive impact on an individual's self-worth.
- 6. Enhanced Coping Skills:**Peer support often involves sharing coping strategies and practical tips for managing challenges. Learning from the experiences of others can provide individuals with new tools and perspectives to cope with their own situations.
- 7. Reduced Stigma:** Interacting with peers who have faced similar challenges can help reduce the stigma associated with certain conditions. This can contribute to a more open and understanding society, promoting inclusivity and acceptance.
- 8. Complementary to Professional Support:** Peersupport is not a replacement for

professional help but can complement formal interventions. Combining peer support with professional services can create a more comprehensive and holistic approach to well-being.

9. Social Connection: Peer support groups and communities offer a social environment where individuals can connect with others who share common experiences. This sense of belonging can be crucial for mental and emotional well-being.

10. Long-Term Support Networks: often continue over the long term, providing ongoing support and encouragement. This sustained connection can be instrumental in maintaining positive mental health and well being.

I am in full support of this bill.

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 2:40:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Chow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. I know peer specialists that need the support and we need more peer specialist in the field.

Mahalo

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 2:55:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB3094 SD1. I meet with the Hawai'i Clubhouse Advocacy Coalition weekly and am a board member of the 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-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 4:28:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marissa Squirrel Celeste	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill as I am a mental health peer specialist. I would like to see part-time positions available as well. Mahalo!

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 5:07:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Ortiz	Testifying for Koolau clubhouse	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Daniel Ortiz Jr. I am a Hawai'i certified peer specialist and member of Koolau Clubhouse. I feel this measure is good because it helps to support me and other peer specialist roles that are current and on-going as well as future peer specialists. After becoming a peer specialist and working in the field, I know first hand how valuable we are to the community and I get great joy when I can make connections with those I serve. Mahalo.

Daniel Ortiz Jr

HCPS

Ko'olau Clubhouse, Kaneohe

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 5:55:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Earl Maeda	Testifying for Ko'olau Clubhouse	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Earl Maeda support Bill SB3094SD1. Supporting Peer support Specialists in Hawaii. I am myself a Peer Specialist Community Empowerment Resources- CER at a crisis management facility Ekolu. The peer support that's needed for these peers and the Peer Support Specialists in this field.

Mahalo,

Earl S. Maeda

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 8:31:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maurica Daniel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello My Name is Maurica Daniel and I work at HCAP Head Start.

As a parent and a foster parent I am in support of this bill. Hawaii Families As Allies has help me when I needed the support with my foster children. They made sure that the peer support was in place when ever I needed it. They have been peer supporting me for the past 5 years, and have been doing peer support for over 30 years.

All of the Parent partners that work with Hawaii Families As Allies are always there and are very knowledgeable with peer support. I am strongly in support of bill SB3094.

Amendment: I would like to request an amendment, to include Hawaii Families As Allies on the working group as they are the pioneering agency, peer to peer support in the state of Hawaii and nationally.

Thank you,

Maurica Daniel

Date: February 28, 2024

To: Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Char

From:

Re: Support for SB 3094 – Relating to Peer Support Specialists Working Group

Aloha, my name is ____ and I am the parent/caregiver of child/youth/young adult with challenges. I have worked to support families as a peer support specialist for the past ____ years. The role of peer support is unique, because it allows me to use my personal lived experience to help support others who are going thru the same struggles. Our connection point is from the perspective of a peer, who has been through these same struggles and can offer support, guidance and hope.

What I enjoy about my role is that each day is different and we structure our level of support specific to the needs of our peers. Some peers need a little bit of support in the beginning to understand how the systems work, such as IEP meetings. Who is on the care team, what they do, how they can help my child, etc. Other peers need a lot of hand holding because they are overwhelmed and are coming to terms with the reality of what all of this means for them and their child.

Among the challenges of this role include funding. Non-profits do not pay sustainable wages based on how state and federal contracts work, which means that I as a peer support specialist need to make tough decisions to do what I love each day. Whether that be picking up a PT job, or finding another means of income, we truly do this work because we believe in the power peers helping each other in meaningful ways. Hawaii needs a sustainable way to hire, train and financially support more peers like me who are doing amazing work with families each day and I strongly support SB 3094 for this reason.

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 9:22:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Daraban	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Re: Support for SB 3094 – Relating to Peer Support Specialists Working Group

I strongly support SB 3094

Request for an Amendment to SB3093

Aloha!

My name is Malia Daraban, I am parent of three children, two of that carry a diagnosis, I have also been a resource caregiver of five children, and I am the Programs Director of Hawaii Families As Allies (HFAA). The work of a peer support specialists is unique in that we go public with our very private story, in service to others.

Peer support specialists are positive change agents for families and the systems that server them by, **Advocating;** Advocating for positive systems change & the services families receive by promoting skills for self-advocacy. **Collaboration;** Helping families & service providers to resolve differences and build positive working relationships. **Navigation;** Parent education & navigation of different court & child/family-serving systems of care, encouraging empowerment to take action. **Family Voice;** Ensuring families have equitable input when making decisions that impact our children/youth. Elevating the family voice with knowledge sharing, and strategic discussion to mobilize program services and best practices. **Coordination;** Services are strengths-based, family-driven, and child/family focused, ensuring families are adequately informed, for family-efficacy. **Partnerships;** Maintains forged partnerships & actively seeks new opportunities to promote family visibility, voice, and choice. **Linking;** Linking families to self-identify needs for overall family wellness and resiliency

Among the challenges of this role include funding. Non-profits do not pay sustainable wages based on how state and federal contracts work, which means that I as a peer support specialist need to make tough decisions to do what I love each day. Whether that be picking up a PT job, or finding another means of income, we truly do this work because we believe in the power peers helping each other in meaningful ways. Hawaii needs a sustainable way to hire, train and

financially support more peers like me who are doing amazing work with families each day and **I strongly support SB 3094 for this reason.**

Request for an Amendment to SB3093

I would like to request amendment to include Hawaii Families As Allies to be a standing member of the Peer Support Specialist Work Group.

HFAA are the content experts of this field as they are the original trail blazers of the peer parent support movement in the State of Hawai'i and nationally, 37 years ago. HFAA is a fully family-run non-profit organization. HFAA's extensive collaboration and partnerships are invaluable for families, community stakeholders, child-serving agencies, school systems, & community partners. As strategic members of local & national advisory councils, workgroups, and initiatives spanning a vast variety of different community, state, & school projects and programs, our goal is to affect positive change and generate favorable outcomes for families and the systems and programs that serve them.

Mahalo nui!

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 10:03:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaimi Brede	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong support of SB3094

Request for Amendment: Add Hawaii Families As Allies to the workgroup

Aloha,

I strongly support as a step-father of a child with challenges, peer support provided by Hawaii Families As Allies has really helped me, my child and my whole family. I don't know what we would have done without their support to help us get the right services for my child.

Peer support specialist are vital to any parent that has a child with challenges. This bill will boost the opportunity for a wider more families in need to be served.

Request for Amendment:

Add Hawaii Families As Allies to the workgroup

As I reviewed this bill I noted a missing component to the workgroup, Hawaii Families As Allies. Hawaii Families As Allies is the grass roots organization that stated peer to peer family support in Hawaii and nationally. This organization is made up of all parents and/or caregivers of children with challenges and/or receiving services from the system of care. I would like to request that Hawaii Families As Allies be added to the Peer Support Specialist Work Group.

Respectfully submitted,

Kam'imi Hanano'e'au

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 8:10:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
RUSSELL ABORDO	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Peer support sepcialists have been shown to be very effective when properly trained and supported and the very reason SB 3094 is vital to their success.

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 8:11:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsay Ann Pacheco	Testifying for O'ahu Lived Experience Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members:

My name is Lindsay Ann Pacheco and I am one of two co-founders for the O'ahu Lived Experience Council (OLEC). On behalf of OLEC we support this bill as we have seen through examples of Peer Support in action how much of an impact Peer Support can have on individuals, especially those who are trying to find their way out of homelessness. Peer Support provides comfort and trust for those who no longer have trust and faith in our social services systems that have oftentimes failed folks living on the streets.

Thank you for allowing me submit this written testimony.

Lindsay Ann Pacheco

O'ahu Lived Experience Council (OLEC)

Co-Founder

Date: February 28, 2024

To: Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

From: Shanelle Lum, Mother of Young Adult with Mental Health Challenges

Re: Support for SB 3094 – Relating to Peer Support Specialists Working Group

Aloha, my name is Shanelle Lum and I am the parent/caregiver of a young adult with challenges. My journey began with my son having uncontrolled seizures at 11 months old with no known cause. Shortly thereafter, he started to regress and was diagnosed with Autism and Severe Developmental Delays. As a young parent in my early twenties, it was all very overwhelming, and I struggled to find services for my son. My husband was equally affected, yet we both dealt with the loss in different ways. When I say 'loss' I mean the loss of the ideas for what our son could be growing up. He was named after a basketball player and with each year and setback that occurred, my husband saw that dream of an 'NBA player son' slipping further and further away. For myself, I did retreat, skipping social and family events for fear that my son would have a seizure, where he dropped to the ground, shook uncontrollably, foamed at the mouth and at times, would need oxygen. It was a dramatic site and something I didn't want to subject my son and our family members to. In addition to this, when he wasn't suffering from seizures, he did have behavioral issues where it would appear as though he was throwing constant tantrums, but that was attributed to his lack of ability to communicate verbally his needs and wants and regulate his emotions. Although my extended family showed empathy, which I appreciated – I didn't have anyone that could truly walk alongside me to help me figure out how to be strong for my son and still be an effective advocate for him to get our family the help we desperately needed. Fast forward to finding a peer support partner. This was the first time that I felt heard, understood and normalized – human again! My peer support gave me insight from their *personal* journey, not from a checklist of 'menu items' that I had become accustomed to. This was a turning point in my confidence that shifted my perspective and gave me a sense of hope that I didn't have in years. Instead of thinking of all the things my son would never do, I started to think of the things he could accomplish and focused on ways to make that happen. This would not have been possible without the support of peers that I have worked with who were brave enough to share their personal story with me and give me advice from their *heart*.

Since then, I was fortunate to find Hawaii Families As Allies and I have worked to support families as a peer support specialist for the past 20 years. HFAA is unique because everyone in the organization is a parent, caregiver or family member of a child/youth our young adult with challenges. We all have different peer journeys which led us to help others, but we connect on those same feelings of loss, devastation, fear of the unknown, etc. We also find solace in one another when we celebrate wins, small milestones or just get past IEP or ISP meetings!

For the past 9 years, I have had the honor and privilege to lead HFAA and bring my passion alongside my peers to ensure that the same connections that were made when we needed support, remain true today. The role of peer support is unique, because it allows us to use our personal lived experience to help support others who are going thru the same struggles. The last thing I wanted, in my time of need was another clinician reading from an available menu to offer me more therapy, more speech for my son, etc. Our connection point is from the perspective of a peer, who has been through these same struggles and can offer support, guidance and hope.

What I enjoy about my role is that each day is different, and we structure our level of support specific to the needs of our peers. Some peers need a little bit of support in the beginning to understand how the systems work, while other peers need a lot of hand holding because they are overwhelmed and are coming to terms with the reality of what all of this means for them and their child.

Unfortunately, non-profits do not pay sustainable wages based on how state and federal contracts work, which means that I as a peer support specialist need to make tough decisions to do what I love each day. Whether that be picking up another job, or finding another means of income, we truly do this work because we believe that peers helping each other in meaningful ways is a real and tangible solution. Hawaii needs a sustainable way to hire, train and financially support more peers like me who are doing amazing work with families each day and I **strongly support SB 3094** for this reason. If I could offer one small request, it would be to include a family-run organization *defined by SAMHSA as a mental health family-controlled organization is one where more than 50 percent of the organizations Board of Directors are family members who have primary daily responsibility for the raising of a child or youth with a serious emotional disturbance (SED).

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 8:50:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa Allen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i support this bill

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 8:58:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Loren Ng	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support SB 3094 SD1 which would establish working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Peer support sepcialists have been shown to be very effective when properly trained and supported and I believe it is important to create a standard across the islands and across diciplines.

SB 3094 would create standards, best practices and collaboration amongst all of the entities supporting peer work in the islands and is necessary for the health and growth of our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Loren Ng

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 8:58:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Loren Ng	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support SB 3094 SD1 which would establish working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Peer support sepcialists have been shown to be very effective when properly trained and supported and I believe it is important to create a standard across the islands and across diciplines.

SB 3094 would create standards, best practices and collaboration amongst all of the entities supporting peer work in the islands and is necessary for the health and growth of our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Loren Ng

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 10:00:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Mundon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I have lived experience navigating multiple systems, including the Judicial System, Child Welfare as a kinship care giver, and the Child and Adloscent Mental Health Division as a parent seeking services for my children. I am also a survivor of domestic violence. I work to uplift the voices of families and youth. Many of the families we provide support to are struggling with homelessness, addictions, domestic violence. We have seen these families engage more authentically with peer support specialist and turn things around when they are able to connect with a peer that understands where they are at and how to move forward. **I am in strong support of bill SB3094.** Thank you for your time.

LATE

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 10:06:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Britney Tavares	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a peer support specialist with lived experience as a survivor of domestic violence, in active recovery from addiction and experience in multiple systems, including the judicial system and Child Welfare. I work with families currently involved with Child Welfare Services. Many of the families I provide support to are struggling with homelessness, addictions, domestic violence. We have seen these families engage with us more authentically and turn things around when they are able to connect with peer support that understands where they are at and how to move forward. I am in support of this Bill.

Thank you Kindly,

Britney Tavares

LATE

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 10:06:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

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

Comments:

Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. No. 3094 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, 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 seen how the 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 support SB 3094 and encourage the legislature to support Peer Support Specialists in Hawai'i

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 10:11:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a peer support specialist with lived experience as a survivor of domestic violence, in active recovery from addiction and experience in multiple systems, including the judicial system and Child Welfare. I work with families currently involved with Child Welfare Services. Many of the families I provide support to are struggling with homelessness, addictions, domestic violence. We have seen these families engage with us more authentically and turn things around when they are able to connect with peer support that understands where they are at and how to move forward. I am in support of this Bill.

Mahalo

Ashley

LATE

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/29/2024 11:21:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Samson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a peer support specialist with lived experience as a survivor of domestic violence, in active recovery from addiction and experience in multiple systems, including the judicial system and Child Welfare. I work with families currently involved with Child Welfare Services. Many of the families I provide support to are struggling with homelessness, addictions, domestic violence. We have seen these families engage with us more authentically and turn things around when they are able to connect with peer support that understands where they are at and how to move forward. I am in support of this Bill.

LATE

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2024 6:20:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha e Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of 3094 SB RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS - which will establish a working group to provide a statewide framework for peer support specialist. As someone who supervises and works very closely with youth peer support staff. I have directly seen the power and healing that peer support creates for youth and families in Hawaii. My staff are often able to connect and engage with youth when no one else on their service team is able to do so. Young people need to know that someone is there who understands them and accepts them for who they are and that is exactly what peer support is. Peer support sees all the potential in our youth and provides real hope for youth to better their circumstances because our peer support staff were in the same situations not too long ago.

Mahalo,

Corinna Sosa

LATE

SB-3094-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2024 8:24:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janeane Mc	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Okay

Will do

Thanks!

My name is janeane I am a person who lives with a mental health disability. I have been receiving care for my illness for over twenty years. I could not have survived without all services for my condition (doctors, nurses, counselors, case management, support groups, one on one therapy, and peer support specialists) has most definitely benefited my recovery. Not only has this group of health care support impacted my own life positively but I've witnessed so many friends regain their life back and also continue to make strides with their kokua. I also have friends that have been able to get employment for Peer Support Specialist and give an important component to us as they can personally relate to our struggles as well as our accomplishments. These persons are a life changing valuable model. Showing me that I can survive and thrive. They encourage me and give me and so many hope. Not only do I need health care professionals but the help of Peer Support Specialist enable me to continue with confidence.