

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

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 237 H.D. 1
RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

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

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: 03/10/2025, 1:00 PM, CR 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The proposed measure appropriates funds to the Department of Health
2 (“Department”) and the establishment of two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) program specialist
3 positions. The Department requests that this measure be considered as a vehicle to provide this
4 needed funding so long as it does not supplant the priorities and requests outlined in the
5 Governor’s executive budget request.

6 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure.

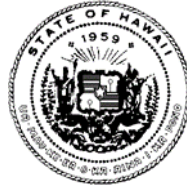
7 **Department Testimony:** The Family Health Services Division (FHSD) provides the following
8 testimony on behalf of the Department.

9 Offering expectant and new parents family strengthening programs using a peer-to-peer
10 support framework is proven to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect and improve positive
11 parenting outcomes. Reestablishing this program in the Department will help strengthen
12 current community-based peer-to-peer support programs and expand resources focusing on
13 addiction/recovery and child welfare peer-to-peer supports.

14 **Offered Amendments:** None.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 7, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 237 HD1 – RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS.**

Hearing: March 10, 2025, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of the measure, defers to the Department of Health, and provides comments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: This bill appropriates funds for the Family Health Services Division of the Department of Health to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs for children from birth to age five and their families, including the establishment of program specialist positions. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

The Committees of Health and Human Services & Homelessness amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the appropriation and position counts to unspecified amounts; and
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion.

Peer support or peer-to-peer support programs for families with young children increase the exchange of information amongst parents with shared experiences and reduce

March 7, 2025

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social isolation. School- and community-based Family Resource Centers may serve as places where peer-to-peer support programs can exist to assist families in their community where they feel comfortable and amenable to seeking information and assistance. The positive outcomes of well-supported peer-to-peer support programs are that participants feel more confident about their parenting, they have support accessing services, they increase social connections, and their children gain access to care and have fewer unmet needs. These outcomes are protective factors that reduce risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII

Executive Office on Early Learning

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

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

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 237, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS.

Committee: HHS
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Conference Room 225

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **COMMENTS**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) supports the intent of H.B. No. 237, H.D. 1 which establishes positions and appropriates funds for peer-to-peer support programs. We defer to the Department of Health (DOH) regarding implementation and funding and offer the following comments.

Peer-to-peer support programs provide opportunities for parents and families to support each other, learn effective parenting practices together, and connect with available resources and social services. These programs strengthen families and promote the well-being of our keiki. The EOEL is in support of expanding state funding for peer-to-peer programs because they enhance family engagement and support – key elements of a successful early learning system.

We appreciate the Legislature's continued investment in our youngest keiki and their families and thank you for the opportunity to share these comments.



2345 Nuuanu Avenue #15 Honolulu, Hawaii 96817
<https://familyhuihawaii.org>

March 9, 2025

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair,
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Dear Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance,

On behalf of Family Hui Hawai`i, I would like to provide our strong support for House Bill 237 HD1 that would appropriate funds to the Department of Health Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

In August 2024, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a nationwide advisory describing our nation's families under extreme levels of parental stress, the consequences resulting in increased risk of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect and chronic health diseases, as well as recommendations for peer-to-peer support programs as an effective strategy to address it. Peer-to-peer programs connect families through meaningful shared lived experiences which allow families to learn from each other and build a sense of belonging, resulting in strong relationships that become their network of support in times of need. Agencies that provide the framework, coordination of groups, and training for the peer leaders provide the support and evidence informed content that ensures the effectiveness of the programs.

This bill provides support for the continuum of prevention strategies, broad-based for all families to tertiary intervention for higher needs for families with children. The bill focuses on prevention measures during a child's most critical period of brain development, prenatal to age 5 years, when the foundations of executive functions needed for success in school and life are formed. Peer support programs allow the community, families and agencies to come together to play an active role in advocating for their family and their community to become stronger from within.

Family Hui Hawai`i is dedicated to strengthening families and communities, reducing violence against children, and promoting the healthy development of children, socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively, through peer to peer connection, parenting education and links to community services. Family Hui Hawai`i is a first contact provider to families with young children, prenatal-5 years serving over 1000 parents and children statewide each year. Our peer parenting support programs provide the opportunity for families to learn and grow together, sharing and helping each other through their parenting journey, discussing child development and age-appropriate effective parenting strategies, access to community resources, parental resilience and the social emotional development of their children. We see the struggles that families face every day and the difficulty they have in accessing resources and services.

HB237 HD1 allows the state to make a smart investment in the power of the people to support each other and not continually rely on institutional support. Peer to peer programs last much longer than their time in formal programs as trust is build more quickly and relationships are

stronger. There is no one who understands you like a peer. Many of our families who met in Hui as babies, continue to support each other through adolescence, not only the parents but the children themselves. Funds invested in peer to peer programs are investments in the community to partner with the state to be advocates for themselves, their families and each other, leveraging our collective finances into building a strong community of support.

The investment in the families of our youngest children is a needed and economically strategic use of funds. During these early years, learning and wellness is about the whole child, physically, cognitively, and social-emotionally. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Maui Wildfires have exacerbated the mental health crisis in Hawaii. Research shows that 52% of children in families with financial hardship are facing emotional distress. During these early years, learning and wellness is about the whole child, physically, cognitively, and social-emotionally. Early learning is not just in the classroom and does not begin at age 4 years at PreKindergarten. Learning is everywhere the child is – not only at school, but at home with their family. Families play a critical role in preparing their children to be successful in school and life. They are the constant in the many learning environments that their children will experience as they grow. It is important to have an easy access point for families to receive information about their child's whole growth and development.

Prevention strategies building family resilience, social and concrete supports, parenting and early childhood development knowledge are proven to alter the outcomes of early adversity, reducing overall family stress and increasing wellbeing. Funding to provide peer to peer support programs will provide a critical step in building a strong system for supporting our children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB237. I urge you to move this bills forward.

Respectfully,



Cherilyn Shiinoki
Executive Director



Date: March 7, 2025

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Committee

From: Micah A. Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President

RE: Testimony in Support for HB 237 HD 1, Relating to Peer Support Programs
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:00 PM
Place: Hearing Room 225

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **supports** House Bill 237 HD 1 relating to Peer Support Programs. The bill would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs. This has the potential to provide concrete aid to families through peer-to-peer programs which have proven to be an effective strategy, especially for families experiencing parenting, mental health or substance use challenges.

HCF believes in addressing the symptoms and impacts of mental health issues for all ages and supporting families facing challenges including family violence, divorce, substance use and incarceration. Establishing peer support programs will benefit keiki and ohana in Hawai'i by improving access to care, providing proven peer-to-peer support, and saving state funds on future interventions that would be more costly. HCF supports HB 237 HD 1 because it relates to efforts coordinated by HCF: First, the [Promising Minds](#) initiative focused on improving mental health of keiki ages 0-5 and their families; and second, the [Health and Wellness sector of the CHANGE Framework](#) which HCF has adopted and implements through key partnerships. The approach in the Health and Wellness sector recognizes the need for preventative health and widespread uptake of trauma-informed approaches.

Please advance HB 237 HD 1.

To:

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

From: Matthew Lorin

As Chair of the Board of Directors of Family Hui Hawaii, I submit this testimony in strong support of HB237 HD1, relating to peer support programs. Family Hui Hawaii has witnessed firsthand the profound positive impact of peer-to-peer support for families, particularly for parents and caregivers of young children.

The critical need for this legislation is evident. Every year, nearly six hundred children from birth to age five are confirmed as victims of child abuse and neglect in our state, with actual numbers likely far exceeding confirmed cases. The cumulative economic burden associated with child abuse and neglect is an alarming \$2.6 billion. HB237 HD1 addresses these serious issues by allocating resources to expand and sustain peer support networks, providing parents with vital resources, and connection during the pivotal prenatal to five-year developmental window.

Family Hui Hawaii strongly supports the proposed allocation of funds detailed by the Committees on Health, Human Services & Homelessness, and Finance. We acknowledge and appreciate the procedural amendments made by the committees, particularly setting appropriation amounts initially to unspecified levels and an effective date of July 1, 3000. We understand these measures facilitate ongoing legislative discussions and refinement.

Committee feedback has underscored the cost-effectiveness and high-impact of peer-to-peer models, notably their capacity to reduce downstream public health and social welfare expenses significantly. By proactively addressing parenting stress, mental health challenges, and isolation, peer support programs not only prevent familial disruptions but also strengthen community resilience, ultimately reducing the economic burden stemming from child abuse and neglect.

For these compelling reasons, Family Hui Hawaii respectfully urges the committee to pass HB237 HD1, enabling broader and sustainable access to peer-to-peer support programs. This investment is not merely financial; it is an investment in our children's futures, our families' stability, and the enduring strength of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this critical measure.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Lorin", with a large flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Matt Lorin
Chair, Family Hui Hawaii

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Adrienne Miller

RE: Strong Support for HB237 HD1 – Peer-to-Peer Support Bill

Dear Chair Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Vice Chair Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am writing individually and in my capacity as a Board Member of Family Hui Hawai'i to express **strong support** for HB237 HD1, which seeks to enhance access to peer-to-peer support services. Peer-to-peer services would bring immense short-term and long-term benefits to our local community.

I believe increased access for peer-to-peer support services will empower parents with a crucial resource to navigate stress, mental health challenges, and personal struggles in a supportive and confidential environment. Parents would have an avenue to feel heard and supported in their challenges, motivated by the success stories of other parents, and encouraged in knowing they are not alone in wanting the best for their children. This proactive approach to wellness nurtures enhanced support systems for parents, healthier parent-child relationships, and stronger families.

For these reasons, I **urge the committee to pass HB237 HD1** to expand access to peer-to-peer support programs. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Miller



Our Mission

Increase Hawai'i's investments in its youngest keiki by collaborating with elected officials and serving as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to Hawai'i's youngest keiki and families.



Steering Committee

City and County of Honolulu

Justina Acevedo-Cross
Greg Auberry
Chiyomi Chow
Kanoë Enos
JoAnn Farnsworth
Jordana Ferreira
Nadia Garcia
Danny Goya
Alex Harris
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Erin Henderson
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Marty Oliphant
Cherilyn Shiinoki
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Sunshine Topping
Kerrie Urosevich
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Bobbie-Jo Moniz-Tadeo

Kaua'i County

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Alice Luck

Hawai'i County

Sulma Gandhi
Kahi Moreman
Angela Thomas



Contact Info

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

info@committokeiki.org
CommitToKeiki.org

Date: March 10, 2025

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

From: Commit to Keiki

RE: House Bill 237 HD1, Relating to Peer Support Programs

Commit to Keiki is a statewide, non-partisan, public-private collaborative to ensure a brighter start for Hawai'i's youngest keiki. Led by a diverse Steering Committee, Commit to Keiki's mission is to increase Hawai'i's investments in its youngest keiki by collaborating with elected officials and serving as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to early childhood.

Commit to Keiki strongly supports passage of House Bill 237 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

As noted in the measure's preamble, a lack of necessary supports for parents and families can—and often will—result in negative outcomes that can include depression, mental health challenges, intimate partner violence, substance abuse and addiction, and child abuse and neglect. Challenges like these can manifest in significant and lasting trauma for children, and Commit to Keiki will continue to advocate for programs and initiatives that provide parents with the critical supports they need to lessen the likelihood of these outcomes occurring.

Peer-to-peer support programs connect parents and/or families with other parents/or families who have experienced similar parenting, mental health and/or substance addiction challenges. This results in higher rates of trust, program retention and ongoing support. Peer-to-peer support programs provide parents and families with a safe place to be supporter on best parenting practices, obtain necessary screening and referrals, and access critical resources. The overall positive effect this can have for families and children cannot be overstated. And—with 58% of children in Hawai'i already made vulnerable by family violence, substance abuse, divorce, and incarceration—the need for social programs like the one proposed by HB237 HD1 should not be underestimated.

From a strictly economic perspective, the benefits of establishing peer-to-peer programs are extremely straightforward. As a society, we understand clearly that early investment in the health and development of our community's youngest people pays dividends over the long run, and conservative estimates have identified the total lifetime economic burden created by child abuse to be roughly \$2.6 billion here in

Hawai'i. Investment in programs and professionals like the ones proposed by this measure represent the likely saving of millions of dollars in future interventions aimed at mitigating the effects of negative childhood experiences.

For these reasons, Commit to Keiki strongly supports HB237 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

To: The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager
Sarielyn Curtis, External Affairs Specialist

Hearing: Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 225

RE: **HB237 HD1 Relating to Peer Support Programs**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of the **HB237 HD1**. This measure appropriates funds for the Family Health Services Division of the Department of Health to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs for children from birth to age five and their families, including the establishment of two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) program specialist positions.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 70,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 37 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare appreciates the whole-person care approach of this measure, acknowledging that children and families, especially those experiencing health and socioeconomic challenges, require a compassionate and holistic approach to care. Peer-to-peer support is an evidence-based practice that has been shown to have numerous positive health outcomes, improving access to care, the overall quality of life, and utilization of services.¹

Peer support specialists can offer the unique perspective built on their lived experience of navigating the same systems and issues as their patients. Peer to peer support offers hope, demonstrates resiliency, and supports the healing that many cultures and communities have relied upon for ages and continue to utilize. The work is already done in our communities, however much of it is delivered in grassroots, unpaid methods by friends and neighbors.

¹ [Peer Support: Research and Reports | Mental Health America](#)



AlohaCare is proud to have established peer support positions and currently employs two full-time certified peer specialists within the Behavioral Health program. Their support has touched nearly 200 of our members this past year and has resulted in many of those members taking a more active role in their treatment and recovery. The establishment of increased peer-to-peer support programs will serve to recognize the unique skills and experience these individuals bring to the table and will further develop our healthcare and social service workforce.

In 2024 Governor Green signed Executive Order 24-01, declaring that “all Executive State Departments will collectively move towards becoming a trauma informed state by implementing evidence-based services based on the Trauma-Informed Task Force’s framework, to mitigate and respond to secondary traumatic stress and build resilience in children, adults, and communities.”² The Trauma Informed Task Force was established in 2021 by the passage of Act 209, declaring that “adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress is an emerging public health issue for Hawai‘i, and that cultural and asset-based approaches may be a resource for our community’s resiliency.”³ Peer support is one of the fundamental principles and action items integrated into the Trauma Informed Task Force’s framework and recommendations.

AlohaCare appreciates the Governor and Legislature for their efforts to create a trauma-informed state. Establishing peer-to-peer support programs through DOH is a prudent next step in this effort. This measure will give our youngest keiki, their families, and most vulnerable populations the necessary support and resources to navigate the various health and socioeconomic challenges that arise for our communities.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support** of the **HB237 HD1**.

² governor.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2402065.pdf

³

health.hawaii.gov/opppd/files/2024/03/23_Trauma-Informed-Care-Taskforce-Recommendations-Report.FINAL.pdf



GUARDIAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT
HAWAII LLC

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair,
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

RE: Strong Support for HB237 HD1 – Peer-to-Peer Support Bill

Dear Chair Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Vice Chair Senator Henry J.C. Aquino,
and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services,

I am writing on behalf of Guardian Capital Management Hawaii, a small business providing services statewide, with offices on Oahu and Maui, to express our **strong support** for HB237 HD1, which seeks to enhance access to peer-to-peer support services. As a private business of 19 years, we recognize the immense value that these services bring to our employees, our company, and our local community.

Our employees do not leave their personal lives at the door when they come to work. They bring their experiences, challenges, and concerns—including those of their families—into the workplace. By providing access to peer-to-peer support services, we empower them with a crucial resource to navigate stress, mental health challenges, and personal struggles in a supportive and confidential environment.

When employees can access peer support, they become **more resilient, engaged, and happier**, leading to numerous benefits, including:

- **Increased Productivity:** Employees who feel supported are more focused, creative, and motivated to perform at their best.
- **Higher Retention Rates:** Businesses thrive when employees feel valued and heard. By reducing burnout and stress-related turnover, peer-to-peer support helps us retain skilled, experienced workers.
- **Enhanced Workplace Culture:** A culture of support fosters teamwork, trust, and overall well-being, strengthening workplace relationships and morale.
- **Stronger Local Economy:** Small businesses like ours rely on a healthy, stable workforce. Retaining employees and improving their resilience translates into long-term economic benefits for our business and the broader community.

As a business owner, I have seen firsthand how workplace stress can take a toll on employees. Having **peer support available means that employees do not have to struggle alone**. This proactive approach to wellness leads to healthier workplaces, reducing absenteeism, improving job satisfaction, and ultimately fostering a stronger workforce across Hawai'i.

For these reasons, we **urge the committee to pass HB237 HD1** to expand access to peer-to-peer support programs. Doing so will benefit not just employees, but also businesses, families, and the entire community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kevin Shiinoki, Principal

Guardian Capital Management Hawaii

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Kiana Kauwe

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and esteemed members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Kiana Kauwe, and I am a parent of a 14-month-old daughter. During her first year, I stayed at home to care for her, an experience that deepened my understanding of the critical role peer support plays in the well-being of parents and caregivers. **I strongly urge you to support HB237 HD1**, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

Research consistently shows that caregiver mental well-being has a **direct and lasting impact on child development**. According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, children thrive when their caregivers have access to **social connections, emotional support, and stress-buffering resources** (Harvard University, 2015). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) also recognizes parental mental health as a **key determinant** of child outcomes, noting that depression, anxiety, and isolation among caregivers can negatively affect children's social-emotional and cognitive development (AAP, 2019).

Peer support programs **address these challenges head-on** by providing caregivers with a safe, understanding community where they can share experiences, receive encouragement, and reduce the stress that so often accompanies parenting. **When caregivers feel supported, they are better equipped to provide the responsive, nurturing relationships that children need to thrive**. Investing in peer support programs is not just about helping parents—it is about creating the stable, emotionally healthy environments that are essential for our children's well-being and future success.

Through **Family Hui Hawaii's Baby Hui**, I found a space where I could openly share my experiences and hear from other parents navigating similar challenges. Simply knowing that others were going through the same thing created connection and healing. These huis, or groups, didn't just provide parenting tips; they **offered emotional support, reassurance, and a sense of belonging** that made all the difference in my journey as a mother.

HB237 HD1 will ensure that more families across Hawai'i have access to these vital support systems. If you support young children, you must also support their families. And if you support parents and caregivers, you must support this bill.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I **respectfully urge** you to pass **HB237 HD1** for the well-being of our keiki, families, and communities.

With gratitude,
Kiana [Last Name]

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, and Committee Members,

My name is James LaBrie and I am a person with a developmental disability. My journey has shown me just how crucial trauma-informed care and peer-to-peer support are, especially for individuals like me with developmental disabilities while navigating systems. I've been through multiple placements in foster homes while trying to cope with overwhelming grief and trauma. It's crystal clear to me now that what's needed most is a compassionate and understanding approach to care.

Trauma-informed care has been a game-changer for me. It's all about recognizing how trauma affects every aspect of our lives and creating spaces that prioritize safety, trust, and empowerment. Given my past, understanding the roots of my trauma and knowing what might trigger it is absolutely vital for providing support that truly helps. Trauma-informed approaches don't just acknowledge what I've been through—they actively work to prevent any further harm by fostering environments of empathy and understanding.

By opening up about my experiences with grief and trauma, I not only validate what others are going through but also show them that there's hope and resilience on the other side. Peer support creates this incredible space where we can connect on a level that's deeper than words, sharing insights, coping strategies, and endless encouragement.

These principles don't just enrich the support we provide to individuals with developmental disabilities; they also create a sense of belonging and understanding that's so desperately needed. My dedication to this cause is fueled by the belief that these approaches can truly make a difference in nurturing healing and resilience, even in the face of the toughest challenges. Establishing the funding to create program specialists positions would be ideal because not many people with ID/DD are aware of the peer support resources available. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB237 HD1.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

James LaBrie

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Leilani Novak

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair, and honored members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for hearing HB237 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am honored to provide testimony **in strong support** of funding for peer-to-peer support programs for families. Through my work and time in the community, I have been able to witness the true benefits of peer to peer support programs as a critical lifeline to families navigating complex challenges - providing emotional support, shared knowledge, and practical guidance that only those with lived experience can offer.

Peer-to-peer support programs empower families by connecting them with trained peers who have faced similar situations. This connection fosters a sense of community, reduces isolation, and promotes mental well-being. Research consistently shows that families who engage in peer support experience lower stress levels, improved coping mechanisms, and better long-term outcomes reducing the risks of adverse childhood experiences. Furthermore, these programs often prevent crises, reducing the need for more costly interventions and alleviating the burden on other public services.

The financial investment in peer-to-peer support programs yields substantial returns both short term and long term. By facilitating early intervention and providing accessible support, these programs reduce the reliance on crisis services, improve educational outcomes for children, and strengthen family stability. This proactive approach leads to cost savings across healthcare, social services, and the judicial system.

I urge the committee to prioritize sustained funding for peer-to-peer support programs. Continued investment ensures that families facing hardships have access to the resources and community they need to thrive. By supporting these programs, we are not only aiding individual families but also fostering healthier, more resilient communities for our future generations.

I hope you can help support families through this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Testimony in Support of H.B. No. 237 HD1 – Relating to Peer Support Programs

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to show my **support** of H.B. 237 HD1, a legislation that creates funds for peer-to-peer family support programs for children from birth to age five in the State of Hawaii.

Parenting is perhaps one of the most rewarding but also challenging jobs, and it is often made more challenging for families with financial problems, psychological disorders, or other obstacles. These hardships often isolate parents, overwhelming and disconnecting them from loved ones. This cycle can create burnout and, in the long term, have detrimental effects on their health and children. Without support, parents can struggle to provide their children with the care they need, which is risking the child's exposure to outcomes like neglect, abuse, and long-term trauma.

The need for peer-to-peer support is always important. These programs provide a lifeline for parents by offering a community where they can connect with others and help and provide support. Parents can learn coping strategies, become confident, gain valuable information resources, and receive emotional support that increases the care they provide to their children. These factors make it so peer-to-peer programs will motivate parents and enhance mental well-being.

Because of all these factors, I support H.B. 237 HD1. This legislation is a step toward healthier families and a brighter future for Hawaii's kids.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kaleigh Flores
kaleighf@hawaii.edu
(405) 889-6133

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 9:04:51 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Celle Galarza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha I am a parent of 2 young children. I strongly support HB237 HD1 peer-to-peer support programs. I have highly benefited from groups led by peers through my parenting journey and it has truly been a blessing. This bill provides the needed support parents need to learn together, share resources, and build their self-confidence. By supporting peer-to-peer programs, it prioritizes parents' mental health and well-being, which directly benefits their children in a positive way. I hope you can help support families through this bill. Mahalo for your consideration.

Celle Galarza

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 11:08:23 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB237 HD1, which would allocate funding to the Department of Health’s Family Health Services Division to develop and manage peer-to-peer support programs.

As a parent of five children, I know firsthand how crucial it is to have a strong support system while raising a family in Hawaii. When my kids were younger, I found invaluable guidance and encouragement through various parent support groups. That network of fellow parents became my community, offering shared experiences, resources, and reassurance during the many ups and downs of parenting.

Parenting can be overwhelming, and the mental health challenges that come with it are often overlooked. Many parents struggle with stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation, all of which can impact not just their well-being but also the well-being of their children. Peer-to-peer programs create a space where parents can connect, feel understood, and receive the emotional and practical support they need. By investing in these programs, you are prioritizing mental health and strengthening families across our state.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB237 HD1 and help provide families with the critical resources they need.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 10:12:54 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JoAnn Farnsworth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: 3/7, 2025

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair and Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair and members of the Committee

Re: HB 237 HD1 Peer Support

From: JoAnn Farnsworth

Mahalo to the Chairs, Vice Chairs, and committee members of the Committee for hearing HB237 HD 1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health’s Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am writing in strong support of peer-to-peer support programs. As noted in HB237’s preamble, a lack of necessary supports for parents and families can—and often will—result in negative outcomes including depression, mental health challenges, intimate partner violence, substance abuse and addiction, and child abuse and neglect. Challenges like these can manifest in significant and lasting trauma for children.

As someone who is Nationally Endorsed in Infant Mental Health, I have seen the power of the Peer-to-peer support programs connect parents and/or families with other parents/or families who have experienced similar parenting, mental health and/or substance addiction challenges. This results in higher rates of trust, program retention and ongoing support. Peer-to-peer support programs provide parents and families with a safe place to be supported on best parenting practices, obtain necessary screening and referrals, and access critical resources. The overall positive effect this can have for families and children cannot be overstated. And—with 58% of children in Hawai‘i already made vulnerable by family violence, substance abuse, divorce, and incarceration—the need for social programs like the one proposed by HB237 should not be underestimated.

Peer to Peer Support Programs are a proven intervention for families in our beleaguered Child Welfare System.

Mahalo for your consideration.

JoAnn Farnsworth, M.S.

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 9:48:39 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in strong support of HB237.HD1. for Peer to Peer Support for families. Department of Health programs need a lot more support and the best people to provide them are people that have experienced the same situations, if a certification program could be established this would be better, but taught by peers that are certified within our own cultural setting. Please support HB23.HD1. Thank you!

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 4:15:53 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Sharon Tisza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

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

From: **Sharon M. Tisza, MD, FAPA**

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair, and honored members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for hearing HB237 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am a parent and community Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist writing in strong support of peer-to-peer support programs. **Family Hui Hawaii (formerly Baby Hui Hawaii) played a vital role in my children's childhood and the early years of parenting for my husband and me. I have been on the board of Famiy Hui Hawaii for nearly a decade and I continue to be in awe of the services that they provide for children and families in our community. I refer my patients to this program every chance I get and I cannot say enough about this resource and the value it brings to all families, both at-risk and non at-risk. Everyone should join a hui.**

This bill provides the needed support parents need to learn together, share resources, and build their self-confidence. By supporting peer-to-peer programs, you prioritize parents' mental health and well-being, which directly benefits their children in a positive way. I hope you can help support families through this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Dr. Tisza

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 7:55:25 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

From: **Jessica Flaherty**

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair, and honored members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for hearing HB237 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am a parent from upcountry Maui with twin boys. I have suffered from isolation and fear with years of downward spiraling to almost need of hospitalization. It's free programs like family Hui Hawaii and many others that lured me safely to becoming a supportive community member. I am writing in strong support of peer-to-peer support programs.

Through safe group meetings from trained group leaders I have not only become a healthier parent and citizen, I have also led other parents out of isolation and have made long friendships with kids of the community.

This bill provides the needed support parents need to learn together, share resources, and build their self-confidence. By supporting peer-to-peer programs, you prioritize parents' mental health and well-being, which directly benefits their children in a positive way. I hope you can help support families through this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Jessica Leal Flaherty

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 4:31:59 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jasmine Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

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

From: **Jasmine Anderson**

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair, and honored members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for hearing HB237 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am not a parent, however, I have helped to raise my younger sisters and teach in a variety of capacities around the state and I writing in strong support of peer-to-peer support programs. As a non-parent I have joined a number of programs from Family Hui Hawai'i and have always felt loved and accepted. I tend to be an awkward and shy introvert, but in these groups I feel accepted. I never feel pressured to have to share anything, but I always come away having found some connection and emotional support. These are vital for people to feel from their peers for mental, emotional, and even physical health. They motivate me and help me feel like I can power through my busy day and take care of those who depend on me after receiving the support I need from Family Hui Hawai'i. And because I feel supported, my sisters, the keiki I interact with as a teacher, and other loved ones, directly benefit from a healthier me.

This bill provides the needed support parents need to learn together, share resources, and build their self-confidence. By supporting peer-to-peer programs, you prioritize parents' mental health and well-being, which directly benefits their children in a positive way. I hope you can help support families through this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 6:34:46 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosalyn Mahashin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

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

From: **Rosalyn Mahashin**

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair, and honored members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for hearing HB237 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health’s Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am a parent *of a girl and living in Kailua*, writing in strong support of peer-to-peer support programs. **I have been attending the Hui parent support groups regularly for months now and it's been so helpful to me in my parenting journey.**

This bill provides the needed support parents need to learn together, share resources, and build their self-confidence. By supporting peer-to-peer programs, you prioritize parents' mental health and well-being, which directly benefits their children in a positive way. I hope you can help support families through this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 8:13:51 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lilia Glauberman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

From: Lilia Ramil Glauberman

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair, and honored members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for hearing HB237 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am a parent living in Kailua, Hawaii writing in strong support of peer-to-peer support programs.

I have hosted a womens peer group and found it has been extremely helpful to bring women together to support one another through challenges of motherhood, life changes, parenting, etc.

This bill provides the needed support parents need to learn together, share resources, and build their self-confidence. By supporting peer-to-peer programs, you prioritize parents' mental health and well-being, which directly benefits their children in a positive way. I hope you can help support families through this bill.

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:23:29 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sade Kahue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an amazing bill!! We need this!!

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:27:55 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair, and honored members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for hearing HB 237 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am a parent of two children from Kailua writing in strong support of peer-to-peer support programs. When my son was a baby I suffered from severe postpartum depression. My husband was deployed and I was alone with no family. I joined Family Hui and the women in my hui became lifelong friends and saved mine and my son's life. They were my anchor and kept my son and I afloat until my husband returned home.

This bill provides the necessary support parents need to learn together, share resources, and build their self-confidence. By supporting peer-to-peer programs, you prioritize parents' mental health and well-being, which directly benefits their children in a positive way. I hope you can help support families through this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-237-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:36:04 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wanya Ogata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Wanya Ogata

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair, and honored members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for hearing HB237 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am a parent of four adult children and recently became a grandparent of 2 grandchildren and I am writing in strong support of peer-to-peer support programs. I have experienced it first-hand and found it to be most beneficial. The program provided me with tools and resources and most importantly, support from other parents in helping me deal with the joys and challenges of parenting. It also gave me the confidence and assurance that I was not alone and the other parents then became my extended 'ohana.

I humbly urge you to pass this bill as it provides the support parents need to learn together, share resources, and build their self-confidence. By supporting peer-to-peer programs, you can make a difference by prioritizing parents' mental health and well-being, which directly benefits their children in a positive way. Please kokua and support families through this bill.

Mahalo piha for your consideration.

Date: March 9, 2025

To:

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Service

From: Carrie Barringer

Mahalo for hearing HB237, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

I am a military spouse, a mother of five boys, and work for an organization that plans and delivers family strengthening programs for Hawai'i families. I am writing in strong support of peer-to-peer programs.

As a peer-to-peer to Family Programs Coordinator, I see the impact that peer-to-peer support has on families every day. Families frequently share feedback including, "My participation in the group changed my life, encouraged me to become a parent leader within my own community, and/or made a world of difference for both myself and my keiki." I also hear, "I wish there were more programs like this one near to me and I would love for this program to be longer than it was." These comments make it clear that Hawai'i's families value peer-to-peer support and that they would like greater access to similar programs.

Peer-to-peer support programs have also been a lifeline of connection and support for my own family. My husband and I participated in Baby Hui after the birth of two of our children. As a military spouse in Hawai'i, I initially felt alone as a new parent, living far from extended family. However, for us, peer-to-peer parent support programs introduced us to a community of people with shared experience, knowledge of meaningful resources, and interest in supporting other families. Later, when our younger children were in preschool, we rediscovered peer-to-peer support offerings and again found instant community.

From a financial perspective, I see the cost-effective approach of peer-to-peer support as one that keeps families from needing to turn to more expensive state and federal aid. Often, the buck literally stops within the context of peer-to-peer programs. Furthermore, the initial money spent on these programs has a great ripple effect, benefiting both parents/caregivers and the children in their care. As strong families build strong communities, the relationships built, information shared, and compassion shown through peer-to-peer support often goes on to impact our community as a whole.

Mahalo for your consideration.

LATE

March 10, 2025

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

From: Karen Worthington, Private Citizen

Re: **HB 237 HD1: Relating to Peer Support Programs**
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 225 and Videoconference, March 10, 2025, 1:00pm

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 237 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs. This bill would enable the development of structured support networks where individuals with lived experience can provide guidance and assistance to parents and families navigating similar challenges, particularly in areas of substance use recovery and mental health.

My name is Karen Worthington, and I am a children's law and policy attorney with a consulting business on Maui, Karen Worthington Consulting. I have worked as a lawyer in and around state systems affecting children and families throughout my 30-year career, including working directly with peer support initiatives. I have worked extensively with Hawai'i state departments and nonprofit organizations that support children and families who exist at the margins of our society.

Please pass HB 237 HD1, and include the following expenditures, effective July 1, 2025:

- \$200,000 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) program specialist V position and one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) program specialist IV position;
- \$270,000 for purchase of service contracts with neighborhood or location peer-to-peer based groups; and
- \$390,000 for purchase of service contracts for addiction and child welfare peer support programs.

In my research and in my work with state agencies and nonprofits, I have seen how peer support programs increase parent and child well-being, reduce the risks of child abuse and neglect, and increase the likelihood of positive health activities and outcomes such as abstaining from alcohol and drugs, caring for one's mental and physical health, and engaging in positive parenting practices. Importantly, peer-to-peer helps parents access needed services and resources, reducing stressors which negatively impact parenting.

Karen Worthington, Kula, HI 96790

Expanding and supporting peer support programs is recommended in the DOH ADAD State Plan (See: "ADAD State Plan System of Care Implications Full Volume," Department of Health Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, December 2022, https://health.hawaii.gov/substance-abuse/files/2022/12/ADAD-State-Plan-System-of-Care-Implications-Full-Volume_print.pdf). The Mālama‘Ohana Working Group also emphasizes this need in their Final Report, especially for mothers struggling with substance use disorder (See: "Final Report," Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group, 2024, <https://www.malamaohana.net/mowg-final-report>).

I urge you to pass HB 237 HD1. If you would like additional information related to my testimony, please do not hesitate to contact me at karen@karenworthington.com.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Worthington". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Karen Worthington

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025
STATE OF HAWAII

H.B. NO. 237

LATE

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that parenting can be challenging for anyone, but especially for parents and families whose basic needs are not met. Parents and caregivers who lack needed support may experience depression and mental health challenges, intimate partner violence, child abuse and neglect, and substance addiction. This in turn may cause early childhood trauma for the children under their care.

The legislature further finds that each year in Hawaii, close to six hundred children from birth to age five are confirmed to be victims of child abuse and neglect, although the actual number of cases may be as much as five times greater. The legislature notes that half of all children in the child welfare system are under the age of five. Child rearing practices and handling parenting responsibilities made up the majority of contributing factors to child abuse and neglect, along with drug use. Child abuse and neglect impacts brain development and is costly, with the total lifetime economic burden associated with child abuse and neglect estimated to be \$2,600,000,000 in Hawaii. The legislature additionally finds that fifty-eight per cent of Hawaii children live in families made vulnerable by adverse childhood experiences, which include family violence, substance abuse, untreated family mental health issues, divorce, or incarceration.

The legislature additionally finds that peer-to-peer support programs provide people with an instant and cost-effective safety net. Parents and caregivers have a place where they can learn, get screening and referrals, share resources, and build their self-confidence. The goal of these programs is to keep parents and children together, strengthen and grow community support and

services, and increase the sense of hope and self-assurance amongst parents and caregivers of young children. Peer-to-peer support programs have also proven to be effective in reducing negative parenting practices, connecting victims of intimate partner violence to appropriate support, and encouraging completion of substance use disorder programs.

The legislature notes that investing early in peer-to-peer support programs can save millions of taxpayer dollars in downstream interventions. Research has shown that investing in the prenatal-to-five-year time period can save seven times in downstream costs, including reducing costs associated with treatment programs, child welfare programs, special education programs, and incarceration.

The purpose of this Act is to support parents and caregivers of children from birth to age five by appropriating funds to the family health services division of the department of health to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$860,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the family health services division of the department of health to establish and support peer-to-peer support programs for families with children from birth to age five, to be expended as follows:

(1) \$200,000 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) program specialist V position and one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) program specialist IV position;

(2) \$270,000 for purchase of service contracts with neighborhood or location peer-to-peer based groups; and

(3) \$390,000 for purchase of service contracts for addiction and child welfare peer support programs.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of health for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

INTRODUCED BY: _____

Report Title:

Peer-to-Peer Support Programs; Children; Families; Positions;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the Family Health Services Division of the Department of Health to establish and oversee peer-to-peer support programs for children from birth to age five and their families, including the establishment of two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) program specialist positions.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

