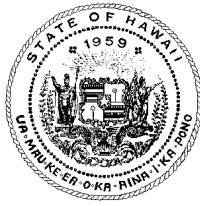


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
**Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalua Kalaima a
Ho'oponopono Ola**
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Vacant
Deputy Director
Correctional Institutions

Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 343
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

By
Tommy Johnson, Director

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Joy A. Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Friday, January 26, 2024; 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 and via Videoconference

Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) has reviewed Senate Bill (SB) 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances, allow the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists, and allow psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing supervised experience requirements.

The Department **supports** the allowance of the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers for psychologists in certain situations and the allowance of psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing the supervised experience requirements. The DCR respectfully defers to the expertise of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) on the feasibility of the proposed regulatory matters involving provisional or associate-level licensure.

Testimony on SB 343

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

January 26, 2024

Page 2

Like other entities throughout the State, DCR is also experiencing a high demand for mental health services. In order to meet the mental health needs of individuals in our custody and care, the proposed measure seeks to address the limitations in Hawai'i Revised Statutes 465-7.6 Licensure of state-employed clinical psychologists.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of SB 343.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: (808) 586-2850
Fax Number: (808) 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, January 26, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 343, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

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

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

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

S.B. 343, requires the Department to grant, upon application and payment of proper fees, provisional licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist and mental health counselor to those who meet certain requirements to obtain reimbursement for services rendered. While the Department appreciates the intent of this measure, the creation of this new license type appears contrary to the provisions of Hawaii Revised Statutes section 26H-2, which provides, in part, that “the regulation and licensing of professions and vocations shall be undertaken only where reasonably necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of consumers of the services; the purpose of regulation shall be the protection of the public welfare and not that of the regulated profession or vocation.” A new licensure scheme should not be implemented solely for the purpose of reimbursement. There may be unintended consequences of regulating or requiring licensure of a currently exempted population of professionals who provide mental health services. For example, the cost of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed to consumers.

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

The Department is unclear whether the requirement for provisional licensure in Part II and III only applies to new applications received once the act takes effect upon its approval. Currently interns are exempted from licensure; those practicing under the exemptions of licensure would automatically be subject to license requirements, thereby, causing possible disruptions in patient care.

Additionally, the Department is asking for clarification on page 3 lines 5 to 11 and 14 to 19. Currently, pursuant to HRS §451J-1, clinical supervision is defined as supervision “*by a licensed marriage and family therapist whose license has been in good standing in any state for two years preceding commencement and during the term of supervision, or any licensed mental health professional whose license has been in*

good standing in any state and who has been a clinical member in good standing of the association for the two years preceding commencement and during the term of supervision.” The proposed language limits direct supervision to currently licensed marriage and family therapists in good standing with the Department.

Similarly, the Department seeks clarification on page 18, lines 9 to 15, and page 19, lines 1 to 3. HRS §453D-7(a)(2) provides for a broader range of clinical supervision to include “*a licensed mental health counselor, psychologist, clinical social worker, advanced practice registered nurse with a specialty in mental health, marriage and family therapist, or physician with a specialty in psychiatry.*” This bill only allows direct supervision to occur with a licensed mental health counselor in good standing with the department.

Should the Committee consider passing this bill, the Department respectfully requests the following to ensure proper implementation:

1. General fund appropriation to allow the Division:
 - a. To establish, recruit, and hire an office assistant V (OA-V) to process provisional license applications expeditiously. The sum of \$73,406¹ or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this position.
 - b. To make the appropriate updates to its internal database. The required updates may take upwards of 500 support hours to create these new license types and the associated requirements. These hours would be added onto the already extensive daily work of the Division’s developer, program analyst, and others outside of the division. The sum of \$75,000 or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this request.
2. Minimally, a delayed implementation date of July 1, 2026, to ensure that:
 - a. In line with the request above, the Division would need the appropriate time to establish, recruit, and hire an OA-V.
 - b. The appropriate updates are made to the database and applications are created.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

¹ OA-V: \$44,760 (salary) + \$28,656 fringe = \$73,406

Testimony of the Board of Psychology

**Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, January 26, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 343, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

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

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) allow psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing certain other requirements; (3) allow the Board to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists; and (4) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances.

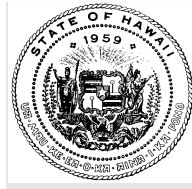
The Board will review this bill at its upcoming February 9, 2024, meeting after which, the Board can provide the Committee with its position. In the meantime, please accept the following comments by the Board's legislative committee on Part IV of the bill only:

- 1) This bill is substantially similar to H.B. 1300 H.D. 2, S.D. 1 from the 2023 legislative session. The Board supported the intent of H.B. 1300 and offered comments as follows:
- 2) The Board held that allowing candidates to sit for the licensing examination prior to completing a doctoral degree did not comport with the intent of the bill, which appears to be focused on creating a provisional license to be obtained after completing a doctoral degree program; this would also include completing an internship prior to sitting for the exam. The Board believes that internship experience and degree completion are

generally essential to successfully passing the exam, which primarily tests the theoretical knowledge psychologists learn in their education program.

- 3) Page 40, lines 4 to 7, authorizes the Board to grant waivers or extensions to licensees who are unable to comply with its continuing education requirements. The Board noted last year when commenting on H.B. 1300 H.D. 2 that this language is unnecessary and redundant since Hawaii Revised Statutes section 465-11(f) already provides a remedy for such circumstances. At the time, the Board strongly maintained that the language should remain out of any proposed legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony commenting on SB343
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

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

Hearing Date: January 26, 2024

Room Number: 225

1 **Position:** The Department of Health offers Comments on SB 343.

2 There is a clear workforce shortage of mental health providers in the country and particularly in
3 the state of Hawai'i. In 2022 it was estimated that there were 284 providers per 100,000
4 individuals with a mental health concern in the state,ⁱ falling within the second worst quartile
5 compared with other states nationwide. Additionally, research shows that Hawai'i youth are
6 particularly vulnerable and in need of mental health support. Of significant concern, Native
7 Hawaiian youth were twice as likely to have made a suicide attempt compared with their
8 Caucasian peers (10.3% vs. 4.0%, respectively).ⁱⁱ Further, in the state, depression rates have
9 steadily increased such that approximately one third^{iii,iv} of both Hawai'i middle and high
10 schoolers report symptoms of depression and approximately one fifth^v of high schoolers and one
11 fourth^{vi} of middle schoolers report engaging in non-suicidal self-injurious behavior.

12 For Hawai'i to achieve behavioral health equity, more effective systems and policies are
13 needed to proactively address workforce shortages of mental health providers for this population.
14 When youth are unable to access needed care early on, the risk of increased symptoms and a
15 need for high-levels of more restrictive, intensive, and costly mental health services are more
16 likely to be required.

17 This bill supports the ability of graduate students training to provide mental health
18 services to remain in our state and provide these much needed services, while completing their
19 training and licensure requirements. Individuals trained at the doctoral level are difficult to

1 recruit to the state. This bill provides a reasonable path, commensurate to national standards, for
2 doctoral level psychologists to obtain their license and continuing services for the state. It is
3 very clear that there is a need for additional mental health providers to support Hawai'i children,
4 youth, and families. This bill will help to retain mental health providers trained in or working in
5 the state of Hawai'i so that needed services can be delivered to the children, youth, and families
6 that need and deserve to have access to these mental health supports.
7 Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

ⁱ Hawai'i Health Matters, Mental Health Provider Rate. Mental Health Provider Rate, 2016-2021. Published April 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.hawaiihealthmatters.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=319&localeId=14>

ⁱⁱ Hawai'i State Department of Health, Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse, Hawai'i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data – Suicide – Attempted, Past 12 Months, High Schools, State-level. Suicide – attempted, past 12 months by year, 2017-2021. Published April 14, 2023. Retrieved from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/SuicideTried12M/SuicideTried12M_HS_ST.html

ⁱⁱⁱ Hawai'i State Department of Health, Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse, Hawai'i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data – Depression – Ever, Middle Schools, State-level. Depression – ever by Year, 2017-2021. Published April 14, 2023. Retrieved from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/DeprsStopActEver/DeprsStopActEver_MS_ST.html

^{iv} Hawai'i State Department of Health, Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse, Hawai'i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data – Depression – In Past 12 Months, High Schools, State-level. Depression – in past 12 months by Year, 2017-2021. Published April 14, 2023. Retrieved from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/DeprsStopAct/DeprsStopAct_HS_ST.html

^v Hawai'i State Department of Health, Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse, Hawai'i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data – Suicide – Attempted, Past 12 Months, High Schools, State-level. Suicide – attempted, past 12 months by year, 2017-2021. Published April 14, 2023. Retrieved from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/SelfHurt12M/SelfHurt12M_HS_ST.html



Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521-8995

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

January 26, 2024 1:00 P.M. – Rm 225 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Testimony in Strong Support of SB343 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) strongly supports SB343 as a critical tool in meeting the burgeoning demand for quality mental health services – and is especially timely as the emotional and mental toll of the Maui Fires, as well as the lingering effects of the pandemic and associated hardships continue to be felt by all our residents, prolonged now for several years. The aftermath effect on our public behavioral health systems is immeasurable.

Of 37 states recently surveyed, 21 already have an associate licensing structure for Associate-level Psychologists in place.

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

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

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

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

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

reviewed by the Hawaii Board. Accordingly, this proposal requires the board to allow licensure candidates to take the exam as soon as they complete their doctorate.

In this vein, **we support recommendations from other mental health professionals to remove the requirement that associate licensees in Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling pass their licensing exam *before* obtaining an “associate license”, [as provided on p. 3, lines 12-13; and p. 18, lines 16-18]** as this creates another financial and logistical burden to potential providers. Removing these testing requirements would be consistent with the removal of such a burden for psychologists on page 37, lines 16-18, which we hope to retain.

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

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

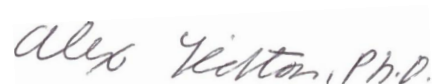
We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in SB1444, HB1242, and HB1830 explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. We therefore **respectfully request that SB343's purpose language be amended to include much of the language of these other bills**, in addition to two additional enumerated purposes:

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

Furthermore, we support the **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing and clarifying the use of the term “intern”**.

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

Sincerely,



Alex Lichten, Ph.D.
Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee



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

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

January 26, 2024 1:00 P.M. – Rm 225 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Testimony in Strong Support of SB343 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports SB343 as a critical tool in improving access and meeting the overwhelming demand for quality mental health services, particularly during and following the prolonged pandemic. Here's a snapshot of recently recorded ratios of clients/patients to mental health providers in Hawai'i:

Hawai'i 320:1

Honolulu 370:1

Kauai 480:1

Maui 550:1

Moloka'i has no registered providers.

Obviously, this demand far exceeds the viable supply of mental health providers. Among other provisions to remove administrative barriers and increase the speed with which trained and qualified practitioners can enter the workforce, SB343 would establish provisional/associate-level licensure requirements for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs), Mental Health Counselors, and Psychologists. This would ensure a regulatory framework that would encourage relevant and quality training to associate-level providers by authorizing insurance reimbursement for supervised care provided by these post-degree/pre-licensed mental health professionals during the 12 to 24-month period in which they are completing required supervised practice hours under the mentorship and guidance of an independently licensed mental health professional.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this vein, we recommend a VERY IMPORTANT amendment. Please delete the requirements that associate licensees **pass their full licensure exam *before* obtaining an "associate license"**, [as provided on p. 3, lines 12-13; and p. 18, lines 16-18] as this creates another financial and logistical burden to potential providers. We suspect this was a drafting oversight in modeling the new associate licensing language after full licensure language – but inadvertently retaining examination requirements. Removing these testing requirements for MFTs and MHCs would be consistent with the removal of such a burden for psychologists on page 37, lines 16-18. We hope to retain the removal of testing requirements for associate licensees for all professions - to support developing the network of local providers in all mental health disciplines.

We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in SB1444, HB1242, and HB1830 explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. We therefore **respectfully request that SB343's purpose language be amended to include much of the language of these other bills**, in addition to two additional enumerated purposes:

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

We also support clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's (NASW) testimony regarding the use of the term "intern" – as our statute uses this term for students, not licensees or graduates; and we agree their statute and language should run parallel in structure as ours. We also recommend NASW's suggested language on insurance billing be included as well.

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

Sincerely,

Mary A Navarro

Mary A. Navarro, MA, LMFT, President
The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

January 26, 2024 1:00 P.M. – Rm 225 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Testimony in Strong Support of SB343

The National Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) strongly supports SB343 Relating to Mental Health, which establishes associate level licenses for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists; and clarifies the ability of a Licensed Social Worker to bill under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

This bill – along with several other measures introduced during this legislative biennium (SB1444, HB1300, HB1242, HB776, and HB1830) does several important things. It creates an Associate level of Licensure for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists, based on the current LSW level of licensure for social workers, which will allow for a mechanism by which clinicians who have completed their graduate school courses can be compensated while they are receiving their required period of supervised practice.

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

These steps will create the opportunity to open up more clinicians in supervision to see clients in the very near future, which is vital given the ongoing stressors resulting from Maui Fires, as well as the pandemic; and will immediately address the current shortage of *clinical*-level mental health providers, and long wait times to get in to therapy as a client.

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

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

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

Suggested Amendments to Strengthen Purpose/Legislative Intent . . .

We would like to offer some black-letter amendments to clarify the language on **page 46, lines 8-17** of this bill relating to the supervision of social workers seeking licensure as a “Licensed Clinical Social Worker” as follows:

“Services provided by a supervised licensed social worker [work] or L.S.W. [intern] obtaining post-masters clinical social work experience under the supervision of a Hawaii licensed clinical social worker or individual identified in subsection (a)(3)(D) to qualify for a license as a licensed clinical social worker shall be eligible for insurance reimbursement; provided that the supervising licensed clinical social worker’s services are eligible for reimbursement as a contracted provider; provided further that the billed rate for the supervised social worker [work] or L.S.W. [intern] is commensurate with the requisite level of training.”

We also believe the language in HRS 467E-6(8) should be revised to replace the phrase relating to “clinical social work interns” to reflect the current practice, which is to use the phrase: **“under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker L.C.S.W.”**

We believe these amendments make clear that billing must be done through the supervising Licensed Clinical Social Worker. This is important as there is currently confusion in insurance billing practices.

Moreover, HRS 467E authorizes those with a Masters in Social Work (M.S.W.) degree to obtain a “License in Social Work” or “L.S.W.”, as set forth in HRS sections 467E-2. Through the L.S.W. licensure, the *supervised* clinical services provided by the L.S.W. qualifies for insurance reimbursement as part of their clinical training to obtain status as a “Licensed *Clinical* Social Worker” (L.C.S.W.). HRS 467E-7(3)(C) requires this supervised training of M.S.W.s to qualify for an L.C.S.W..

While a practitioner with a M.S.W. does not need a L.S.W. to fulfill the hours of clinical supervision required to obtain an L.C.S.W., we are seeking to establish a mechanism so the L.S.W.'s supervised clinical services can be reimbursed under their supervising L.C.S.W.'s insurance. This is the crux of these proposals: eliminating a requirement that these practitioners work many years for free before achieving clinical licensure, risking brain drain and burgeoning mental health provider shortages.

In this effort, we want to emphasize the “**clinical**” nature of the licenses we hope to be established through these proposals – which would allow insurance reimbursement for the services provided by supervisees/trainees gaining the required training, skills, and guidance necessary to independently perform one-on-one *clinical* therapy.

Additionally, with respect to the “Practice of Social Work,” and the “Limitations of Scope of Practice,” as defined and outlined in HRS Sections 467E-1 and 467E-1.5 respectively, it is important to recognize that “licensed bachelor social workers” (L.B.S.W.s) and “licensed social workers” (L.S.W.s) are NOT authorized to independently perform “Clinical diagnosis or psychotherapy, or both, [as may be] provided by a licensed clinical social worker [L.C.S.W.]” pursuant to the definition of the “Practice of Social Work” in HRS 467E-1(8). (*Underlining added.*)

To reiterate, the current law *already* allows insurance reimbursement for the clinical services provided by those with a “License in Social Work” (“L.S.W.”) who are pursuing a *clinical* license (L.C.S.W.) pursuant to the requirements outlined in HRS 467E-7(C)(3) – which requires supervision by a Licensed “Clinical” Social Worker (L.C.S.W.) that meets the requirements set forth in HRS 467E-7(3)(D).

In light of the above, we believe that **use of the term “social work intern” and/or “clinical social work intern” in this bill, as well as in its description – read in conjunction with the term “intern” in the current statute regarding licensing exemptions in HRS 467E-6(3) and (8) - lends to further confusion;** tending to imply that such interns are not already licensed social workers (L.S.W.s) and/or may not yet have achieved the academic requirements to receive *any* degree, including a bachelor’s degree. Moreover, the term “intern” is NOT defined in the definition section of HRS 467E-1.

Such a change is supported by the use of the term “intern” in the statutes regulating Marriage and Family Therapists and Mental Health Counselors – which refer to students engaged in an academic program, NOT licensed practitioners, as L.S.W.s would be referred to in this bill.

In this vein to provide more clarity, **we also recommend that existing statutory language on page 44, lines 17 -p.45, line 10 which appears to “grandfather” potential clinical supervisors between July 1, 2004 – July 1, 2009 be repealed,** as this language is now moot and potentially confusing.

We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in SB1444, HB1242, and HB1830 explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. We therefore **respectfully request that SB343’s purpose language be amended to include much of the language of these other bills,** in addition to two additional enumerated purposes:

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

Finally, **we support recommendations from other mental health professionals to remove the requirement that associate licensees in Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling pass their licensing exam *before* obtaining an “associate license”, [as provided on p. 3, lines 12-13; and p. 18, lines 16-18]** as this creates another financial and logistical burden to potential providers. Removing these testing requirements would be consistent with the removal of such a burden for psychologists on page 37, lines 16-18, which we hope to retain.

We thank you for your careful attention to this critical mental health access bill and are available for further questions and clarifications.

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

Sincerely,

 *Sonja Bigalke-Bannan*, MSW, LCSW

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LCSW

Executive Director, National Association of Social Workers- Hawai’i Chapter

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 12:27:34 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Gustin	Testifying for Pau Hana Counseling, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings, my name is Dr. Erin Gustin, MA, PsyD and I am a licensed clinical psychologist and the founder and owner of one of Hawai'i's largest mental health counseling centers, Pau Hana Counseling, LLC. We currently employ 40 therapists and serve almost 2000 residents of Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of this bill being passed. The current state of mental health services on this island is untenable. We turn away hundreds of Hawai'i residents every month who desperately need mental health services due to lack of availability of licensed clinicians. And yet, we have half a dozen associate therapists email us every month, trying to get jobs as therapists to help Hawai'i residents. There is a huge disconnect between services needed vs our ability to provide them. As a large counseling organization, who has been dedicated to serving the Hawaiian islands for almost 10 years, in the current state of affairs, we are left with two choices, either to not pay our associate counselors for the hard work they do, or to force clients to pay cash for the intern services. Many of these Hawai'i residents that we are asking to pay cash have great insurance that they pay a lot of money for that they really want to use for services, and we end up turning a great deal of people away that desperately need help because of this reason. Passing this bill would greatly improve the accessibility of mental health services to our Hawai'i residents. We would be able to pay associates for their services, and allow residents to use their insurance for services. Cash pay is not sustainable long term for many of our residents, and thus we end up not really serving their needs. As a counseling center, we take almost nothing from these cash pay clients for them to be able to receive services and to make sure that our associates get paid and complete their hours necessary to become licensed therapists. With rising prices of everything in Hawai'i, it is becoming more and more difficult to live here, and most associate therapists cannot provide services and get their hours without some sort of stipend. If this bill were passed, it would link the need for services with the need for insurance reimbursements that is desperately needed for us therapists to continue to provide mental health services to our residents.

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 3:43:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joanne Okika Shigeke Qinaau	Testifying for Pilina Center for Wellbeing	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai Kākou,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

As a Mixed Kanaka Maoli born and raised in 'Ewa Beach and Honolulu, I'm currently trying to find a way to come back home to contribute to community. I'm a PhD student in Clinical Psychology at UH Mānoa, on internship at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center/Harvard Medical School. I have found that the path home entails being underpaid for a significant amount of time as I aim to seek licensure. The path is much more equitable in other states, with licensure requirements that honor the advanced skillset that PhD graduates from APA-accredited programs

possess. I urge you to pass this legislation today, so I, and other helping professionals like me, can see a clear vision for a future of service in our homelands.

Mālama Pono,

Jo Qina‘au, MA, EYT

Pilina Center for Wellbeing

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 4:30:43 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Kim	Testifying for The Catalyst Group, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Richard Kim, Ph.D.

Clinical Director

The Catalyst Group, LLC

Psychological Services

rkim@tcgoc.com

(808) 739-1992

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,



Testimony in Support of SB343 Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health

Dear Committee Members,

I **strongly support Senate Bill 343**, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i is a Hawaii nonprofit that was founded in 1989. Our mission is to provide professional, accessible behavioral health counseling sensitive to the spiritual traditions of individuals, families, and communities in Hawaii, regardless of their ability to pay.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. There is an increased need for mental health services, and difficulties hiring and retaining licensed professionals. The licensure process means that recent graduates must choose between completing required hours and being paid for their services so that they can afford to live in Hawai'i.

SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** This bill encourages recent graduates and those entering the mental health field to become licensed in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 increases the community's access to qualified professionals.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Rachelle Chang
Executive Director

Celebrating 35 Years of Service

1020 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, HI 96814 • Phone: (808) 545-2740 • Fax: (808) 545-2852
www.samaritancounselingcenterhawaii.org • Email: info@samaritanhawaii.org



Subject: SB 343-- Support

Dear Members of the Conference Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB343. The Hawai'i Counselors Association (HCA) Executive Board and members support SB343. HCA currently has over 100 members who provide mental health counseling and related services to the community or are enrolled in graduate programs. Almost a third of our members are graduate students who would benefit directly from the passing of SB343. This does not include recent graduates who are currently working on their post-graduate experience. The HCA Executive Board and the majority of members (who have provided feedback) expressed strong support for SB343. We feel strongly that the bill would open opportunities for graduates of mental health-related programs to enter the field while increasing access to mental health services in our communities, particularly underserved populations. These benefits are seen in over 20 other states that have already established associate-level licensure for mental health professionals.

The intent of SB343 is to expand the quality of mental health services by allowing provisional/associate-level licensure for mental health practitioners. Hawaii currently has a shortage of licensed mental health professionals, and many providers have waitlists. SB343 will help to address the shortage of mental health providers in Hawaii by allowing graduate-level professionals to enter the field at an associate level, thus increasing the number of qualified professionals in the mental health field. It will also create a career pathway for graduates of mental health-related programs, including social work, mental health and professional counseling, marriage and family therapy, and clinical psychology.

Additionally, the HCA Executive Board offers comments in acknowledgment and support of appropriating the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Professional Vocational Licensing with additional funds for necessary personnel and improvements to database infrastructure, which are crucial to the implementation of this bill.

Overall, SB343 will create more job opportunities for pre-license mental health professionals while also addressing the need for more providers and improving access to services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 343.

Sincerely,

Christine M Park, PhD, LMHC, REAT, NCC
President, Hawai'i Counselors Association

Sample Written Testimony

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges emerging professionals face in our field and the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



Christine Walton, PhD., BCBA-D., LBA
Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc
564 South Street
Honolulu, Hi 96813
(808) 591-1173



To: Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing Date/Time: Friday, January 26, 2024 at 1:00 pm

Re: Testimony to Strongly Support of SB 343

From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center

Dear Members of the Committee,

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) fully endorses SB 343 as it presents a crucial opportunity to create a more efficient pathway for recent graduates and individuals entering the mental health field. The proposed legislation allows these aspiring professionals to take their licensure exams sooner, expediting their entry into active service. By enabling insurance reimbursements in certain situations, SB 343 also contributes to making mental health care more affordable and accessible.

HHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i 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. We support increased access to mental health services, but strongly feel these services should be outside the correctional setting.

We believe that this bill serves as a vital steppingstone for qualified individuals to swiftly transition into active service, particularly through licensure waivers. The streamlined process for licensure exams not only benefits the professionals but also addresses the growing need for mental health services in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, LCSW, MSW
Executive Director
Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center

Written Testimony

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.
Sincerely,

Chelsea Huntington [Practicum Student/ Behavioral Health] [317-408-3857 /
Chunt44@hawaii.edu]

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 10:13:45 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaime D'Eredita	Testifying for Collective Current	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Our community needs support.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Jaime D'Eredita, MSW, LCSW, CSAC

Owner, Collective Current

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 8:59:19 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

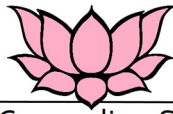
Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeremy Kalan	Testifying for Center for Healing & Transformation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As the owner of a Counseling & Psychiatry Center in Kailua, HI, I know how impossible it currently is to hire enough therapists to meet the enormous demand for services on our islands. I have received hundreds of resumes from post-grad therapists needing hours toward licensure and since we cannot bill insurance for their services, I cannot hire them. This bill will help immensely with significantly increasing the amount of therapists to serve our Hawaii community. Right now, there are thousands of people sitting with trauma stuck in their bodies and horrible pain without help to heal because we do not have this provisional licensing in place. This bill will be a giant step to help those thousands of people in need.

Mahalo nui loa,

Jeremy Kalan, CEO, Center for Healing & Transformation



Fujimoto Counseling Services LLC

Hearing January 26, 2024 1:00 PM

Testimony In Strong Support of SB343 Relating to Mental Health

To The Senate Committee on Health & Human Services,

My name is Jamie Fujimoto and I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and have been a therapist for 25 years and in private practice for 20 years, providing therapy to adolescents, adults, and couples in Hawai'i. I am strongly in support of SB343, as there is a shortage of therapists in Hawai'i and an abundance of quality pre-licensed therapists currently working for various State and private agencies providing counseling to those in need. These pre-licensed therapists could help to eliminate the shortage of mental health providers in the private practice setting in Hawai'i that has become so prevalent over the past few years.

There have been two major recent mental health crises in Hawai'i: COVID and the Maui tragedy. Throughout the COVID lockdown, I was the busiest that I have been in my career, with 10-12 clients on my waitlist on any given day, waiting for a cancelation and jumping at the opportunity to have a session with me, as anxiety was heightened in so many people at that time. My colleagues experienced the same as well. Many of those in need were turned away by therapists because there were not enough of us to handle the demand, with everyone from children to healthcare workers being affected by the COVID pandemic.

With Maui, every single client of mine was affected by the tragedy, even those who did not have loved ones directly affected in Maui. Many were, and still are, heartbroken, grieving, and in need of mental health services by those who understand the culture of Hawai'i.

With the passage of SB343, local pre-licensed therapists who are seeking their clinical hours and training would be able to be trained and mentored by local seasoned therapists like myself in the private practice setting, which would better prepare them for practicing on their own and providing quality care to our people. Training under experienced therapists in Hawai'i would be able to help pre-licensed therapists to not only learn to be culturally sensitive to the people of Hawai'i, but also to provide quality services in the private practice setting to those in our community.

This bill is essential to help shape the future of mental health care in Hawai'i by expanding the way private practice therapists are trained as well as increasing the number of therapists available to those seeking help through their private insurances. Please support this much needed bill.

With Gratitude,

Jamie K Fujimoto, LCSW
Fujimoto Counseling Services, LLC
(808)258-0018

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 12:57:49 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Val Umphress	Testifying for Oahu Psychological Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:



Oahu Psychological Services

99-128 Aiea Heights Dr, Suites 302 & 305, Aiea HI 96701

808-488-9288 (office) 808-487-3106 (fax)

January 26, 2024

Dear Senate Committee on Health & Human Services,

My name is Val Umphress and I have been a Hawai'i State Licensed Psychologist for 26 years. Most of these years has been in a mental health group practice providing services to children, adolescents, and adults. I am strongly in support of SB343, as there is a shortage of therapists from all mental health disciplines in Hawai'i. In our group practice we usually have a waiting list of several months for our therapists (comprised of psychologists, licensed social workers, licensed marriage and family therapists). With the advent of telehealth, those on the outer islands now have a platform through which they can have greater access to mental health services; however, unfortunately due to the shortage of therapists, most outer island residents in need cannot obtain regular psychotherapy online. Particularly since the Lahaina tragedy, many Maui residents are struggling to access mental health services. With the passage of SB343, pre-licensed therapists who are seeking to meet their clinical hour requirements under the supervision of a qualified, licensed therapist would be able to provide such needed services.

Thank you in advance for your support with this much needed bill.

Sincerely,

Val Umphress, Ph.D.

Director, Oahu Psychological Services

Aiea Medical Building

99-128 Aiea Heights Drive #305

Aiea HI 96789

LATE

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Erik Acuña, LCSW
Owner of Trauma Healing Hawaii
Ph: 808-445-1858
Email: erik.acuna@traumahealinghi.com

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/23/2024 1:00:59 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a social work major, I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 11:33:39 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. John Souza, Jr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Souza, Jr., LMFT, DMFT

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 12:07:02 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lucas Morgan, PhD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I am a local psychologist with experience both as an unlicensed pre-doctoral psychology trainee and as a licensed psychologist and training supervisor with a community-based non-profit clinic serving Native Hawaiian and other underserved communities in our islands.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Lucas Morgan, PhD

Licensed Psychologist and owner of Kilolani Counseling and Mindfulness Services

808-560-3090

drmorgan@kilolanicounseling.com

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in the State of Hawai'i.

I am aware of the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my written testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

With Gratitude,

Shawn Johnson, PhD, LCC
drshawnjohnson.com

4-831 Kuhio Hwy. Ste. 483-409
Kapa'a, HI. 96746
(808)378-6449

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Franklin de Gracia

CSAC, MA-MFT

frankdegracia@me.com

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 12:43:10 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Bradley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Lauren Bradley

Counseling Psychology Master's Candidate at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo

lebr@hawaii.edu, (410)652-2383

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 12:58:48 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lianne Philhower	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

As a practicing psychologist and Director of Clinical Training at Hawaii School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. I have personally had to turn many service seeking individuals away when I would have preferred to have had them seen by a pre-licensed professional under my mentorship and supervision.

By aligning Hawaii with other states that already allow an associate/training license, we will be working more effectively towards meeting current mental health service needs.

SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping-stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Lianne T. Philhower, PsyD

Clinical Psychologist/Associate Professor

Email: LPhilhower.PsyD@gmail.com

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Okumura

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Ho'oulu Counseling

(808) 465-3005

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 1:07:27 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lori stitt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Aloha kakou,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name] [Your Title/Position] [Your Contact Information]

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Lori Stitt

University of Hawaii at Hilo

Counselling Psychology, Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Graduate Student, MA CP May 2024

Intern Hale Malama, mental health services at Kauai Community College

Intern CAMHD Kauai Family Guidance Center

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 1:19:16 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannah Katherine Hancock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Hannah Hancock, MSW, LCSW and I am a licensed clinical social worker and the Clinical Director of one of Hawai'i's largest mental health counseling centers, Pau Hana Counseling, LLC. We currently employ 40 therapists and serve almost 2000 residents of Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of The Associate Licensing bill (SB343) which we have been advocating for over the last three years, has made significant strides thanks to the support of the house majority.

Why This Bill Matters: Enhanced Access to Mental Health Care: This bill will establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, significantly expanding access to mental health services in our communities.

Insurance Reimbursements: It authorizes insurance reimbursements under certain conditions, making mental health services more accessible and affordable.

Flexibility in Licensing: The bill allows for licensure waivers and eases the process for upcoming professionals, ensuring a smoother entry into the field. The current state of mental health services on this island is untenable. We turn away hundreds of Hawai'i residents every month who desperately need mental health services due to lack of availability of licensed clinicians. And yet, we have half a dozen associate therapists email us every month, trying to get jobs as therapists to help Hawai'i residents. There is a huge disconnect between services needed vs our ability to provide them. As a large counseling organization, who has been dedicated to serving the Hawaiian islands for almost 10 years, in the current state of affairs, we are left with two choices, either to not pay our associate counselors for the hard work they do, or to force clients to pay cash for the intern services. Many of these Hawai'i residents that we are asking to pay cash have great insurance that they pay a lot of money for that they really want to use for services, and we end up turning a great deal of people away that desperately need help because of this reason.

Passing this bill would greatly improve the accessibility of mental health services to our Hawai'i residents. We would be able to pay associates for their services, and allow residents to use their insurance for services. Cash pay is not sustainable long term for many of our residents, and thus we end up not really serving their needs. As a counseling center, we take almost nothing from these cash pay clients for them to be able to receive services and to make sure that our associates get paid and complete their hours necessary to become licensed therapists. With rising prices of everything in Hawai'i, it is becoming more and more difficult to live here, and most associate therapists cannot provide services and get their hours without some sort of stipend. If this bill were passed, it would link the need for services with the need for insurance reimbursements that is desperately needed for us therapists to continue to provide mental health services to our residents.

Sincerely,
Hannah K. Hancock, MSW, LCSW
Private Practice Therapist
Clinical Director of Pau Hana Counseling, LLC
NASW Board of Directors, East Hawai'i Representative
Cell Phone: (808) 464-5962

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 1:34:57 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nirit Stephens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

Many states have already approved an associate license, which eased the pressure on the mental health system. More consumers were able to get services from associate level therapist and get compensated for their services. These professionals are already receiving services from these pre-licensed therapists, but this would allow for insurance reimbursement, which is only fair considering the challenges on the job and the level of burnout among therapists, newcomers and veterans alike. This would be the only difference: allowing new therapists who are already providing services to be compensated for their work.

Our state is in dire need for more mental health professionals. Again, most states have already approved similar bills. Let us be at the forefront and support more accessibility for consumers and more opportunities for emerging professionals!

Sincerely,

Nirit Stephens

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 1:37:47 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Regarding **SB 343** and **SB 1444**: While the language here does not make specific mention of clinical social workers (granted I do not know the history for this in this state), this makes so much sense for *every* mental health profession. In NYS, for clinical social work, we have long had a process for obtaining limited permits for LMSW and LCSW candidates for MSW graduates who attended an accredited program, are employed in a setting that will render them "license-eligible", and with direct oversight and supervision by a qualified supervisor. Importantly, this is an excellent way to boost the capacity for patient care in a safe and manageable way, helps ensure high quality supervision and mentoring to new mental health clinicians, and allows for expansion of billable services in the context of integrated behavioral health (not just co-location) so that you can engage more junior clinicians to do frontline work and case management while engaging more senior clinicians for higher level billable mental health services and leadership roles.

Perhaps social workers already are accounted for in this process, but if not, it especially highlights other issues related to what appears to be a gross misunderstanding of the training, licensure process, and integrity of promoting and utilizing clinical social work as a healthcare/mental health care profession in this state (e.g., why are we not credentialed through the state education department as in other states/why are we included in the credentialing process for skilled vocations, no disrespect intended, rather than with other healthcare professionals?). This presents an unnecessary barrier to expanding the mental health workforce here, and is neither reasonable nor correct.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Amber Drake

UH Hilo Clinical Mental Health Counseling Graduate Student

NAMI Maui Affiliate Leader

801-361-1791

amber@namihawaii.org

adrake8@hawaii.edu

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 2:25:20 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Ferguson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Rachel Ferguson

Student in the Counseling Psychology Master's program at UH Hilo

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 3:15:17 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Powers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Emily Powers

Mental Health Counseling Intern

25-246 Pukana La St, Hilo HI 96778

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 3:48:37 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marina Galvan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name] [Your Title/Position] [Your Contact Information]

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

Marina Sternthall (Galvan)

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 3:48:53 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Bartholomew	Testifying for Brighter Bound	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343- Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i. As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Private Group Practice owner I have witnessed firsthand the high need of individuals seeking mental health care and challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field.

My first year in private practice, I had a full caseload in 3 months due to the high demand of those seeking mental health counseling. All of the therapists at my practice also have full caseloads. This trend has not stopped in the 4 years I have been in private practice. It is not uncommon that prospect clients tell me that they have already called 10 other therapists that are all full. Most people want to utilize their insurance to pay for mental health counseling. Without their insurance, the average counseling session costs around \$125 in our state, which most people cannot afford.

The pre licensed professionals face many challenges on the path towards licensure which include: obtaining experience, training, and supervision. Many are seeking work, however due to the lack of insurance reimbursement it is difficult for companies to hire them. In my small practice we can only take 1-2 pre-licensed people on at a time as a way to "give back to the field and help our community." It costs us money to train and help the pre-licensed individuals and I can see why most businesses choose rather to not help these individuals obtain licensure. In addition to this, the pre-licensed individuals often also have to work full time jobs elsewhere to cover themselves financially while they are working towards licensure; the high work hours and nature of the work can lead to burnout before licensure is obtained.

SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

- 1. Helps address the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.**
- 2. Helps community members get affordable healthcare when they need it.**

3. Reduces the risk of burnout for mental healthcare professionals by making the path to licensure more obtainable.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in addressing the mental health concerns in Hawai'i. I look forward to a day in Hawai'i where I don't have to put someone on a waiting list, or "wish them the best " in finding a counselor. This will not only have an immediate positive impact on our communities but also benefit the mental health professionals as well. Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Melissa Bartholomew, LMHC, Owner of Brighter Bound, mel@brighterbound.com

CHARMAINE HIGA-MCMILLAN, PHD
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST, #1010
HILO, HI 96720

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am a licensed psychologist and I am a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. I am also currently serving as the Director of the [MA Program in Counseling Psychology \(Clinical Mental Health Specialization\)](#) at UH Hilo. I am testifying as an individual citizen of Hilo, HI.

SB343 aims to establish provisional or associate level licensure requirements for Mental Health Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists and Psychologists in the years prior to full licensure. A primary purpose of the Bill is to authorize insurance reimbursements to associate license holders in certain circumstances. This Bill not only creates more job opportunities for mental health professionals, but it will also improve access to mental health care for the citizens of Hawaii.

SB343 would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on the neighbor islands, where there is a significant shortage of qualified mental health providers, to help meet the demand for mental health services. **This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community. Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Charmaine", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charmaine Higa-McMillan, Ph.D.

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 4:01:28 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
YiLin Fang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,
YiLin Fang

yilinf@hawaii.edu

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 4:22:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sample Written Testimony

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Lisa Lee, PsyD

Clinical Psychologist

LisaLeePsyD@gmail.com

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 4:30:04 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia J'Anthony	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

With warm regards,

Cynthia J'Anthony, PHD

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 4:42:59 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Britt Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Britt Young, M.A., LMFT

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 5:39:00 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isabella Dagher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Hawaii Capital Committee Members,

I am submitting a testimony to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343. I am writing you in request to establish a provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I am a graduate student and have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by fellow emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. Oftentimes graduate students in our field face major economic disparities, housing insecurity, and exploitation by the job sector.

In my own experience, I am overqualified for many part-time positions yet do not have flexible working capabilities to commit to a supplementary full-time job and support my family due to training as a full-time clinical psychology graduate student. Even with this barrier of time restraints, I have obtained jobs in this process to support the rising costs of living in Hawaii. In these transitional positions, I have been taken advantage of and underpaid for being overqualified and overasked in tasks within my roles.

On the other hand, as a pre-licensed therapist, my clients/patients have to pay out of pocket for my services which limits accessibility to care and hinders my ability to gain sufficient hours towards licensure. Additionally, clinicians who supervise pre-licensed therapists in training may also take advantage of our free labor and dedication to their clinic, which also creates tension and vulnerability toward exploitation in our internship and post-doc positions and relationships. By the time pre-licensed therapists make it to licensure, we are burnt out, underpaid, and/or exploited for our need to gain clinical training hours, tied up in debt, and struggle with starting into our careers as mental health service providers with a sense of wellness and economic stability.

SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the

mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.

2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals in creating a sustainable career path but, also, will have a profound impact on the well-being and quality of care within our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Warm Regards,

Isabella Dagher

Clinical Psychology PhD Student & Pre-licensed Therapist

e: isabelladagher@gmail.com

p: (706) 957-2727

Jeffrey D. Stern, Ph.D.
1433 Kamehameha IV Rd
Honolulu, HI 96819

THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
SEN. JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SEN. HENRY J. C. AQUINO, VICE-CHAIR

Testimony in support of SB 343, Relating to Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Hearing: Jan. 26, 2024 1:00 P.M.

Jan. 24, 2022

Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the State Senate committee on Health and Human Services. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

As a professor of and supervisor for graduate students in clinical psychology (PsyD students), I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities.

SB343 addresses these crucial issues by creating opportunities for emerging professionals. By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i. Additionally, SB 343's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population. Finally, by allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

Most importantly, this legislation will improve access to care while ensuring oversight and it will allow our post-docs to begin their careers in Hawai'i rather than moving to the mainland or elsewhere, where they have associate licensure.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my mana'o.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Stern, PhD
Assistant Professor of Psychology
Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 6:55:48 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse Senate Bill 343, a pivotal initiative aimed at establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

As someone currently navigating the challenges of being an "Intern MFT" in the State of Hawaii, I intimately understand the hurdles faced by emerging professionals in our field due to the absence of an associate license, a support system that many other states have successfully implemented. The limitations imposed by our current status not only hinder our ability to be reimbursed for services but also place us under significant duress, reducing the time we can dedicate to serving our communities.

The absence of an associate license compels emerging professionals like myself to seek alternative income sources to sustain a living in Hawaii, creating an additional layer of complexity. This reality underscores the urgency of Senate Bill 343, as it addresses a crucial need for financial stability while simultaneously fostering a conducive environment for emerging professionals to serve their communities effectively.

Moreover, the bill is a beacon of hope for those of us who have faced challenges in finding employment that aligns with our field of expertise, hindering our readiness for licensure. Senate Bill 343 is not just a piece of legislation; it's a catalyst for closing the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities.

I urge you to consider the significant positive impact Senate Bill 343 can have on the mental health landscape in Hawai'i and support its swift passage.

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will

make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.

3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Koch, Intern MFT

509-781-1559

kochkounseling@gmail.com

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

As a graduate student currently working through the MFT program at Chaminade University and as a lifelong Hawai'i resident and Native Hawaiian woman, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as appalling gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities, especially our Native ones. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to our Native Hawaiian communities as well as a broader segment of our general population here in the islands.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Balish, jacquelinebalish@gmail.com

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,





Michael A. Kellar, Psy.D.

24 January 2024

RE: SUPPORT for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential steppingstone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Kellar, Psy.D.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael A. Kellar, Psy.D.

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 8:38:23 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jazlyn Bulatao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Jazlyn Bulatao support this SB343 because in the field of mental health, we need more therapists but the clients and issues in the world outweigh the therapists due to the amount of time it takes to get licensed. So many therapists are at their full caseloads with many on the list so passing this bill will help aid society in conjunction with therapists who are working towards their licensure.

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 9:22:18 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katrin Skeele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Katrin Skeele, Student, kat.skeele@gmail.com

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 9:29:37 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Jessica Rosenfeld, PsyD

980-297-0603

drjessicarosenfeld@gmail.com

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Jessica Wong, LCSW

Owner of DaVine Counseling Services, LLC

P.O. Box 13056

Aiea, HI 96701

808-207-0637

JessicaWong@davinecounseling.org

www.davinecounseling.org

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 10:12:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

Hawai'i is in great need of helping professionals, especially with current licensed providers being overworked and unable to take on new clients. This bill will help to encourage students to stay in Hawai'i to serve the growing needs of the community. With the high cost of living along with high student loan repayment, this bill will help to financially support students AND help to increase access to care. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kendyl Oshiro, Doctoral Candidate in Clinical Psychology, (808) 348-4439

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 10:23:15 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tina Bartsch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Tina Bartsch, MA

(520) 975-6091

bartschtina@yahoo.com

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/24/2024 10:56:05 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Brito	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals
Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals: By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.

Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services: The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.

Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery: Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Sincerely,
Dr. Janet Brito

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 12:55:17 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ELIZABETH K TAITANO, PHD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth K. Taitano, Ph.D.,

Clinical Psychologist

(808) 341-432i8

January 25, 2024

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai i.

I have worked in the behavioral health field on Maui, Hawaii for over 20 years. During that time I have witnessed firsthand the challenges emerging professionals face in our field and the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. This legislation is even more crucial to the mental health service care delivery and our economy in Maui after the devastating Lahaina wildfires. We continue to see an increase in substance use and mental health challenges across the entire island. Sadly, this will likely continue to get worse unless we have local professionals who understand the island and its people. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps address the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader population segment.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

With Aloha,

Dr. Lisa Ponichtera, PhD LMFT CSAC

lisabd@hawaii.rr.com

808-214-4141

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 4:18:20 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Claxton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Claxton

Mental Health Counselor

Malama Family Recovery Center

elizabethmclaxton@gmail.com

808-269-4661

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 5:07:53 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Castaldi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this measure

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 6:23:44 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

- 1. Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
- 2. Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
- 3. Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name] [Your Title/Position] [Your Contact Information]

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you very much for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

Brian R. Lim, PhD

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 7:09:58 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Ishihara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Esteemed Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Emma Ishihara, LSW

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 7:34:23 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ray Teramoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Ray Teramoto, M.D.

Child and Adult Psychiatrist

98-211 Pali Momi St. Suite 600

Aiea, HI 96701

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 7:57:03 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miriam Goldberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name] [Your Title/Position] [Your Contact Information]

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

Miriam Goldberg, LCSW

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 8:23:20 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crystal Charkowski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB343.

I am a recent MSW graduate from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. A majority of the cohort I graduated with are currently in the testing and licensing process for our Licences Social Work (LSW). I was so grateful for my education that helped me pass my exam and I am officially licensed in the state of Hawaii. I serve the community of Kailua-Kona on the island of Hawaii, but work for an organization that serves the entire population of the island of Hawaii.

I am fortunate to work for a company that is providing supervised psychotherapy hours as part of my job title. However that is not the case for the majority of my 27 cohort members. Most students who graduate with a Masters of Social Work then scrounge for psychotherapy hours in an attempt to collect the required 3000 hours of supervision if they want to pursue the Licensed Clinical Social Work path. This creates a 2-5 year gap of mental health services to our state as educated and passionate social workers are limited to the jobs they can do because of Insurance billing. It's bad for the new MSW's as we have to work multiple jobs, and beg for supervision, often trying to justify our hardwork as applicable to the 3000 supervision hours which are demotivating barriers. It's bad for the people of Hawaii who needs social work and mental health services as it limits access to mental health support by the eager and ready LSW's. It's bad for our state because the health of our population directly affects employment rates, voting, crime, substance use, criminal justice, taxes and so much more.

This bill would allow a LCSW to bill for the work done by the LSW which will increase the supervision bond, increase access to quality supervision and job opportunities for newly educated social workers and increase access to quality mental health care to our community.

I look forward to the changes coming in the future for my chosen field of service!

Thank you for the hard work you do!

Crystal Charkowski, MSW, LSW

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 8:50:12 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanela Kamahalohanuilai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support Senate Bill 343.

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 9:08:53 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Agcaoili Mills	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Andrea A. Mills, LCSW

andreamills150@gmail.com

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 9:50:06 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Francoise Acra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.

Additionally, as the spouse of a former soldier, I know first-hand that there are several trained clinicians who are currently stationed in Hawai'i with their service members, but are unable to provide services (and help alleviate the significant backlog and unmet needs due to lack of available providers) either because they are pre-licensed and still need to accrue supervised hours (which a provisional or associate-level licensure would allow them to do) or because they are experiencing significant delays, or are unwilling to engage in the lengthy process of obtaining their licensure if they will only be stationed in HI for 3 or so years.

1. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
2. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

C. Francoise Acra, Ph.D.

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 9:58:24 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathaniel Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel B. Smith, LCSW

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 10:13:08 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Polk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Emily Polk, Counseling Intern at Hope Services Hawaii

mpolk12@gmail.com

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

Emily Polk

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 10:28:05 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexis Tansey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Support for SB343 - Increasing Access to Mental Health Services in Hawaii

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB343, a crucial piece of legislation that addresses the pressing need to enhance mental health services in Hawaii. As a resident who understands the challenges posed by the high cost of living in our state, I believe that this bill will significantly contribute to building a healthier community.

Firstly, the cost of living in Hawaii is exceptionally high, making it difficult for individuals to pursue careers in fields that require extensive education and training, such as mental health. SB343's provision to allow Pre-Licensed Therapists to bill for their time is a commendable step toward providing a financial incentive for professionals to enter the Mental Health field. This, in turn, will help diversify and expand our pool of mental health practitioners.

Furthermore, Hawaii is facing a critical shortage of mental health professionals. By enabling pre-licensed therapists to bill for their time, SB343 addresses this shortage directly, offering a practical solution to the growing demand for mental health services. This legislation aligns with the urgent need to bolster our mental health workforce, ensuring that individuals in our community receive timely and accessible care.

Supporting SB343 also means recognizing the value of a master's graduate's time and expertise. It acknowledges the dedication and hard work that these professionals put into their education and training, making it fair and just for them to be compensated for their

post-graduation time. This recognition not only benefits the individuals directly involved but contributes to the overall improvement of mental health services in our state.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support SB343 and believe that its passage will have a lasting positive impact on the mental health landscape in our state. I kindly request your support for this vital legislation, ensuring a healthier and more resilient community for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexis Tansey

808-352-2508

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

In my personal life, I have been made aware of the overwhelming need for more professionals to provide mental health services to the general population of Hawai'i. I have friends and family that have expressed difficulty with accessing mental health professionals due to the shortage of qualified mental health professionals.

I am currently working in the behavioral health field with children with disabilities as a Behavior Analyst. In my work, I have witnessed firsthand the need for more professionals to provide mental health services to children with disabilities as well as the family members of those with disabilities.

While I am not actively practicing, I am also a licensed social worker and I hope to pursue my clinical licensure to provide mental health services to the general population of Hawai'i. This has been my passion and ultimate career goal. However, I have personally experienced the challenges as an emerging professional in the social work field to accrue clinical hours needed for clinical licensure. I've been struggling to find direct experience opportunities working with and receiving supervision from clinical social workers to develop my knowledge and skills in the clinical setting that I intend to function in once I receive my clinical licensure.

SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.

3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities. Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Kylie Teramoto, MSW, LSW, BCBA, LBA

Contact Information:

(808) 398-8277

kylieteramoto@gmail.com

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 10:39:14 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keli Chambers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to express my unequivocal support for SB343, which aims to allow Licensed Social Workers to bill insurance under the supervision of Licensed Clinical Social Workers in Hawaii, provisional licensure for Marriage and Family therapists and Mental Health Counselors, and allows licensure waivers for psychologists under certain circumstances. This legislation is crucial in addressing the current provider shortage and ensuring accessible mental health services for our residents.

The shortage of mental health providers is a pressing issue that adversely affects individuals seeking support. By creating provisional licensures and allowing supervised licensees to bill for their services, we can expand the pool of qualified professionals who can contribute to meeting the growing demand for mental health services in Hawaii. This approach not only maximizes the skills and expertise of more mental health professionals, but also provides a sustainable solution to alleviate the strain on our mental health care system.

Further, many LSW's and other mental health professionals are already working under the supervision of independent licensed professionals for necessary licensure experience. These providers are not equitably compensated for this additional work. By allowing these supervised licensees to bill for their supervision work, it will enhance their economic wellbeing and will therefore have a positive impact in overall quality of care. Licensed Social Workers must have a Master's Degree in Social Work from an accredited university, pass an AWSB LSW exam, and maintain continuing education requirements. Provisional LMFT and LMHC also have Master's Degrees in their respective fields and must work under supervision for 3-6 years before obtaining licensure. The average salary of an LSW and unlicensed LMFT and LMHC in Hawaii is around \$60,000. Comparatively, Registered Nurses require a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from an accredited university and must pass the NCLEX-RN exam. The average salary of an RN in Hawaii is around \$105,000. LSW's and RN's both work directly under the supervision of a higher licensed professional and provide direct services to clients. During COVID-19, nurses saw pay raises that enhanced interest in nursing to meet the needs of the population. Social Workers and therapists did not receive the same support, and has therefore led to a shortage in mental health providers in the state due to low wages compared with lesser qualified positions.

I believe that by allowing current LSW's and provisionally licensed mental health professionals to bill insurance for direct services under the supervision of independent practitioners, more clients will receive the care they need in a more timely manner. I kindly urge you to consider the positive impact that this legislation can have on our community's mental

health, economic impact, and streamlined access to mental health care. By supporting and enacting this proposal, we take a significant step towards meeting this much needed support.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I appreciate your commitment to the well-being of our community.

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my dedicated support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I passionately believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will profoundly impact our communities' well-being. Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Shaun Kamisato

MSW Student

Shaunwk@hawaii.edu

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 10:45:31 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naghum Alfulajj	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Naghum Alfulaij, Ph.D.
University of Hawaii Research Associate & Current Mental Health Counseling Student
Alfulaij@hawaii.edu

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 10:48:38 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, it will have a profound impact on the wellbeing of our communities. Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Matthew Johnson, MS, (and future Hawaii-licensed LMHC)

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name] [Your Title/Position] [Your Contact Information]

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 11:03:12 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brittney Zeeman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

- **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
- **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
- **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Brittney Zeeman, MSW Student, brittnyzeeman@yahoo.com

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 11:15:25 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Thornburg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Shannon Thornburg, Intern Therapist at UH- Hilo Counseling Services, 971-320-9082
sthornbu@hawaii.edu

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 11:31:00 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MARNIE HONEYCUTT	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please allow this modernization of practice and increased access to providers!

I love being a social worker and have loved my entire career here on the Big Island. It has been my privilege and honor to support my community. However, the need has continued to rise and not equal to the number of providers. It is so hard to turn down referrals; yet, it has become common practice.

I am in complete support of SB 343 & SB1444, Please help the residents of Hawai'i by allowing more access to accountable providers.

Marnie Honeycutt, LCSW

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 11:51:25 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colin Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Colin Moore
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
(808) 650-7474

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 12:00:33 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vernalyn Holokai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Committee on Health and Human Services

Rep. Joy San Buenaventura, Chair

Rep. Henry Aquino, Vice Chair

FROM: Vernalyn Holokai

DATE: 1/25/2024

RE: Testimony in support of SB343

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee,

My name is Vernalyn Holokai. I earned my Master of Social Work degree and graduated in May 2023. I recently became a Licensed Social Worker. I am in support of SB343 because it creates an associate level of licensure as a clinical social work student or trainee and allows for insurance reimbursement for services.

SB343 will align Hawai'i with nearly half of all states that already have an associate license for social workers. The interim license will help to ensure that pre-licensed social workers adhere to professional standards. I would be able to complete my licensure hours effectively. It will also promote better supervision and mentoring which is essential for mental health care.

This bill allows professionals like me, who were born and raised in Hawai'i, to stay and serve the community that generations of our families have known and loved. The knowledge that I have of resources here in my community, as well as understanding the cultural context because of being raised on Maui, allows me to better support clients as they navigate through the health system here in Hawai'i.

There has been a shortage of mental health providers here in Hawaii. The current provider-to-patient ratio makes it difficult to schedule appointments so that individuals can be seen in a

timely manner. With the Maui wildfires there is even more of a need for culturally responsive, local mental health providers. SB343 supports growing local professionals like me.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB343.

Mahalo,

Vernalyn Holokai

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 12:01:13 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am an LCSW, CSAC, writing in support of SB343. This would help expand mental health services and employment opportunities for those who want to provide services.

Thank you for your time,

Natalia Werkoff

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 12:16:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha. I'm a long time psychologist, professor, and life-long resident. I support this bill because I believe it can improve the mental health of the community. Mahalo. Sean Scanlan, Ph.D.

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

January 25, 2024

Aloha Committee Members,

I am strongly in support of SB343, Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals (MHPs) and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill. As a practicing Clinician in Private Practice, I am constantly having to turn away clients seeking mental health support and it is heartbreaking. I hate turning people away in their time of need and I often hear the same sentiment from many of my colleagues. This bill in its enactment will be able to resolve some problematic issues on multiple levels.

In addition to the shortage of available MHPs, we also lack the availability of sites where up and coming Professionals seeking their Clinical License can obtain their direct practice hours for Licensure. I am in the fortunate position where I can also provide Supervision and Training for Graduate Student Interns as well as Professional Interns seeking their Clinical License. For years now, in addressing these two deficits, I have offered their services as alternatives to clients that are unable to locate a Licensed MHP. In doing so, it helps to address the shortage of MHPs available as well as provide assistance and opportunity for Licensure Candidates to obtain their hours. This option is not very viable however, as most people must already work a full-time job while also collecting their hours. Additionally, it takes up a lot of my voluntary and donated time which can create a challenge for my own income and economic security.

This proposal would support those issues on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands where the need is often greater due to even more limited resources. This bill would also improve and incentivize on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii to meet the unique needs of our community.

Lastly, this bill would also provide more relief for the Providers currently working to support the community. I have witnessed an increase in burn-out in some of my colleagues due to the burden of sometimes over-extending themselves or getting overwhelmed with the high need. The demand for mental health services has risen to a record high. The good thing is that, as there has been a strong focus on mental health, more people are open and willing to seek counseling support. The need is there; we've been in it for years and need to address this more quickly and efficiently.

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

Respectfully,



Sharon K. Usagawa LCSW

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Kennedy Spencer, M.A., BCBA, LBA

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 12:58:32 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nadezda Arbles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need more counseling help in our community. I believe that a person who already got a Master's degree with practicum and internship should deserve to be able to get provisional licence and start practicing as soon as possible with proper mandatory supervision.

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 12:58:54 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Savana Campbell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am reaching out to express my robust endorsement for Senate Bill 343, which aims to institute provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

Having observed firsthand the hurdles confronted by emerging professionals in our field and recognizing the existing gaps in accessible mental health services, SB343 emerges as a pivotal solution by:

1. **Establishing Paths for Emerging Professionals:** This bill, through the introduction of associate licensure, provides a crucial bridge for recent graduates and those embarking on a career in the mental health field. This not only fosters their professional growth but also addresses the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Improving Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The provision for insurance reimbursements for services delivered by provisional or associate-level professionals, as outlined in the bill, will render mental health care more economically feasible and within reach for a broader cross-section of our population.
3. **Reinforcing Mental Health Care Delivery:** SB343 facilitates psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and empowers the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under specific conditions, thereby streamlining the process of integrating qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the approval of SB343 will mark a significant stride in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i, especially following the devastating wildfires. Its positive impact will not only extend to mental health professionals but, more importantly, will profoundly affect the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for taking into account my endorsement of this crucial piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Savana Campbell Associate Therapist (MS, NCC)

928-632-2121

Savana808@gmail.com

P.O. Box 1248

Puunene, HI 96748

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 12:59:39 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I am an Clinical Mental Health intern, I will graduate in the Summer 2024 and will then work on my 3000 hours. My hours will not be paid by insurance. It will be extremally hard as I am a single parent of 3 children and the only supporter of my family.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

- 1. Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals: By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.**
- 2. Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services: The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.**
- 3. Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery: Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.**

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Galina Arintcina (Chen)

808-960-0580

galinadvor@gmail.com

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 1:17:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sonia Z. Shalhout	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Sonia Z.Shalhout, Graduate Student, Northcentral University, Administrative Assistant for the Hawaii Associate for Marriage and Family Therapy, (808) 747 2659, soniahart164@yahoo.com

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 1:47:16 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Muftiah Martin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, holding licenses in the states of Hawai'i and California. This bill would go a long way towards remedying the shortage of mental health providers in our Island state. I am also a member of HIAMFT, the professional association for MFTs in Hawai'i, which supports passage of this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 2:15:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Jillian Lommori

Associate Marriage and Family Therapist

jillian.lommori@gmail.com

808.463.0845

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

Jillian Lommori, MFT

Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Representative Henry J. C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services

University of Hawaii at Manoa
2500 Campus Road
Honolulu, Hawaii
96822

January 25, 2024

Support for S.B. No. 343, Relating to Mental Health

My name is Ashley Nelson and I am a Master of Social Work student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. As a future social worker, my duty is to recognize the needs of our state in terms of mental health practitioners especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. I strongly support S.B. No. 343, Relating to Mental Health, which would allow for the expansion of access to high quality mental health services by: 1) establishing provisional or associate-level licensure requirements and reimbursement allowances for certain mental health practitioners in training; and, 2) allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing other requirements.

According to a study conducted by the National Institutes of Health, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the rates of anxiety, depression, and substance use disorder as well as intensified the rates of domestic violence and intimate partner violence, which gave rise to the “Shadow Pandemic” term. The pandemic isolated our communities and created an atmosphere of loneliness and helplessness. Thus, many individuals started searching for professional help, and although they were looking to be met with guidance, coping skills, and support, they were instead met with long waiting times, in some cases wait lists, and sometimes, no response at all.

Mental Health America’s 2023 Access to Care Rankings show that 187,000 adults in Hawaii have a mental health condition with 20% reporting that their treatment needs were unmet. I, myself, have mental health disorders and have also struggled to get care in a timely manner. It is my job as a future social worker to advocate for our communities so that they can have the access and resources they need and deserve for their mental health.

In conclusion without expanding mental health services, we will continue to perpetuate the idea that mental health is not as important as physical health. Mental health is extremely important and we must work to end the stigma and open access to care. Thus, I urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 343. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 7:03:42 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodie E. Gerson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Jodie E. Gerson, PsyD; jodiegerson@gmail.com; 702-521-7528

LATE

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/25/2024 10:38:00 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristine Miguel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

January 25, 2024

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

As a clinical social work intern, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

- 1. Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
- 2. Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
- 3. Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Kristine Miguel, MSW

LATE

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 7:21:36 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Pat Waterhouse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura and Members,

I strongly support this bill. It will provide Hawaii with more mental health workers, which is critically needed. In addition, it will stem the loss of mental health workers from Hawaii. For example, when doctorate students are looking for an internship in Hawaii they often end up having to the mainland since we do not have this provisional license. Once there and after their internship is complete they often have professional and personal ties and they remain on the mainland. We need to do what we can to keep them in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Mary Pat Waterhouse

LATE

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 7:51:17 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Rich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Laurie Rich, Hilo HI

LATE

Sample Written Testimony

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Kaliko Allen

Salvation Army Addictive Treatment Services Residential Counselor

Email: allenkhaliko@gmail.com

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 10:14:16 AM
Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Andrea Manzana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for MFTs, MHCs, and psychologists in Hawaii. Being a graduate student pursuing an LMHC, I have seen the challenges I and my colleagues face in finding ways to serve our community and apply our knowledge and skills to the populations that need us the most. Many times, we have heard stories of our mental health professionals feeling the need to leave their island home to gain the experiences they need for licensure. By supporting the SB343, we will be addressing these current and crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities. Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,
Diane Andrea Manzana

MA Clinical Mental Health Graduate Student

Email: Manzana@hawaii.edu

LATE

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 11:33:09 AM
Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taryn Itagaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Taryn Itagaki

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 12:05:43 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Logan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a clinical psychologist, I would like the opportunity to supervise postdoctoral trainees in pursuit of licensure and to ensure adequate training and familiarity with our unique patient populations in Hawai'i. Without this Bill passing, I am unable to do that as there is no mechanism to reimburse the trainee or the supervisor for their work. I have an ongoing waitlist due to staffing shortages across Hawai'i so volunteering hours is not feasible. Passing this Bill will allow for direct supervised access to retain our well-trained providers in Hawai'i rather than requiring them to relocate to the continent for their hours and hope they return a few years later.

As a coordinator of the Maui Strong Mental Health Response, we could have (and still could) greatly expand services accessible to those affected by the disaster if this bill was passed. We continue to rely on overextended licensed providers and well-intentioned but uninformed providers from the continent to attempt to meet the increased need. Even before this tragedy, waitlists and provider shortages created unacceptable delays in mental health care in our state.

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Diane Logan, Ph.D., ABAP, CSAC, ICDAC

Clinical Psychologist

Past-President, Hawai'i Psychological Association

Past-President, Hawai'i Island Psychological Association

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 12:09:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
nancy sidun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill. We need it.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nancy Sidun

LATE

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 12:23:28 PM
Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alanna Barnes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

- 1. Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
- 2. Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
- 3. Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Alanna Barnes, M.A. (she/her)

Doctoral Student

Hawai`i School of Professional Psychology

Chaminade University of Honolulu

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 12:24:32 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Holly Arroyo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB343 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 343, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of SB343 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Holly Arroyo, LSW

Hospice Social Worker

St. Francis Healthcare System of Hawai'i

808-354-8474

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 12:29:51 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

LATE

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

Comments:

So important to help with our under staffed mental health system! Please pass,

Judith C. White, Psy. D.
Kapaa clinical psychologist

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 12:31:12 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melvin Dizon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting Testimony for Senate Bill 343 Concerning Mental Health

Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am a Master of Social Work (MSW) candidate at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, where I am pursuing a concentration in Behavioral Mental Health. My name is Melvin Dizon. With the aspiration of becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), I am writing to convey my unequivocal endorsement of Senate Bill 343, an initiative concerning mental health. By authorizing insurance reimbursements under specific conditions and instituting provisional or associate-level licensure prerequisites for various mental health practitioners, this bill constitutes a substantial advance in improving the mental health landscape in Hawaii.

To begin with, it is progressive to include provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in the bill. This will enable aspiring professionals, such as myself, to provide essential mental health services shortly while gaining valuable experience under supervision. Implementing this measure is critical in Hawaii's effort to address the mental health practitioner shortage, ensuring that more people receive the necessary care.

An additional positive development is the provision that permits applicants for a psychologist license to take the licensing examination before fulfilling all other prerequisites. This modification can potentially accelerate the recruitment of certified psychologists, which is essential in light of the growing need for mental health services.

Regarding the authorization of insurance reimbursements for services rendered by supervised social work interns, this provision especially resonates with me as an aspiring LCSW. This provision of the legislation acknowledges the significant contributions made by social work interns and promotes enhanced community accessibility to mental health services. This instills optimism and drive within me as a student, knowing that my forthcoming endeavors, including those of my internship, will be acknowledged and appreciated.

Furthermore, it is a considerate inclusion that the bill gives the Board of Psychology the authority to issue licensure waivers under specific conditions, thereby offering flexibility. It demonstrates recognition of the heterogeneous career trajectories and varied expertise that professionals may possess within the mental health domain.

SB 343, in summary, is an all-encompassing and well-considered legislative proposal that attends to various critical facets of mental health service delivery. It acknowledges the significance of addressing the needs of Hawaii's residents by expanding access to mental health services and assisting emerging professionals in the field. With unwavering dedication to the advancement of mental health, I implore the committee to approve this bill, which would establish a more resilient and adaptable mental healthcare infrastructure within our jurisdiction.

I appreciate your consideration regarding my testimony supporting this vital bill.

With sincerity,

Melvin Dizon

US Army, Retired
MSW Student, Behavioral Mental Health
University of Hawaii, Manoa

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 12:49:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hawaii Psychological Association	Testifying for Hawai'i Psychological Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Buenaventura, Senator Aquino and Members of the Committee,

As the Executive Director of HPA, I am in strong support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals. Passage of this bill will expand the pool of providers on all islands, and particularly on the neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawai'i and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encourage utilization of critically needed therapy services.

Please pass SB343! Thank you for your consideration,

Raymond A. Folen, PhD, ABPP
Executive Director, Hawai'i Psychological Association

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 12:53:49 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joshua Franklin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my deep concern and to provide testimony regarding the grievous issues surrounding Child Family Services in Hilo, Hawai'i. It has come to my attention that there are significant problems with oversight that have allowed for the misuse of the non profits position and resources. It has surfaced that Child Welfare Services (CWS) has been complicit in the abuse of Hawaii's children—children they are avowed to protect. There are They have been billing for clinical therapy under their NPI without providing actual therapeutic services, exploiting the vulnerable situations of families in their care.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has been notified of these serious allegations, yet it appears that no decisive action has been taken to rectify the situation or to protect the affected children. This inaction is alarming and raises questions about the efficacy and integrity of the oversight processes in place.

In the midst of these troubling issues, I must also address the need for regulatory reform in the licensure of psychologists, which is pertinent to SB 343. The current high demand for mental health services underscores the necessity for the Board of Psychology to have the authority to grant licensure waivers and for psychologist license applicants to be permitted to sit for the licensing examination before completing supervised experience requirements.

While I support the proposed measure to alleviate some of the limitations outlined in Hawai'i Revised Statutes 465-7.6 regarding the licensure of state-employed clinical psychologists, I must emphasize that reform should not forsake thorough scrutiny and accountability. The DCR's deference to the DCCA's expertise is prudent; however, given the aforementioned issues within Child Family Services, it is critical that any measures to expedite licensure include robust mechanisms for oversight to prevent any further mistreatment of Hawai'i's children.

As a Family Advocate for the last decade in the State of Hawai'i, I have dedicated myself to the welfare and protection of families and children. It is with a heavy heart that I must bring these concerns to the fore, trusting that the gravity of these allegations will prompt immediate and thorough investigation and action.

Sincerely,

Joshua Franklin
Family Advocate

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 1:02:16 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jadu Jagel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a clinical psychologist, I would like the opportunity to supervise postdoctoral trainees in pursuit of licensure to competently serve our unique patient populations in Hawai‘i. Without this Bill passing, I am unable to do that as there is no mechanism to reimburse the trainee or the supervisor for their work. Passing this Bill will ensure for quality supervision to retain our well-trained providers in Hawai‘i rather than requiring them to relocate to the continent for their hours and hope they return a few years later.

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Jadu M Jagel, PsyD

LATE

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 1:06:45 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodi Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Trainees in mental health need to have some reimbursement while completing training. This has been a longstanding concern and is paramount to creating great clinicians and more great clinicians. Please support this bill! It is time there is parity with other health providers who all provide an essential service.

SB-343

Submitted on: 1/26/2024 1:03:46 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/26/2024 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Reilynn Yamane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

Thank you for your consideration.