



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 1042, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DATE: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 **TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 225

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Alana L. Bryant, Deputy Attorney General

Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish the mental health emerging therapies special fund (fund) to support clinical research and the development of emerging therapies for the treatment of mental health and behavioral health disorders; (2) appropriate general funds into the fund; and (3) appropriate funds out of the fund for the fund's purposes.

Section 1 of the bill would establish the fund to be administered by the Department of Health, but the fund may not meet the requirements of section 37-52.3, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), which provides that special funds shall: (1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose and scope of the program and an explanation of why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; (2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon program users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; (3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and (4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining.

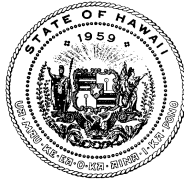
The bill does not describe the scope of the program, including financial information on fees to be charged, sources of projected revenue, and costs; contain an explanation as to why the special fund could not be successfully implemented under the general fund appropriation process; reflect a clear nexus between the benefits

sought and charges made upon the program users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity that is used only when essential to the successful operation of the program or activity; or demonstrate how the initiative will be financially self-sustaining.

We suggest adding a purpose section to the bill that explains how the fund meets the requirements of section 37-52.3, HRS.

We respectfully ask the Committee to make the recommended amendments if this bill is to pass. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'



KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A, M.P.H
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'ŌIHANA OLAKINO
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**Testimony COMMENTING on SB1042
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATOR HENRY J.C. AQUINO, VICE CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date and Time: February 12, 2025, 1:00 p.m. Location: Room 225 and Video

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health will require significant additional funding and
2 personnel to establish infrastructure should this pass.

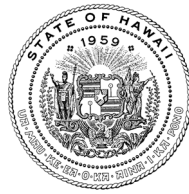
3 **Department Position:** The Department offers the following comments on this measure.

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

6 While the intent of the measure to establish a special fund to support clinical research
7 or evaluation is commendable, the Department does not have the infrastructure, personnel or
8 protocols to support primary scientific research. With a 30% vacancy rate, the Department is
9 already understaffed in maintaining core functions and cannot afford to divert resources to
10 develop and manage a new project to support human subject research, which we do not have
11 the subject matter expertise to perform or oversee. Finding an existing entity with qualified
12 research investigators and experienced clinical trial personnel and legal support for liability and
13 compliance for privacy, human participant protections and ethical considerations may be more
14 likely to achieve the desired outcomes.

1 As the state’s public health agency, the Department is responsible to protect and
2 promote the health of the entire community of Hawaii. While we support clinical research to
3 explore emerging treatments for specific refractory conditions, this is beyond the scope and
4 expertise of the Department. However, we are happy to be part of the discussion to identify
5 alternative approaches.

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



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 1042

**February 12, 2025
1:00 p.m.
Room 225 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

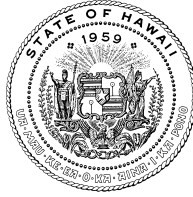
The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 1042 amends Chapter 321, HRS, to: 1) establish in the State Treasury the Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund (MHETSF) to be administered by the Department of Health (DOH); 2) appropriate an undetermined amount of general funds for FY 26 and FY 27 to be deposited into the MHETSF; and 3) appropriate an undetermined amount of special funds out of the MHETSF for FY 26 and FY 27 to be expended by DOH to support clinical research and the use of emerging therapies for treating mental and behavioral health disorders.

As a matter of general policy, B&F does not support the creation of any special fund, which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS. Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work, and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and

the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding S.B. No. 1042, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed special fund would be self-sustaining.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Wednesday February 12, 2025, at 1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

In consideration of
Senate Bill No. 1042, Relating to Mental Health

COMMENTS

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 1042 establishes and appropriates moneys for a mental health emerging therapies special fund, to be administered by the Department of Health.

Mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder, are widespread affecting millions worldwide and many in our community. While traditional first-line treatment modalities have significantly improved outcomes, they often fall short for those experiencing treatment resistant symptoms. Undertreated or untreated symptoms can lead to great personal, social, and economic impact and consequence. Emerging therapies for the treatment of behavioral health conditions, including those that have received breakthrough therapy designation, provide new pathways and have a potential for more rapid and effective treatment. Continued research, education, and preparation for adaptation are important to establish efficacy and when appropriate, add to available clinical approaches to reduce suffering and improve well-being. We are willing and interested in participating in the conversation on how best to support these developments moving forward.



Testimony in Support of SB1042

Senate Committee on Health | February 12, 2025

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ashley Lukens. For the past 19 years, I have worked as a community organizer and advocate in Hawaii. I received my PhD in Political Science from UH Manoa in 2013. Today, I am writing in strong support of SB 1042, a bill which is the continuation of a now 5 year legislative conversation around therapeutic access to breakthrough therapies in Hawaii.

SB 1042, the Mental Health Emerging Therapies Act creates a dedicated fund to support clinical research, training, and access to innovative treatments for mental health conditions, including funding for FDA-regulated trials and compassionate use programs. It also expands education for professionals, improves patient access through pilot programs and community support services, and mandates annual reporting on program outcomes and recommendations. While it creates a long term receptacle for state funding, I am confident that private sector partners would also contribute to the fund if it is created.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of psychedelic medicine on the brain and body. Breakthrough therapies like psilocybin and MDMA are proving to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. So it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to bring these breakthrough therapies above ground for broader use. Since 2019, Clarity Project has been working closely with the legislators, state officials, Office of Wellness and Resilience and various community doctors and practitioners to understand the current national landscape of psychedelic access programs.

Even with the impending rescheduling of both psilocybin and MDMA, expected in 3-5 years, the Hawaii State Legislature has an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA, and other medicines. Groundbreaking initiatives in favor of these therapies are occurring at all levels of government, private and public research institutions, and throughout mainstream society. Leading examples, include Oregon that

launched its Oregon Psilocybin Services with the State's Oregon Health Authority, which licenses & regulates psilocybin for therapeutic use. Colorado voters approved the decriminalization and legal therapeutic use of psilocybin and other psychedelics. Many expect California, Vermont, Washington and New York to follow suit. [Decriminalization of psilocybin](#) and other psychedelics has already been approved in at least 15 counties across 5 states, including California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Washington, and Washington D.C.

SB 1042 builds on these initiatives to provide a funding vehicle to help accelerate patient access. The Mental Health Emerging Therapies Act creates a dedicated fund to support research, training, and access to innovative mental health treatments, including FDA-regulated clinical trials and compassionate use programs. It enhances education by training mental health professionals and expanding public awareness while also developing pilot programs and community services to improve patient access. By investing in research, workforce training, and policy development, Hawaii can lead in advancing evidence-based mental health solutions and reducing barriers to transformative care.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin. Please support this measure by advancing it through this committee today.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashley', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Ashley Lukens, PhD
Founder, Director - Clarity Project



February 10, 2025

Chairman Buenaventura and esteemed members of the Committee,

My name is Martin R. Steele and I am proud to offer testimony on behalf of the Veteran Mental Health Leadership Coalition in support of Senate bill 1042, an act creating a mental health emerging therapies special fund.

For background, I am a retired Lieutenant General in the U.S. Marine Corps, and I had the privilege of wearing the uniform of a U.S. Marine for nearly 35 years, rising from an enlisted private in 1965 to three-star general, and retiring in 1999 as Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Policies, and Operations, which is the civilian equivalent of Chief Operating Officer of the Marine Corps. I lived in Honolulu from 1995-1997 where, as a Major General, I served as Strategic Policy and Planning Officer of the J-5, US Pacific Command.

Since retiring from active duty, I have dedicated my career to combating the Veteran mental health and suicide crises. This includes serving as Associate Vice President for Veterans Research and the Executive Director of Military Partnerships at the University of South Florida in Tampa, working with scientists exploring the co-morbidities between traumatic brain injury (TBI) and PTSD; and I was appointed to the VA Commission on Care in 2015, which was established during the Obama Administration to make recommendations about the future of VA health care. I have testified before Congress three times on Veteran suicide prevention.

Our nation's Veterans face a mental health crisis that demands urgent action. Every day, approximately 44 Veterans die by suicide, overdose, or other forms of self-harm. Combat Veterans disproportionately suffer from a complex mix of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and traumatic brain injury (TBI)—conditions that often overlap and significantly increase the risk of suicidal ideation, attempts, and deaths by suicide.

Currently, most Veterans with these conditions are prescribed SSRIs or other slow-acting medications, which must be taken daily—often indefinitely. These treatments frequently provide only minimal relief or no relief at all, and many patients experience intolerable side effects. Moreover, there are no FDA-approved medications for TBI, leaving critical gaps in care for Veterans with this debilitating condition.

Fortunately, in recent years, groundbreaking research has resulted in FDA Breakthrough Therapy designations for MDMA-assisted therapy to treat PTSD and three different psilocybin therapies for treatment-resistant depression (TRD) or major depressive disorder (MDD). Recent research out of Stanford University also suggests that **an ibogaine-based treatment** may qualify for a future Breakthrough Therapy designation for TBI—a condition that, as noted, still has no approved medications.

Significantly, the FDA only grants Breakthrough Therapy designations to treatments that have shown potential for *substantial improvement* over existing therapies to treat a serious condition, thereby expediting research and development. Unlike SSRIs, which often take weeks or months to exert their effects, the above referenced therapies are rapid-acting with potential to provide robust and durable therapeutic benefits across various conditions. Evidence suggests that these clinical improvements arise through a combination of enhanced neuroplasticity, moderated fear responses, and profound



psychological insights, allowing Veterans to process trauma and achieve meaningful, long-lasting recovery.

However, despite their incredible promise, these powerful and time- and labor-intensive treatments do not fit neatly into our current mental healthcare system. Clinical trials typically feature:

- Preparation sessions to build rapport and set therapeutic goals;
- Medication administration sessions that may last six hours or more each;
- Integration sessions to help patients process and apply newfound insights.

Such protocols require an interdisciplinary approach, with specialized training for healthcare professionals and sufficient clinical infrastructure.

Additionally, because these therapies involve controlled substances currently classified under Schedule I, research has been significantly limited and underfunded, and few opportunities exist for Veterans to participate in clinical trials or for clinicians to receive necessary training. Further, under the current Right to Try framework, doctors cannot access these investigational drugs to treat patients with terminal or life-threatening conditions, forcing many Veterans—including many members of our own coalition—to leave the country to access these potentially life-saving treatments. While most report **astonishing improvements** from treatments overseas, it is unconscionable that Veterans must go to such lengths to save their own lives.

Even after anticipated FDA approvals, the time and labor-intensive nature of current protocols means that cost, workforce availability, and clinical infrastructure will be major barriers to implementation—particularly within the Veterans' Affairs healthcare system, where early demand is expected to significantly outpace availability. **It is therefore crucial to build infrastructure, train healthcare professionals, develop scalable care models, and secure robust insurance coverage to ensure access for Hawaii's Veterans.** Unlike many medical sectors, we cannot rely on large pharmaceutical companies to drive this process, as they have mostly stayed on the sidelines due to uncertain profitability.

Recognizing the profound potential of these breakthrough therapies, several other states—such as Texas, Connecticut, Illinois, Washington, Arizona, and Maryland—have authorized or begun allocating resources toward Veteran-focused research. Meanwhile, a Georgia Senate Study Committee on Veterans, Mental Health, and Housing recently recommended up to \$5 million in clinical research funding. However, Hawaii now can lead the way with a more robust approach to help its Veterans in both the immediate and long-term.

S.B. 1042 takes essential steps to ensure Hawaii is prepared to meet this moment by establishing the Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund, which will:

- Support **clinical research** into innovative therapies, including FDA-designated Breakthrough Therapies such as MDMA and psilocybin-assisted therapy for PTSD and TRD.
- Fund **public-private partnerships** to advance research and ensure that these therapies are available once approved.



- Provide **training and education** for mental health professionals to prepare them for delivering these therapies safely and effectively.
- Establish **patient access pilot programs** to ensure that those in need, including Veterans, have pathways to care.
- Utilize both **public and philanthropic** contributions.

This legislation represents a bold and necessary step toward addressing the urgent mental health needs of our Veterans. By establishing this fund, advisory council, and ensuring timely state regulatory alignment, Hawaii can become a national leader in providing access to innovative, life-saving treatments for those who have selflessly served our country.

I appreciate your leadership and stand ready to assist in any way I can to ensure the success of this important initiative. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or for further information.

Sincerely,

Martin R. Steele

Martin R. Steele

Lieutenant General, US Marine Corps (Retired)

Founder and President

Veteran Mental Health Leadership Coalition



February 10, 2025

Chairman Buenaventura and members of the Committee,

My name is Jesse MacLachlan, and I am proud to offer testimony in support of SB 1042, an act establishing a Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund.

By way of introduction, I serve as the State Policy and Advocacy Director at Reason for Hope, a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to combatting the mental health crisis in our country by ensuring safe, affordable, and equitable access to psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy. Prior to joining Reason for Hope, I served as a State Representative in the Connecticut State Legislature, where, upon leaving office, I led the advocacy behind the first psilocybin therapy working group within the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The recommendations from that group led to the creation of Connecticut's psychedelic-assisted therapy pilot program, funded by the state and operating out of the Yale Program for Psychedelic Science. This program is now treating Veterans, first responders, and frontline healthcare workers with psilocybin-assisted therapy through an FDA open-label clinical trial. If Hawaii passes SB 1042, similar advancements in research and access could be realized on the islands.

SB 1042 is an essential step in addressing the growing mental health crisis in Hawaii. Traditional treatments for conditions such as PTSD, treatment-resistant depression (TRD), and major depressive disorder (MDD) have not been sufficient for many individuals, particularly our Veterans and first responders. Psychedelic-assisted therapy, including MDMA and psilocybin-assisted treatments, has shown remarkable promise in clinical trials, offering rapid and lasting relief where conventional therapies have failed.

The establishment of a **Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund** will:

- **Support clinical research** into innovative treatments, ensuring Hawaii remains at the forefront of mental health innovation through the use of both public philanthropic contributions.
- **Expand training and education** for mental health professionals, equipping them with the skills necessary to administer these breakthrough therapies safely and effectively.
- **Develop patient access programs**, ensuring that individuals in need—especially Veterans and first responders—can access these life-saving treatments in a responsible, supervised environment.
- **Facilitate public-private partnerships**, enabling collaboration between state agencies, research institutions, and healthcare providers to accelerate the integration of these therapies into mainstream mental healthcare.

Other states have already recognized the value of investing in these treatments. **Texas, Maryland, Connecticut, Washington, and Arizona** have all passed legislation to fund research and expand access to psychedelic-assisted therapy. Now, Hawaii has the opportunity to lead in

this space, ensuring that its residents—especially those who have served our country—are not left behind in accessing cutting-edge treatments.

We owe it to our Veterans, first responders, and all those suffering from mental health conditions to provide them with the best possible treatments. By investing in emerging therapies today, we create a future where mental healthcare is more effective, compassionate, and accessible.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 1042 and help Hawaii become a leader in innovative mental health solutions. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I stand ready to assist in any way to ensure the success of this critical initiative.

Sincerely,

Jesse MacLachlan

Aloha friends! Please be sure to make a COPY of this document to edit and personalize so that everyone may use it as a template. Mahalo for your support!

Testimony in Support of HB1340

Committee Hearing | 2023 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joseph DeLorenzo, I live in Ewa Beach, Hawaii and I am writing **in strong support of this measure**, which requests the DOH to establish the Beneficial Treatments Advisory Council to review, evaluate, and recommend new mental health treatments.

As a licensed mental health counselor in the state of Hawaii, I am deeply committed to supporting individuals on their journey toward healing, growth, and self-discovery. With a compassionate, client-centered approach, I help individuals navigate the challenges they face and explore new pathways for emotional and mental well-being.

In my practice working with Post-partum depression, religious trauma, Near Death experiences, birth Trauma, sexual trauma, spiritual trauma, and clinically resistant depression, I specialize in guiding clients who are interested in integrating psilocybin and ketamine into their therapeutic journey. I understand that these powerful medicines can hold the potential for profound healing, and I am here to provide a safe, supportive space for exploration. With the wisdom of both traditional therapy and cutting-edge psychedelic-assisted methods, I collaborate with clients to thoughtfully explore how these substances can support their personal transformation, healing, and overall wellness.

Having seen firsthand how these substances can help break through entrenched patterns, relieve trauma, and bring clarity to difficult emotional spaces, I am honored to be part of this process with those who are ready to take that next step. Every journey is unique, and my role is to walk alongside each client with empathy, respect, and the understanding that this work is deeply personal. I believe in creating a space where my clients feel seen, heard, and supported, with a focus on safety and integration, ensuring that the insights gained through this process are meaningful and sustainable in everyday life.

Together, we can explore the possibilities for healing that are uniquely suited to your journey—whether through therapy, the integration of medicine, or both. I am here to help you navigate this transformative path with care and an open heart.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of psychedelic therapies on the brain and body, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to bring safe medicines like psilocybin and MDMA above ground for therapeutic uses.

Research from major institutions around the world has shown psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

State and County lawmakers now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other psychedelic therapies. Groundbreaking initiatives in favor of psychedelic therapies—like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act of 2022 in Colorado—are occurring at all levels of government, private and public research institutions, and throughout mainstream society.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other psychedelic therapies. Please support this measure.

Mahalo,
Joseph DeLorenzo CPTSI, PAT, LMHC



Testimony in Support of SB 1042 – The Mental Health Emerging Therapies Act

Chair Beunaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB 1042, a critical piece of legislation that addresses the urgent mental health crisis we are facing in Hawaii and across the nation.

I am the daughter of a US Marine who died by suicide after years of struggling with ineffective treatments. His life – and subsequent death – shaped me personally and professionally. I grew up very aware of the effects of stress and trauma, including war and combat, not only on the individual who experiences those things firsthand, but also the family, friends, and communities that experience so much in parallel. Since the mid-80s when he died, there have been great strides in understanding and treatment of trauma-related concerns; however, available treatments fall significantly short and do not work for many individuals. The focus of my work is on studying and supporting novel, rapid-acting interventions with potential to save lives. I am an expert in the psychoneurobiology of chronic stress pathology – namely posttraumatic stress, suicidality, and related symptom constellations and novel, rapid-acting interventions with potential to provide healing. My research focuses on the fine-grained understanding of the neurobiological and clinical mechanisms underlying psychoplastogens – a class of medications including traditional psychedelic medicines like psilocybin and ibogaine as well as the dissociative anesthetic and antidepressant ketamine - that produce rapid-onset and robust changes in functional brain connectivity or synaptic plasticity. My work and that of others suggests synaptic plasticity is likely the ‘golden key’ for understanding and treating stress- and trauma-related psychiatric conditions. The ultimate goal of my work is to shift treatment paradigms to improved, effective, personalized, and sustainable mental health outcomes that provide a foundation for people to not ‘simply tolerate existence,’ but importantly, to *build lives they truly want to live*.

I now lead a psilocybin-assisted therapy trial for Veterans with PTSD and a trial for Veterans with depression. I have authored multiple recent manuscripts reporting positive outcomes of ibogaine and 5-MeO-DMT treatment among Special Operations Forces Veterans and has published widely on studies of ketamine for stress- and trauma-related concerns. I have received honors and funding for my work from premier organizations including the Fulbright Association/US Department of State, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Brain and Behavior Foundation (BBRF), the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), American College for Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP), Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS), and the International Society for Clinical Trials and Methodology (ISCTM).

My primary academic appointment is an Associate Professor at Baylor College of Medicine’s Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, where I serve as the Clinical Director of the Emerge Research Program and Co-Director of the Ethical Legal Implications of Psychedelics in Society (ELPISIS) Program. I also serve as the Director of Research at The Menninger Clinic, a private, non-profit psychiatric institution with a reputation for world-class research and clinical services. Further, I hold an appointment as a Clinical Research Psychologist at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, maintain a faculty appointment at Yale School of Medicine and am a clinician and innovation expert advisor at NPSYT, PLLC. I am a co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer for Reason for Hope ~ Hope for

Reason, a non-profit organization focused on mental health and suicide prevention, specifically through supporting thoughtful policy for safe, equitable and ethical use of psychedelic medicines and assisted therapies. Further, I have served as subject matter expert for TX House Bill 1802 that passed with near unanimous bipartisan support and funds a clinical trial of psilocybin for Veterans with PTSD, which I now lead. I've also served as a subject matter expert for Connecticut's Psilocybin Work Group and was recently appointed to the Illinois Psychedelic Medicine Working Group, both created out of legislative process, as well as testifying in special briefings at the state and federal level in the US, Canada, and Australia on matters relating to thoughtful legislation around psychedelic medicine and assisted therapies.

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The need for **novel mental health interventions has never been more urgent**. Traditional treatments for conditions like treatment-resistant depression (TRD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and major depressive disorder (MDD), as well as associated concerns such as substance misuse and suicidality often take too long to work, are ineffective for many, or come with significant side effects.

Emerging therapies—including **psychedelic-assisted treatments like psilocybin and MDMA—offer a new frontier of hope**. These therapies have been designated by the FDA as **Breakthrough Therapies** due to their potential to provide rapid, robust, and long-lasting relief, particularly for those who have exhausted all other options.

SB 1042 is essential because it directly addresses four key areas that will drive progress in mental health care:

1. **Research and Development** – By establishing a **Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund**, this bill will provide crucial resources to advance clinical research and FDA-regulated phase three trials. Public-private partnerships will accelerate our understanding of these treatments and ensure they are developed safely and effectively. As a researcher in this space myself, I am painfully aware of how significant and time consuming the hurdles are and how many lives are lost during these delays in advancing research.
2. **Education and Training** – The bill will ensure mental health professionals receive **specialized training** in these cutting-edge therapies. It also supports **public education initiatives** focused on harm reduction and mental health awareness—critical components for ensuring responsible and effective use. This provides a fantastic solution to a critical gap that exists currently – access to well trained providers that can support these life-saving interventions. By getting ahead of the curve and being proactive in training and education initiatives, HI is setting itself up for success, both before and after FDA approvals.
3. **Patient Access Programs** – This legislation prioritizes **compassionate use programs and patient access pilots** to expand availability for those most in need. Too many individuals are forced to travel out of state or seek underground treatments, which introduces significant risks. SB 1042 would provide a structured pathway for access in a regulated, evidence-based setting. To me, this is one of the most critical things we can do. We must consider untreated or under-treated stress- and trauma-related mental health concerns are life-threatening conditions, just as we would a cancer diagnosis for example. We must treat these conditions with the same grace and flexibility and access to potentially life-saving treatments, even if they are still experimental.

4. **Legislative Oversight and Accountability** – The bill requires **annual reporting** on funded studies, outcomes, and legislative recommendations. This ensures transparency, accountability, and the ability to adjust strategies based on emerging evidence.

Why This Matters

Hawaii has the opportunity to be a leader in **advancing mental health innovation and greatly improving – and in many cases saving the lives of Hawaiian citizens**. Other states have already recognized the need for action: Texas, Maryland, Connecticut, and Arizona have all passed similar measures to fund psychedelic-assisted therapy research. SB 1042 allows Hawaii to **join this movement while tailoring solutions to our unique population needs**.

By investing in these emerging treatments, **we are not only transforming lives—we are building capacity, reducing barriers to care, and setting a precedent for responsible mental health innovation that provides a much-needed foundation for people who have struggled so significantly to find healing and build lives they truly want to live**. I urge you to pass SB 1042 and make a bold commitment to **scientifically backed, life-saving mental health interventions**.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions. Please note, I write on behalf of Reason for Hope, the Veterans Mental Health Leadership Coalition, and NPSYT only. While I include my other affiliations, these are for reference only. I am not speaking as a representative of these organizations.

Onward and upward,

Lynnette A. Averill, Ph.D.
Chief Science Officer, Reason for Hope
Chief Science Officer, Veterans Mental Health Leadership Coalition

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Associate Professor
Clinical Director, Emerge Research Program
Co-Director, Ethical Legal Implications of Psychedelics in Society (ELIPSIS) Program
Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Neuropsychiatry Division
Psychology Division
Baylor College of Medicine

-

Director of Research
The Menninger Clinic

-

Clinical Research Psychologist
Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center

-

Owner, Expert Advisor, Psychologist
NPSYT, PLLC

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:26:52 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Southard	Testifying for Honolulu Psychotherapy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

xx

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Kathy Southard LCSW. I live in Ewa Beach and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

John Erlichman, *Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs under President Richard Nixon* made the following statement "

“You want to know what this [war on drugs] was really all about? The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I’m saying?

We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news.

Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.”

The only reason we don't have access to these healing medicines is political, based on racism, division, and the drive for one man to consolidate his power.

As a licensed clinical social worker working primarily in mental health for over 22 years, I first learned of the therapeutic benefits of these medicines while working as a psychiatric social worker at the Cambridge Hospital, a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital in 2015, then attending a conference at Harvard Medical School on these medicines. In 2022, at Naropa University in association with MAPS, I proceeded to attend their first year long certificate program to become a Psychedelic Assisted Therapist with the expectation these medicines would

soon be available for use. I will be doing training including practicums where these medicines are authorized to obtain further certifications to work with MDMA Assisted Therapy for PTSD and psilocybin assisted therapy for depression and anxiety.

Today, I work for the VA working with Veterans, many with PTSD, and it would be a honor to provide this care to them. It is now a calling, to treat people with these medicines to allow individuals with long term emotional distress to return to healthy fulfilling lives.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Kathy Southard LCSW



1401 S. Beretania St. Suite 450
Honolulu, HI, 96814

IN SUPPORT:

SB1042

- Establishes and appropriates moneys for a mental health emerging therapies special fund

2-10-2025

I am a board certified psychiatrist in Honolulu. My clinical expertise is in suicide risk and depression. I often treat suicidal, depressed people who failed numerous medications.

Patients come to me all the time saying their SSRI's don't work, and someone they know committed suicide on them. They want alternatives. They hear that psychedelics are safer than antidepressants, **and more effective**. And so what do I tell them?

That sorry, but they are federally illegal.

Even though these substances could literally save my patients' lives... This has been verified by large studies: **psilocybin reduces suicide risk.** (R.Griffiths, 2015.)

But I have to say, "sorry, illegal."

Are we in Hawaii supporting these citizens needs? Usually they say, "but won't Hawaii fund studies? Don't they care? Isn't there a medical school that's interested?"

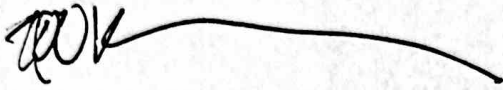
I can only give them disappointing answers.

People have committed suicide waiting for this research to be completed. Most standard antidepressants are far riskier, and can increase the risk of suicide. They can cause an array of other problems, such as glaucoma and Parkinsonism, or risk of stroke in the elderly due to thinning of the blood.

ph (808) 457-1082
fax (808) 356-1649

Vexed and worried people in Hawaii need legislators to advocate for them, and to pass laws allowing studies to occur...

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TC', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Tom Cook, M.D.

ph (808) 457-1082
fax (808) 356-1649

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:47:14 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Jeremy Kalan, MA, LMHC. I am co-CEO and co-owner of the Center for Healing & Transformation in Kailua. I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

We have seen firsthand the incredible accelerated healing and personal growth that has occurred with Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP). People who had not had any success with other more mainstream methods of healing, have had huge transformations through KAP. I know that other psychedelics such as psilocybin and MDMA can also be tremendously beneficial in combination with psychotherapy from highly trained and skilled psychotherapists.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Jeremy Kalan, MA, LMHC

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:19:35 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michal C Cohen	Testifying for Michal Cohen, LCSW	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Michal Cohen, LCSW, I live in Kaka’ako on Oahu and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to these potent healing modalities.

I am a licensed clinical social worker who works in private practice. Prior to establishing my own practice, I worked with both combat veterans and victims of military sexual trauma at the Department of Veterans Affairs, I have extensive knowledge and experience about the challenges people face when they have PTSD. Most of the current treatments for PTSD do not work.

I have lived through the horrific experience of losing a client to suicide. This client was waiting for psilocybin treatment to become legal. His trauma was quite extensive and none of the treatment options we tried worked. He took his own life because the treatment he read about with so much promise, was not legally available to him. People are literally losing their lives because of limited treatment options. Not every one can afford to travel to Mexico for these treatments. We owe it to those suffering from PTSD and depression to offer a treatment that actually works and has been used for centuries for deep healing transformations.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Michal Cohen, LCSW



Aloha Integrative Mental Health

PO Box 162, Mountain View, HI 96771

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email: admin@alohaimh.com

Written Testimony in Support of Hawaii SB1042

Date: 02/11/2025

To: Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

From: LeAnn Neilson
Owner PMHNP-BC
Aloha Integrative Mental Health
18-1228 Kona Street
Mountain View, HI 96771

Re: Support for SB1042

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 1042 (SB1042). I would be honored to present my testimony in person, however I can not take the time away from my patients to do so. As a mental healthcare provider, business owner, and resident of Hawaii, I believe this bill addresses important issues that are crucial to the well-being of our state, especially in light of the significant trauma related to trauma, such as the Lahaina fires, limited mental health care providers and threadbare mental health support available within the state.

Psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the **most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings**. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation. **I highly**

value the potential for thorough and effective mental health care when using psychedelic medicine for the following ways:

Clinical trials have demonstrated that psilocybin therapy can reduce PTSD symptoms and anxiety associated with trauma. For example, a study by the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) found that MDMA, combined with therapy, could be effective for PTSD. Psilocybin, used similarly, could provide similar benefits, with the added advantage of potentially fewer sessions due to the lasting effects of a SINGLE DOSE.

Veteran and First Responder Treatment: Veterans and first responders, who often experience high levels of PTSD, have benefited from psilocybin therapy. By addressing the root causes of trauma, such as combat exposure or traumatic events, psilocybin allows for deep emotional healing and reduction in PTSD symptoms.

Research from Johns Hopkins University has shown that psilocybin, when combined with psychotherapy, can lead to significant reductions in depressive symptoms. In one study, 67% of participants experienced a reduction in symptoms lasting for months after a SINGLE psilocybin session.

Patients who have undergone psilocybin-assisted therapy for depression often report lasting improvements in mood, outlook, and overall life satisfaction. This is especially promising for individuals with treatment-resistant depression, who have typically struggled to find lasting relief with conventional antidepressants.

Psilocybin's ability to induce profound experiences can help individuals gain new insights into their addictive behaviors. Many individuals report experiencing a sense of clarity and insight into the root causes of their addiction, such as past trauma, emotional pain, or unresolved issues. This can enable them to develop healthier coping mechanisms.

The psychedelic experience can increase self-awareness, allowing individuals to understand the triggers and patterns that fuel their addiction. With the help of therapists, patients can integrate this understanding into their daily lives, reducing the need to rely on addictive substances or behaviors for emotional regulation.

Psilocybin can foster a sense of empathy and connection with others, which is often lacking in individuals struggling with addiction. By encouraging a sense of oneness, it can reduce feelings of isolation that often drive substance use, leading to a more positive, healing mindset.

SB1042 is particularly vital because it will address the urgent need for mental health services for individuals impacted by the Lahaina fire, Hawaii residents struggling with treatment resistant mental health conditions as well as struggling with addiction. By ensuring the availability of alternative resources, it offers crucial support to those facing emotional and psychological challenges. This bill is

a critical step toward improving mental health care that is thorough, time efficient, and sustainable, thereby improving access and utilizing the available mental health support in a more effective manner.

As a psychiatric nurse practitioner, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges that our communities face in the aftermath of disaster and during times of hardship. Traditional models of mental health care can compound distress in Hawaii due to lack of available providers, medication treatments that can cause detrimental side effects, and difficulty accessing quality care. Alternative therapy offers a more advanced model for total mental health improvement that can be achieved in a shorter amount of time and is long lasting, improving availability and access to resources. For example, many individuals and families have struggled to access mental health support due to the overburdened mental healthcare system in Hawaii, which has resulted in a prolonged period of emotional and physical distress. SB1042 provides a comprehensive approach to address these challenges and is a necessary step forward for our state's recovery and resilience.

Given the ongoing challenges that many in our community continue to face, SB1042 is an essential piece of legislation that will provide immediate relief and long-term benefits. The urgency of addressing these issues cannot be overstated. With the support of this bill, we can ensure that those who have been most affected by the Lahaina fire, economic hardship, and mental healthcare disparities will receive the help they need to rebuild their lives and move forward with confidence.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support SB1042. By doing so, we will provide crucial resources and support to those in need, strengthen the recovery efforts in our state, and promote long-term resilience for all Hawaiians. I appreciate your attention to this matter and your commitment to improving the lives of our residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrienne L. Pritchard PMHNP BC". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the last name "Pritchard" being the most prominent part.

Testimony for SB1042

Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB1042.

My name is Adam Marr, and I serve as the Director of Operations for the Veteran Mental Health Leadership Coalition, Co-Host of the American Legion's Tango Alpha Lima Podcast, and Advisor to Beond Service—a 9-week veteran-focused ibogaine therapy program. I am here today in full support of SB1042—not just as an advocate, but as someone who has personally experienced the life-changing power of alternative therapies.

I was an Apache helicopter pilot, Pilot in Command, and Air Mission Commander, combat-deployed to Iraq. My job was to make split-second decisions that meant life or death—not just for me and my crew, but for the ground forces we supported. But my greatest challenge, like so many of my brothers and sisters, came after my service—figuring out what “normal” looked like post-military.

Like many veterans, I thought I had it figured out. Get out, get an MBA, build a career, take care of my family. But I wasn't fine. And I wasn't alone. I watched my older brother—a Special Forces Green Beret—return home with TBI and PTSD. He was prescribed thirteen different medications, numbing him, disconnecting him, and doing nothing to heal him. We found his healing outside the system and created one of the first GWOT veteran nonprofits solely focused on solving TBI and PTSD for our community.

For me, it wasn't TBI—it was being wound so tight I didn't know how to have peace. I was trying to hold it all together—co-founding a nonprofit, navigating a failing marriage, raising kids, enduring financial hardship, serving a mission-driven purpose—having answers for others but none for myself. I was drowning and didn't even realize it.

Over the past decade, healing hasn't been a single event—it's been a journey. It wasn't the result of one therapy, but many. Each experience taught me how to prepare, surrender, and integrate what I learned. These therapies didn't just help me heal—they helped me become whole again. As a servant leader, husband, father, faith-driven follower of Christ, and advocate, I now dedicate my life to helping others find their own path to healing and purpose. And I'm not alone.

More and more veterans are stepping up—not just to seek these therapies, but to bring them to the next level. Over the past decade, we've seen an explosion of veteran-led organizations working to get our community the critical care it needs now, collecting data and research, and building better infrastructure for those who come next. This is what the Veteran Mental Health Leadership Coalition embodies—a movement of leaders building the future of veteran care.

The American Legion—our nation's largest veteran service organization—has made winning the war within its #1 legislative priority for 2025. They have passed national resolutions supporting these therapies and urging Congress and the VA to do more.

But it doesn't stop there. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), and USAA's "Face the Fight" campaign are pushing this work forward at a national level. The momentum is here.

Hawaii has the chance to lay the foundation for a future where we stop losing people to outdated, ineffective treatments. This bill is about leadership in action to ensure the right infrastructure is in place so that when access expands, it is done the right way.

Preparation is everything. As an Apache pilot, I didn't just jump into the cockpit and start flying combat missions. I trained, I studied, I rehearsed every scenario imaginable because the margin for error was razor-thin. Lives depended on precision, preparation, and execution.

The same applies here. Healing isn't just about access—it's about ensuring that when veterans and others seek these therapies, they receive them safely, effectively, and with the right support. The protocols, infrastructure, and trained professionals—this is what SB1042 builds.

Make no mistake—this is a crisis, and Hawaii has the opportunity to take decisive action. Passing SB1042 is not the final step, but a critical first step. It ensures that Hawaii is ready—not years from now, but now—to take responsibility for its own veterans and citizens. I urge you to pass SB1042. This bill is not just about policy—it is about taking action, about setting the stage for real solutions, and about ensuring that Hawaii leads where others hesitate.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to this cause.

Sincerely,

Adam Marr, US Army (Retired)
Director of Operations, The Veteran Mental Health Leadership Coalition

Testimony from VETS (Veterans Exploring Treatment Solutions)

Good afternoon, Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee. On behalf of Veterans Exploring Treatment Solutions (VETS), we thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the urgent need for new treatments for veterans struggling with PTSD and traumatic brain injury.

VETS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to end the disproportionate incidence of suicide among American veterans by underwriting treatment grants for Special Operations Forces veterans seeking psychedelic-assisted therapies for PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and other mental health conditions. Since 2019, VETS has provided financial and organizational support (including preparation and integration coaching) to nearly 1,000 veterans and veteran spouses through our Foundational Healing Grant program, enabling them to travel outside the U.S. and access life-changing psychedelic-assisted therapies (P-AT). The model and approach pioneered by VETS has been adopted by many other regional, national and international organizations serving military veterans and first responders. These veterans, facing limited options within the U.S., are forced to leave the country to seek more effective treatments that are not yet approved by the FDA and thus unavailable through the VA. The need for these treatments is growing, and it is crucial that the U.S. makes these therapies accessible to meet the mental health needs of our veteran community.

The veteran mental health crisis has reached staggering proportions. Since 2001, over 125,000 veterans have died by suicide, and 29% of Global War on Terrorism veterans are known to suffer from PTSD. The disproportionate incidence of PTSD among veterans is also a driver of the disproportionate incidence of suicide among them. We lose no less than 17 and by some estimates as many as 44 U.S. veterans to suicide *every day*, at nearly double the rate of non-veteran Americans lost to suicide each year.¹ This urgent crisis necessitates swift action to explore and develop novel treatments for PTSD.

Thus, in addition to providing SOF veterans with treatment grants, VETS supports the development of FDA-approved P-ATs by assisting researchers engaged in clinical studies, as well as engaging in advocacy at the state and federal levels for laws and public policies that expedite the availability of these treatments.

Existing treatments for PTSD, such as antidepressants and therapy, often fall short for many veterans. These conventional treatments provide limited relief and rarely address

¹ "44 Veteran Suicides a Day – What We're Doing isn't Working, Alternative Treatments are Needed!" Special Operations Association of America, June 30, 2023, <https://soaa.org/44-veteran-suicides-daily/>. Accessed 20 September 2024.

the root causes of PTSD. As a result, far too many veterans continue to suffer without effective care. As clinicians studying current treatments have observed, “the only FDA-approved drugs for the treatment of PTSD are the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) sertraline (Zoloft, Pfizer) and paroxetine HCl (Paxil, GlaxoSmithKline)... Although SSRIs are associated with an overall response rate of approximately 60% in patients with PTSD, only 20% to 30% of patients achieve complete remission.”² The inadequacy of these treatments is a driving force behind the need to explore alternative therapies that offer veterans real hope.

VETS believes that P-AT can help lay the foundation for further healing, and that future FDA-approved P-ATs will bring revolutionary advances in the treatment of PTSD after decades of reliance on SSRIs—one that has the potential to save the lives of countless veterans (as well as other Americans) that might otherwise struggle with PTSD and lose their lives to suicide. Fortunately, we are seeing significant progress in the field of psychedelic research. Both MDMA and psilocybin have been designated Breakthrough Therapies by the FDA and are currently undergoing Phase 3 trials. The data is compelling—MDMA-assisted therapy has demonstrated that nearly two-thirds of participants no longer meet the criteria for PTSD after treatment. These therapies offer a level of effectiveness that traditional treatments cannot match, but we must continue to push for more research to ensure they become widely available.

Several states have made significant progress in advancing psychedelic research, setting a crucial policy precedent. Texas was the first state to establish public funding for a psilocybin trial to treat veterans with PTSD through HB 1802, allocating \$2.2 million. Connecticut created a Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy Pilot Program funded with \$1 million, targeting veterans, first responders, and healthcare workers. Maryland established the PTSD & TBI Alternative Therapies Fund, with \$1 million allocated for researching psychedelic treatments for veterans. Arizona approved \$5 million in funding for psilocybin research through a grant program prioritizing veterans and underserved communities. Illinois has also appropriated \$5 million for a pilot program offering psilocybin therapies to veterans and military families.

Last year, a Senate Study Committee in Georgia recommended a state appropriation of \$5 million be allocated for research on psychedelic therapies including MDMA and psilocybin therapies for PTS, TBI, and other mental health conditions affecting veterans. It’s important to recognize that this is not a red state or blue state issue. This is an American issue. Veterans from all walks of life have sacrificed for our country, and it’s our responsibility to ensure they have access to the best possible care as expeditiously

² Alexander W., *Pharmacotherapy for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder In Combat Veterans: Focus on Antidepressants and Atypical Antipsychotic Agents*. P T. 2012 Jan;37(1):32-8. PMID: 22346334; PMCID: PMC3278188. (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3278188/>)

as we can provide it. The legislation in Texas, for example, passed with near-unanimous support and was championed by former Governor and Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, demonstrating that this issue transcends political lines.

While other states have taken important steps, Hawaii has the opportunity to take the next giant leap in psychedelic leadership. By making a larger investment and designing a more ambitious program, Hawaii could move beyond the foundational steps laid by Texas and other states. This would be a bold initiative—one that ensures veterans can access these therapies now while also contributing to the broader national conversation on how to best integrate psychedelic treatments into our healthcare system. Hawaii could lead the way, setting a precedent for the future of psychedelic medicine.

Our government sent a generation to war, and now it is our duty to care for the invisible wounds they carry home. After two decades of sustained combat, our veterans deserve the best possible care. It is imperative that our state and federal governments act expeditiously to provide access to therapies that can truly heal their wounds and save their lives. We urge Hawaii to join other states leading the way on advancing veteran health care, by investing in psychedelic research and treatments for mental health.

Thank you.

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:09:52 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
christina braddock	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Expanding Access to Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy in Hawaii

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tina Braddock, I am a resident, business and property owner, a Nurse Practitioner here in Hawaii, a veteran with 8 yrs active duty Army, and full time caregiver to a loved one with a severe Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). As a former combat trauma nurse, I was ready for facing war overseas but I was not ready for the war I faced upon returning to home that was even more devastating.

One year after returning from Afghanistan, while serving as the lead trauma nurse at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, my husband suffered a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) right here on the Likelike while being struck by a tow truck carrying a semi refrigerator truck while he was stopped at a red light. What followed has been an ongoing five-year+ journey as his full-time caregiver, navigating a broken healthcare system that continuously failed us. We traveled all over the mainland because Hawaii lacked the necessary medical support for his condition. Despite seeking care at some of the nation's top hospitals, we could not find a provider who truly understood the complexity of his injuries or the treatments that could offer real hope.

It was this desperate need for better solutions that led me to become an Integrative Family Nurse Practitioner to help support him and hopes of others like him left hopeless and alone. Aside his permanent disability to walk, use his L arm, have clear speech, memory loss and much more the most devastating are the emotional effects of traumatic brain injury that are very very real- anger, violence, addiction, emotional instability, confusion, memory loss, irritability, and especially, Post Traumatic Stress. To get into what this does to families would take me all the day, but it is not pretty. I will share though, the number one reason persons with TBI die is not the laundry list of secondary and tertiary complications and comorbidities that come with it, but it is DEATH BY SUICIDE. The effects are so tremendous and to many, that is the only way to break free.

I built my practice around neuroregenerative medicine because I saw firsthand that conventional treatments were not enough. We needed something more. And we found it but outside of this country. After years of inward study and receiving my healing, I was then able to go through an intensive year-long psychedelic assisted therapy and research course through the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies to best educate myself as a provider to better understand these mechanisms of actions and how to apply them in practice safely. There are now countless programs that are available and being developed around the world that are

accredited to help educate more parties interested from lawyers to clergy, coaches, and doctors, I can assure you almost all specialties are interested in learning how to best implement these medicines and can .

In our search for healing, we traveled across the globe to access treatments like ibogaine, psilocybin, medical cannabis, and ketamine-assisted therapies. These medicines did what no traditional treatment had done: they saved BOTH our lives. They allowed us to reclaim a sense of self, of purpose, of healing. For me, a war veteran with deep generational trauma, and for my spouse, who has endured debilitating physical and emotional wounds, these treatments have been nothing short of miraculous.

The statistics on veteran suicide are staggering. The Department of Veterans Affairs reports that approximately 17 to 22 veterans die by suicide every day, but recent independent analyses suggest that the real number is closer to 50 per day when factoring in accidental overdoses and deaths due to high-risk behaviors linked to mental health struggles. These are not just numbers—they are my friends, my battle buddies, my neighbors, and my patients. I have lost too many to suicide, overdoses, and preventable tragedies due to the lack of effective mental health treatments. One is too many. Fifty a day is truly a national crisis.

As a medical provider in Hawaii and a first responder to the Maui wildfires, I have seen firsthand the devastating impact of trauma on our communities. The mental health crisis is not exclusive to veterans—it affects first responders, survivors of disasters, and countless others who have suffered unimaginable losses. Our current system is failing ALL of them.

We need more approaches to care. We need to allow our veterans and those suffering from trauma to access these breakthrough therapies safely, here at home, without forcing them to leave the country in search of healing. We need to invest in research and infrastructure to integrate these medicines into mainstream treatment. We owe it to those who have sacrificed everything for this nation to provide them with the best possible care.

I urge you to support legislative efforts that expand access to psychedelic-assisted therapies in Hawaii. It is time to stop losing our brothers and sisters to preventable deaths. It is time to bring real healing home.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christina N. Braddock, APRN, MSN, CEN, CPTR, FNP-BC

Family Nurse Practitioner, Combat Veteran, Caregiver, Advocate

808-212-9922

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:22:03 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vicky Farmer	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Vicky Farmer, I live on Hawai'i Island and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to life saving therapies.

The title of my testimony is Ex Tenebris Lux. I am a military spouse but not a deployment spouse. My husband served for 22 years in the army and within special operations community. I don't think that when he entered the military at the age of 17 he believed he would even live to 40.

Several years ago we found ourselves in "crisis" if you don't know what that means it means "suicidal." During that time I had thoughts of "will my baby grow up without a father, will I continue this life without my husband?" I believe the statistic after one deployment is 30% chance of having PTS; my husband did 10 combat deployments. That's 300%. He was also part of an A team which is considered tip of the spear. He was an engineer which is a fancy word for blowing things up. His exposure to IEDs, heavy weaponry, mass casualties, losing teammates first to the war, then to the PTS it's no surprise he ended up in crisis. He hid it well, at first. I didn't deal with the waking up screaming due to nightmares or punching holes in the wall, or severe alcoholism, they were more silent symptoms but that also means he suffered in silence.

He was however open to anything that might help. He left the VA on 13 medications that left him feeling like a zombie; we've tried music therapy, art therapy, talk therapy, equine therapy, neurofeedback, alpha stim, transcendental meditation, mERt, hyperbaric oxygen treatment, prolonged exposure, emdr, I say "we", because we are a team. I was and have always been his fierce advocate. I'm not commenting on the efficacy of these treatments but for him they barely scratched the surface. By the time he was in crisis several years ago articles and studies about psychedelics started appearing in my newsfeed. I can tell you at that point my first thought was "fuck no!" Putting veterans in crisis, mine was highly trained on something that makes them hallucinate sounds like a terrible fucking idea.

How uneducated and close-minded I was at that time. I had very limited understanding of the history of psychedelics and grew up during the DARE era, thank you Nancy. After that point I did some research, I learned the history, read study after study, listened to podcast by leading

experts... which lead me to finding VETs. We are incredibly grateful for Amber and Marcus Capone who started VETs. We both applied and were approved as grant recipients to access psychedelic medicine outside of the country. It's not a magic pill, it's more like a catalyst. It gave him profound relief and neuroplasticity and space to process many of the events he experienced. That's why it's a process. He still had to do integration work. The set, setting and integration was of the utmost importance. As a spouse who wasn't present during deployments my good friend told me "you didn't go to the party but you were stuck cleaning up the mess" - the wives the children we become the collateral damage and we experience secondary pts as a result of their wounds. TRAUMA affects not just the veteran but the entire family. I'm here to tell you that HEALING has the same effect. It has a ripple effect. Ex tenebris lux means "out of darkness, there is light". I'm hoping that you all will take this upon yourselves to see there is light and hope in these breakthrough therapies. Thank you for your time.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Vicky Farmer

What if there was a path to healing that could transform not just individuals but entire families? This is the promise of psychedelic therapies, and I stand in full support of proposed bill SB 1042.

My name is Erika Manzano. I am a veteran, the spouse of a veteran, and a mother. Throughout my life, I have battled the shadow of depression and PTSD, shaping my existence in profound ways. Yet, in the past four years, I have witnessed a remarkable transformation—first in my husband, next myself and then within our family unit. As well as, in many other veterans and their families seeking solace from their trauma. These therapies unlock a depth of expression that traditional treatments often fail to reach. They foster not only healing for the individual but also create a ripple effect that can mend generational trauma within families. The evolution I have witnessed through these treatments is something one must experience firsthand to comprehend. Even then, it is difficult to find words to adequately describe the profound gift of life that these incredible therapies restore to us.

My struggle with anxiety and depression began at the age of five, when I experienced trauma at the hands of my mother's fiancé. From that moment, every day was overshadowed by an overwhelming sense of fear and worry. Even playtime was tainted by his unwanted presence, transforming my childhood into a realm of distress. Unfortunately, this sense of turmoil persisted even after he was removed from my life, following me into my teenage years and adulthood.

At 19, I joined the Navy, believing it would offer the safety I so desperately craved. However, I quickly realized how naïve I had been. Sexual harassment was a constant during my service, culminating in an instance of rape. When I tried to report the harassment, I found no support, leading me to bury that painful experience deep within. Convinced it was my fault, I absorbed the blame and allowed shame to erode my self-worth.

For years, I believed that my accomplishments—raising three children, maintaining a marriage—somehow shielded me from the impact of my trauma. I thought I was coping better than others because I was not struggling with addiction, I had a successful career and from the outside my marriage looked perfect. Yet I came to realize that by suppressing my pain, I was harming my mental and physical well-being.

In 2021, after 13 years of marriage to my husband Randy, we appeared to have it all, but we were struggling beneath the surface. Randy was battling his own traumas and PTSD, leading me to fear that our relationship could end. Thankfully, he reached out to a veteran friend who introduced him to the transformative power of psychedelics at a treatment retreat in Mexico.

The change I witnessed in Randy after just five days was astounding. He returned calm and reflective, having made profound progress. Inspired by his journey, I began confronting my own traumas. Although I had been experiencing panic attacks, I initially resisted seeking help. Eventually, I traveled to Mexico for my own psychedelic experience in 2022.

Words cannot express how transformative this journey was. It helped me feel deeply for the first time, reconnecting with my children and my emotions. I learned to manage my anxiety in everyday life, a freedom I had not known before. This transformation has positively impacted our family dynamics. Our children, once hesitant to share their feelings, now openly communicate and show vulnerability.

Now, as I support fellow veterans on their own journeys, I see the same hope rekindled in them. Many arrive feeling hopeless, yet leave transformed, eager to embrace life and reconnect with their families.

My personal experiences and those of others emphasize the urgent need for measures like those proposed in SB 1042. I understand the apprehensions surrounding psychedelics, given decades of negative narratives. However, these substances have been used for centuries in traditional ceremonies, and esteemed research institutions are currently investigating their therapeutic potential.

Schools such as Johns Hopkins, Yale, Harvard, and Stanford are at the forefront of this research, exploring the effects of psychedelics on mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and addiction. These studies are vital in recognizing the value of psychedelics in treating mental health issues.

SB 1042 aims to increase the understanding of these therapies by ensuring their safety through studies on best practices for administering medicines, the crucial integration process, and educating those who assist with integration. Additionally, it promotes the use of these therapies within the U.S. Currently, veterans and others must leave their families and country to access these therapies, which adds stress and financial burden—costs that many cannot afford. As a result, individuals often turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as alcohol or drugs, or even consider suicide.

In closing, my journey stands as a testament to the transformative healing potential of psychedelic therapies, igniting hope not only for myself and my family but for countless individuals grappling with trauma. I urge you to approach this bill with a mindset transcending the mere classification of psychedelics as a drug. Rather, consider the profound impact these substances have had on the lives of those who have experienced their restorative powers. Let us shift the focus to the narratives of those who have triumphed over addiction and reclaimed their lives through these revolutionary therapies. Together, we can champion a future where healing is within reach for all who suffer. Support SB 1042.

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:57:16 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randall Manzano	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Warmest Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Randy Manzano, a resident of Iroquois Point, Ewa Beach, Hawaii. I strongly support SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials and training for mental health professionals. This bill aims to enhance access to therapeutic plant medicines and other modalities currently available only overseas or underground.

As a 25-year U.S. Navy Veteran and son of a Vietnam veteran, I've witnessed the mental toll of combat. After retiring in 2016, I experienced Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and sought help through various treatments, including outpatient therapy and Stellate Ganglion Block shots. Unfortunately, these did not provide lasting relief.

In 2021, after struggling with worsening symptoms and deteriorating family relationships, I turned to psychedelic plant medicines in Mexico. This experience transformed my life, helping me manage my PTS symptoms and improve my relationships. Inspired by my journey, my wife also sought help for her military-related trauma.

Both of us have since served as hosts and coaches at AMBIO Life Sciences and The Mission Within, assisting over 70 participants on their healing journeys.

Research shows that psilocybin and MDMA can effectively treat various mental health conditions, including anxiety and PTSD. Recent legislative efforts in other states, such as Oregon and Colorado, highlight the potential for safe, legal access to these therapies.

Hawaii must not miss this opportunity. Many individuals could benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA, and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure to create a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawaii.

Mahalo Nui Loa in advance for your time and consideration,

Randall M. Manzano

619-886-3192

kainoa1125@gmail.com

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:55:22 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edith Garcia	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

My name is Edith Garcia, and I am a proud veteran who has served this country for over ten years. Like many of my fellow service members, I have struggled with PTSD, anxiety, depression, and other chronic conditions as a result of my service. Unfortunately, my experiences within the VA healthcare system have compounded my suffering, leading to medical trauma that has only worsened my condition.

Despite my service and sacrifice, I found myself unable to access the care I truly needed within the traditional medical system. In desperation, I sought treatment overseas, where I finally found relief. I am alive today because of those treatments. However, no veteran should have to leave their country or their home state just to receive adequate care. We deserve access to all evidence-based treatment options, especially those showing promise for mental health conditions that disproportionately affect veterans.

This bill (SB1042) is a crucial step forward in addressing this urgent need. By supporting clinical research on emerging therapies—specifically psychedelics— this bill opens the door for innovative treatments that could save lives, reduce suffering, and offer new hope to those struggling with treatment-resistant conditions. The scientific community has already demonstrated the therapeutic potential of psychedelics for PTSD, depression, and anxiety. It is time for Hawaii to lead in this field and ensure that our state's veterans, first responders, and all residents have access to safe, regulated, and effective treatments.

As a veteran, I have fought for the freedoms of this nation. Now, I ask you to fight for the freedom to heal—for me, for my fellow veterans, and countless others in need. Please pass SB1042 and support psychedelic research in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Edith Garcia
Navy Veteran
Hilo, HI

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

Fr: TY Cheng, on behalf of Aloha Green Holdings Inc.

Re: Testimony of **STRONG SUPPORT** on **House Bill (SB) 1042**

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

Establishes and appropriates moneys for a mental health emerging therapies special fund, to be administered by the Department of Health. Requires annual reports to the Legislature.

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chairs Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

Aloha Green Apothecary (“Aloha”), a state-licensed medical cannabis dispensary operating on Oahu, respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of SB 1042, which appropriates moneys for mental health emerging therapies.

As a Schedule 1 substance, cannabis was also labeled as having no medicinal value. The federal government is now on the verge of rescheduling cannabis after new medical research shows what many patients have known all their lives – that cannabis has medicinal value. The same holds true for some psychoactive therapies for mental illness.

Aloha wishes to highlight how far we have come in better understanding of natural remedies available to us. Alternative mental therapies with psychoactive substances are no different as new medical research shows a positive impact on patients’ lives with little to no risk when administered by a healthcare professional.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai‘i would also join**

Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:32:50 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Martin	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Comittee,

My name is Dr. Robin Martin, I am an assistant clinical professor with the department of psychiatry at JABSOM and and a board certified psychiatrist serving the people of Hawai‘i, and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to facilitate research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would pave the way for safe patient access to new treatments that are desperately needed.

I have witnessed patients who failed every conventional mental health treatment, who only responded to ketamine, currently the only legally accessible psychedelic in medicine, outside of clinical trials.

In my profession I am on the front lines of addressing the mental health crisis, but you do not have to look far to appreciate the unmet need for new treatments. Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide and suicide the leading cause of death in the youth of Hawai‘i. PTSD is estimated to impact 5% of the population with women and veterans particularly impacted. In many cases, conventional medications and therapies do not work.

There are important and promising new therapeutics being developed, such as MDMA and psilocybin assisted psychotherapy. This bill is an important step forward in evaluating how these treatments could be safely used for those who need it most in the state of Hawai‘i.

Please support this bill and help bring these innovate treatments to the people that need them the most.

Mahalo,

Robin Martin

Testimony in Strong Support of SB1042

Submitted by Megan Smith

Resident of Kilauea, Kauai, HI

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Megan Smith, and I am a licensed mental health therapist specializing in the treatment of trauma on Kauai. I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund to support clinical trials, professional training, and research into breakthrough therapies.

As someone working on the front lines of mental health care, I have seen firsthand the devastating impact of untreated mental health conditions on our families, friends, and broader community. Nearly everyone knows someone who has struggled with depression, anxiety, addiction, or suicidal ideation. Yet, Hawaii faces a mental health crisis—one of the worst in the nation.

- In 2023, 69% of individuals in Hawaii with a mental health condition did not receive treatment, compared to the national average of 54%.
- Our state has only 297 psychiatric beds, or 20.6 beds per 100,000 people, far below the minimum standard of 50 beds per 100,000 necessary for adequate care.
- Only 14% of the need for mental health professionals is currently being met in Hawaii, making access to treatment incredibly difficult.

Given these alarming statistics, SB1042 is crucial to improving mental health outcomes in our state. Current psychiatric approaches often serve as band-aid solutions, managing symptoms rather than addressing root causes. Many individuals on SSRIs and mood stabilizers continue to suffer from chronic depression and, tragically, some lose their lives to suicide despite long-term treatment. It is time to invest in new, evidence-based approaches that can improve patient outcomes and reduce the burden on our overwhelmed system.

Historically, many treatments now considered gold standards in mental health care—such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)—were once considered experimental. They only became mainstream because of research and funding.

As a psychedelic-assisted therapist and energy psychology practitioner providing ketamine treatment for individuals suffering from treatment-resistant depression, I have witnessed the

life-changing effects of emerging therapies. I frequently receive calls from individuals who say, "I have been in therapy for most of my life, seen plenty of doctors, and nothing has worked." These are the people who are desperate for innovative treatments—people who deserve access to the latest advancements in mental health care. I have a long waitlist of clients because I utilize effective and timely solutions that work such as emotional freedom techniques and brainspotting but more clinicians need evidence based research and training in these and other new techniques.

Hawaii has an opportunity to lead the way in mental health innovation, just as Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington have done by funding research into emerging therapies in recent years. By passing SB1042, Hawaii can take a bold step toward providing quicker, more effective, and evidence-based treatments for our people.

In Hawaii, the well-being of our community is a shared responsibility, deeply rooted in our values of 'ohana (family), mālama (care), and lokahi (harmony and balance). It is the duty of our state to care for its people, and SB1042 is a direct action this committee can take to honor that commitment.

I urge you to support SB1042 and help make Hawaii a leader in mental health care innovation.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Megan M. Smith, LMHC
Owner at Trueself Therapy, LLC
Kilauea, Kauai, HI

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:54:44 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristina Rodriguez	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February 12th @ 1pm

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Kristina Rodriguez, I live in Maui County and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to life saving medicines.

As a registered nurse specializing in psychedelic-assisted therapy, I have witnessed firsthand the profound healing potential of plant medicines and psychedelics. Backed by research and substantiated by millenia of traditional indigenous ceremonial practices, these substances offer a powerful, evidence-based approach to addressing mental health conditions often where conventional treatments fall short. Personally, my own experiences with psychedelics have deepened my empathy, expanded my resilience, and allowed me to process past trauma in ways traditional therapy never could. With proper education, regulation, and medical oversight, psychedelic medicines are revolutionizing mental healthcare, providing hope and healing to countless individuals in need.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

I do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psychedelics in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

Kristina M. Rodriguez, BSN-RN, IFMCP

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:07:49 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jadu Jagel	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Jadu Jagel, I live in Kailua and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to effective mental health treatment.

Long before I became a clinical psychologist, now in private practice for over 20 years, I was an urban hippy who "grew up on" the Grateful Dead. In graduate school, I was already familiar with the history and untold story of psychedelics, not to mention their fascinating and what many of us call, rather non-clinical sounding, heart opening and wisdom expanding effects. Once a teenager during the "war on drugs" era of the 1980s, in 2003 I received a scholarship, which became my dissertation research, to study mystical experiences ordinary people like you and me had during these non-ordinary states of consciousness. My findings highlighted the healing nature of psychedelic mystical experiences of unity and interdependence. Experts on resilience and coping agree that spirituality is a powerful internal resource.

I've always been struck by the legal discrepancy in psychedelic substances being categorized as drugs of abuse on par with dangerous narcotics like cocaine and heroin, yet having shown to be non-addictive. They truly are in their own category when it comes to mind altering drugs. Moreover, as I deepened my research I learned that psychedelics in fact help human beings with the most difficult of human problems, ie. trauma, depression, terminal illness. Increasingly, they are proving to be the most powerful healing agents on the planet.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a

wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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Mahalo,

Jadu Jagel, PsyD

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:58:26 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandra Takayesu	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Alexandra Takayesu. I was born and raised and currently live in Kula, Maui. I am testifying, as an individual, **in strong support of SB1042**, which would create a special fund to support research and education related to breakthrough therapies for mental health disorders.

While I do not come here as a representative of my professional institutions, I am a JABSOM trained psychiatrist and currently an assistant professor of psychiatry with the medical school, an adult psychiatrist at Kapiolani hospital, I sit on the State Maternal Mortality Review Committee, and I am involved in a clinical trial here in Hawaii studying a psilocybin-like drug for postpartum depression.

Additionally, come here as a survivor. Early in my career as a medical student, after the birth of my first child, I developed severe postpartum depression. Fortunately, in the hands of, at the time, a very forward thinking physician, I received ketamine treatments which quite frankly saved my life. At that time, I vowed to always think outside the box for my future patients.

My clinical practice is focused on treating pregnant and postpartum women with mental health disorders and women with psychological distress related to cancer diagnoses. I am here today for my patients: the mothers, daughters, and grandmothers who come to me looking for deep healing. Unfortunately, our current therapies are pretty limited. Suicide remains one of the leading causes of maternal mortality here in Hawaii.

I am also here today as a woman from Maui who can feel the palpable pain of her island's people as we move through the trauma of the Lahaina and Kula fires. We are still not well.

Despite crisis levels of mental illness in our islands, I feel very hopeful that we are on the verge of accessing an entirely new set of tools to approach PTSD, depression, addiction, anxiety, end of life distress etc. — the evidence supporting the use of MDMA and psilocybin continues to grow in an exceedingly robust manner. We can read the papers and see the headlines, but I feel

very strongly it is time to center this science here in Hawaii, let's not be 10 years behind the continent, let's take this initiative to get our people well sooner than later.

Please support SB1042 as a beacon of hope for the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Alexandra Takayesu, MD

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:53:02 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rowen Ollier	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)
Senate Committee on Health

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Rowen Ollier, I live in Waikiki and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

I am a nurse working alongside Dr. Robin Martin, providing ketamine therapy for patients dealing with treatment resistant depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicidal ideation, and trauma. I've been a nurse and an officer in the US Navy for over ten years, and have experienced a large population of people struggling with their mental health, including veterans. In my practice, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that psychedelic-assisted therapies can have on individuals who are often at the end of their rope after exhausting traditional treatments. Many of our patients have suffered from debilitating mental health conditions for years, and their struggles have often led to feelings of hopelessness and isolation. However, through guided therapy with ketamine, we have observed patients experience real breakthroughs, opening doors to healing that were previously thought impossible.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

Rowen Ollier, RN

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:31:47 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shea Petty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Shea Petty, I live in Kona on Hawai'i Island, and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, and other promising treatments.

As someone deeply passionate about health, healing, and traditional medicine, I have witnessed firsthand the limitations of conventional mental health treatments. Through my studies in naturopathic medicine, La'au Lapa'u (Hawaiian traditional healing), and herbalism, I have come to understand the profound impact that plant-based and natural therapies can have on overall well-being. However, I have also seen how many individuals, friends, loved ones, and those in my community continue to struggle with treatment-resistant conditions such as PTSD, depression, and addiction, often with little relief from standard pharmaceutical options.

Personally, my own journey through loss, trauma, and emotional healing has shown me the necessity of approaches that address not only the symptoms but also the root causes of suffering. Emerging therapies like psilocybin and MDMA have demonstrated remarkable potential to help individuals process trauma, reconnect with themselves, and experience deep healing. Many indigenous and traditional healing practices recognize the power of altered states of consciousness in facilitating emotional and spiritual breakthroughs. Modern science is now confirming what many ancestral healing traditions have long understood: these therapies, when used responsibly and in clinical settings, can offer hope where other treatments have failed.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major

institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses, including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD, respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more pressing issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA, and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Shea Petty

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:35:14 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breanna Crenshaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Breanna Crenshaw. I am the spouse of an Army SOF Veteran and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. I am in support of SB1042. My written testimony follows in the words below, although the profound and limitless impact of Psychedelic Assisted Therapy can hardly be scribed. I began my social work career in 2014 and quickly entered into trauma treatment and crisis intervention. I have worked in various settings with individuals and groups ranging from domestic violence, end of life support, and with veterans who were identified as high risk for completing suicide. I have witnessed the impact of trauma on the mind, body, and spirit.

A majority of evidenced based therapeutic approaches and medical interventions attempt to separate these three areas of need and therefore leave the person only partially healed at best. Psychedelic Assisted Therapy and the safe use of these sacred medicines works to integrate the person's entire being and experience to access deeper levels of processing and healing. The result is incomparable to other treatments and has far exceeded the benefits that I've witnessed with other modalities such as psychotherapy therapy, EMDR, SGB, and hormone replacement.

After enduring vicarious trauma through my husband's childhood and military experiences, I became misaligned from my own individual wellness and my mental health suffered significantly. I battled with suicidal ideations and isolation from my support network. Feelings of helplessness and resentment were rampant and deteriorating the marriage. While my husband's mental health rapidly declined, my own anxiety and depression increased. My coping strategies were minimally effective whilst trying to manage my first pregnancy and eventually becoming a new mother. Like many, our family turned to Psychedelic Assisted Therapy out of desperation. We had to travel outside of the country in order to legally and safely access treatment, take time off of work, and arrange for child care. I can confidently say these medicines are life saving and invaluable. Our family went from a state of almost constant crisis with moments of reprieve (typically with bandaid approaches, substances, or simply fatigue from the cycle of emotional turmoil) to a state of mutual respect, compassion, clarity, and freedom from our vices). Suicide is no longer a thought for either my husband or myself. We are better people, partners, and parents.

In my personal life and career I have been made keenly aware of the unique struggles that service members and their families endure, and the suicide epidemic plaguing the veteran community. In my current role as Director of Women's Programs at a veteran non profit supporting these treatments, I aid in reviewing hundreds of applications from veterans and their spouses who are fighting for their lives and pleading for relief from their symptoms. I quickly identify that each of these individuals deserves access to these healing methodologies and that funding and access is extremely limited. It often feels like I am choosing who lives or dies with the approval or decline of an application.

Science and personal testimony have displayed the life changing impact of these treatments for many years, and for many years before that these medicines have been used in ceremony to offer healing for individuals in deep need. Our veterans and their families deserve access to effective treatments in the country that they served, and in settings that will preserve the safety and integrity of both the medicine and the vulnerable person seeking assistance. We have a duty to care for those who have sacrificed themselves to protect our freedom, and a general duty to take care of one another throughout the human experience. In the words of George Eliot, "What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?".

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:03:04 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenna Grosso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Psychedelic Therapy Legislation

Good morning, Chairpersons and Members of the Committee. My name is Jenna Lombardo-Grosso, and I'm here today as a former U.S. Marine, a mother, and an advocate for veterans and their families. I come before you to share my personal journey and to urge your support for advancing access to safe and regulated psychedelic-assisted therapy.

My service in the Marine Corps shaped me in ways I will forever carry — lessons of resilience, duty, and sacrifice. I led operations in some of the world's most challenging environments, but like so many veterans, I returned home with scars that couldn't be seen. The weight of moral injury, trauma, and the transition back to civilian life left me searching for a way to heal, to feel whole again.

I sought every traditional avenue of care: counseling, medication, and endless attempts to "power through." But those paths often treated the symptoms, not the root of the pain. In 2023, I turned to psychedelic therapy — a leap of faith guided by desperation and hope. It was during a retreat in Mexico that I confronted some of my deepest wounds: childhood trauma, moral injuries from combat, and the unrelenting grief over losing my mother to suicide.

The experience was transformative. Through controlled and expertly guided sessions using psilocybin and 5-MeO-DMT, I was able to face long-buried memories, process them, and begin to release the grip they held on me. It was as though years of unresolved pain were purged, leaving room for light and healing.

Psychedelic therapy is not a miracle cure, but it holds immense promise for those of us who have exhausted every other option. Research continues to demonstrate its efficacy in treating PTSD, depression, and anxiety. We owe it to our veterans, first responders and their families to explore this potential fully and responsibly.

As a mother and wife, I now stand stronger for my family. My healing journey has allowed me to feel joy and grace in ways I couldn't before. My story is one of hope, not just for myself, but for every veteran searching for a way back to themselves.

By supporting this bill, you will be paving the way for safe, ethical access to these life-changing therapies. You will be giving veterans, first responders, and their families a fighting chance at peace and healing.

I urge you to listen to our stories, to the science, and to the growing chorus of voices calling for compassionate change. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to those who have served.

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:05:25 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marni Reynolds	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)**Senate Committee on Health | February xx @ xx****Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,**

My name is Marni Suu Reynolds, I live in Honolulu and Thailand and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

I have worked in the trauma field for the last 20 years and grew up in Hawaii. I currently am working on trauma and psychosocial support programs for displaced migrants along the border of Thailand from Myanmar. I have worked with clients who have complex trauma, PTSD, post-secondary stress and gender-based violence. The trauma field understands that trauma lives in the muscles and tissues and autonomic nervous system of the body - the approach must be a body-mind practice and the support of non-addictive therapies and supplements is vital to our progress in the mental health field.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Marni Suu Reynolds, MBA, Ph.D. Candidate, Trauma Specialist

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:25:37 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean'ne Nicole Marie Robertson-Leong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February 12, 2025 @ 1:00pm

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Jean'ne Nicole Robertson-Leong, I live in Waikele and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

Expanding access to breakthrough therapies like psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, and others is incredibly important for several reasons. These substances have shown promising results in treating mental health conditions, offering a new hope for those who may not have found relief through traditional treatments.

1. ****Mental Health Crisis****: We are facing an escalating mental health crisis worldwide, with conditions like depression, PTSD, anxiety, and addiction on the rise. Traditional medications and therapies are not always effective for everyone, leaving many with few options. These breakthrough therapies have shown remarkable potential in providing long-lasting relief for those suffering from these conditions.

2. ****Efficacy Beyond Conventional Treatments****: Studies have demonstrated that psilocybin, MDMA, and ketamine can produce profound therapeutic effects, sometimes after just a few sessions. For instance, MDMA-assisted therapy has been shown to help people with severe PTSD process trauma, while psilocybin has been linked to alleviating depression and existential anxiety. Expanding access to these therapies could save lives and improve the quality of life for many.

3. ****Filling Gaps in Current Healthcare****: Current mental health treatments can often involve long-term medication use or therapies that take years to show results. In contrast, some

breakthrough therapies have the potential to bring about rapid, transformative change in a short period, making them a game-changer for those who need immediate help.

4. ****Reducing Stigma****: By integrating these substances into the medical landscape, we begin to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health treatments and encourage more people to seek help. With proper regulation and oversight, these therapies could be safely used as part of an integrated approach to mental health care.

5. ****Holistic Healing****: Many of these therapies, particularly psilocybin and MDMA, encourage deep introspection and emotional healing that goes beyond symptom management. This can lead to lasting psychological shifts that help individuals reconnect with themselves, overcome trauma, and lead more fulfilling lives.

6. ****Research and Innovation****: Allowing more people access to these therapies can accelerate further research, helping us understand their full potential and discover even more benefits. Widening access will foster innovation and push the boundaries of what's possible in mental health treatment.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands

to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Jean'ne Nicole M. Robertson-Leong, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:10:03 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harvey Arkin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Harvey Arkin, I live in Manoa and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

[Insert personal testimonial here—share a personal story or connection you have to this issue to emphasize how important it is to expand access to psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, or other breakthrough therapies. Relevant professional credentials/experience, if any, can also be included.]

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:29:06 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tane Datta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need all the mental health tools we can find during this chaotic period both economically and climate based. This is just one more tool to be used appropriately not necessarily a miracle cure

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:35:19 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
michael foo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB1042

Senate Committee on Health | February 28th, Downtown Resident of 25 years.

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Michael, I live in town and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

My personal story would involve having difficulty breaking into stable Health Care work, which brought me to Hawai'i, via the Bay Area. This included long periods of disappointment and concomitant low mood struggling to find secure work, helping people. I want to emphasize how important it is to expand access to psilocybin, in particular has the potential to be much safer than the various Mood enhancer medications offered by traditional medicine, including to the elderly patients I saw everyday.

I attended MD educational in-services, where those were emphasized, that most allopathic drugs are only for the severely depressed, and even then the efficacy is dubious vs the risk, including rebound effects, when stopping them.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo, and Best Regards.

Michael MS, PT

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:46:49 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsay Jensen-Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB1042

Senate Committee on Health | February 12 @ 1PM.

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Lindsay Jensen-Evans, and I am writing in **strong support of SB1042**, which would establish a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, professional training, and research on breakthrough therapies such as psilocybin and MDMA.

As someone deeply engaged in mental health and wellness work, I have witnessed the increasing need for innovative approaches to healing. Many individuals struggling with PTSD, depression, and other mental health challenges have not found relief through conventional treatments, leaving them without viable solutions. Decades of research from leading institutions demonstrate the promise of psychedelic-assisted therapies in providing relief for those suffering from treatment-resistant conditions.

By passing SB1042, Hawai‘i would be taking a responsible and forward-thinking approach to mental health care—one that prioritizes scientific research, safety, and accessibility. Supporting research and clinical training ensures that these therapies are explored and implemented in a regulated, ethical, and professional manner, providing individuals with evidence-based treatment options.

I urge you to support SB1042 and help expand safe, effective therapeutic options in Hawai‘i. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:07:08 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christabel Marron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Christabel and I am a resident of Oahu. I am testifying in support of bill 1042. I believe allocating funds to research new ways of treating mental health is crucial for our communities. Thank you for considering my testimony on these matters.

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:12:33 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tracey Bryan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Tracey Bryan, I live in Tyler, Texas and I am writing in strong support of SB1042 to establish funds to support breakthrough mental health therapies. I believe that psychedelic therapy is such a breakthrough therapy. It has the potential to not just save lives, but transform people from a shell of a human to a thriving member of our society. I have seen this happen in our own home.

My husband is a 20 year veteran of the United States Navy, 14 of those years spent with Naval Special Warfare as a Special Boat Operator. I have watched him struggle and suffer from the devastating effects of post traumatic stress and multiple traumatic brain injuries sustained during the course of his military career. It is not something I can explain succinctly in a short letter, but the darkness and war that raged inside him was terrifying and all consuming. It permeated every aspect of his life and impacted everyone around him. He was on two SSRIs, two pills for sleeping, alprazolam for anxiety, and then at least 2 different pharmaceuticals for the side effects introduced by the aforementioned prescription medications. This cocktail kept him from extreme depression probably about 50% of the time. However it also kept him from experiencing any joy, happiness or any feelings really, aside from anger. He had given up alcohol and was seeing a therapist regularly. After another teammate took his own life, he decided it was time for a change. We were desperate for some hope. Separately we both went online to research options and both came across the website for Veterans Exploring Treatment Solutions (VETS). He filled out an application and was accepted to their program to be able to leave the country to go to a retreat where he would receive the psychedelics ibogaine and 5MeO-DMT.

I have worked as a researcher in a pediatric orthopedic department at a major academic affiliated hospital in Southern California for over 2 decades. While my work has not had me involved in many pharmaceutical trials, I understand the process and the importance of the 4 phases of clinical trials in establishing the safety and efficacy of a medication. It had me very apprehensive that my husband was going to leave the country to ingest medicines that had not yet gone through this rigorous testing. I quickly jumped onto pubmed and was relieved to see that at least some research existed, particularly around ibogaine. I was relieved by the knowledge of the director of the retreat center in answering all of my concerns. But the reality is

my husband was on track to end up as a statistic if this retreat did not work, so I put aside my apprehension in hopes that what we were hearing had worked for so many other veterans would work for him.

My husband went to Mexico in January of 2022 for his psychedelic retreat. Immediately, his night sweats and night terrors ceased. He has been able to stay off all psychotropic and sleep medications. While he can still experience depression and anxiety, it does not go as deep or extreme as it used to and the duration of the episodes are shorter. The cerebral reset that the ibogaine allowed, gave him the clean slate to invest significant time into re-learning how to process and express his emotions in a much healthier way. Relationships that seemed to be irreparably broken were restored, as people could sense within 10 minutes of being with him that he was no longer the same person. He no longer isolates himself, but desires to serve others. He spends much of his time supporting his brothers and sisters who are struggling OR encouraging and celebrating with them on their wins.

After my husband began to get better and I no longer needed to spend my time orchestrating our lives to avoid the various triggers that could set him into a violent spiral, I started to have my own anxieties and traumas surface. Thankfully, VETS offers support for the wives to experience their own retreats. So I also applied for a grant and in 2024 was able to go to Mexico to a facility where I was able to experience the healing impact of psilocybin and 5MeO-DMT. I am no longer captive to the fears and anxieties that were paralyzing and consuming me. Being able to walk freely in my true inheritance has allowed me to become a better human, rest in truth, and walk in hope for the future.

We owe it to the citizens of our country, especially our veterans, to have access to these therapies and the healing that my husband and I (and so many others) have experienced. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway to pave the way for therapeutic access to breakthrough therapies, such as psychedelic medicines, in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Tracey Bryan

ANNE HALL, LMFT

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February xx @ xx

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Anne Hall, I live in Princeville Kaua'i and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to important new therapeutic benefits.

As a therapist, I have seen the debilitating impacts of trauma and abuse. As clinicians the more access to support and healing modalities to improve the overall mental health and wellbeing of our clients is essential. It is important that we explore and implement all available researched methods to support the health of our community. Working especially with a population that has suffered generational traumas through the colonization and stealing of Hawaiian lands from Native Hawaiians that can no longer afford housing and have chronic housing instability issues.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for

people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne I. Hall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne Hall, MS LMFT

annehallmft@gmail.com

805-253-3435

My name is Brandon Bryan, I live in Tyler, Texas and I am writing in strong support of SB1042 to establish funds to support breakthrough mental health therapies. Psychedelic medicine has saved my life and I believe it has the capability to help so many others.

As a veteran, I've spent numerous years fighting the demons in my head alone. I drank myself to sleep most nights after my deployment to Iraq in 2008. Physically, I came home, but mentally and spiritually, something had shifted in me, and it wasn't for the best. I was full of rage, anger, hate, resentment, and trauma built up since childhood, but it made me good at my job and it was praised. Even though I was in this Brotherhood, there weren't many that I could confide in due to the stigma of being considered weak. I was completely overwhelmed with guilt, shame, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.

After drinking the symptoms away for a decade, the wheels finally came off on March 6, 2018. Leading up to this incident I had three deaths in my family, my ex-wife was threatening to leave me, and I had sustained a traumatic brain injury the month before. My life was in complete chaos and turmoil. I found myself in a Xanax- and alcohol-induced flashback, barricading myself in my home. I had a pistol on me and I was going to take my own life in fear the enemy would capture me. Luckily in my stupor I called my best friend who also got hold of some guys from the team and our team psychologist. One of my teammates was able to talk to the police officers on scene and deescalate the situation.

From there, I underwent various inpatient treatments for alcohol and drug rehabilitation, Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). I followed each of those treatment programs to the best of my ability, but I couldn't find complete relief. I was committed to staying alcohol free, I swallowed every pill the doctors threw at me, and was in talk therapy weekly—but I was still ready to end my life.

After four years remaining sober from alcohol and trying all that Western medicine had to offer, on October 1, 2021, one of my Special Warfare Combat Crewman brothers took his own life. I had previously found Veterans Exploring Treatment Solutions (VETS) through online searches but was hesitant to apply because I felt that there were guys worse off than me or had more deployments than me; in my mind, I wasn't "that bad." But after my teammate took his own life, I knew I wasn't too far behind him. I applied for a grant and went to Mexico in January 2022. My experience with psychedelic therapy was the single most spiritual experience of my life. It has given me a new lease on life, true love for myself and others, and most importantly, a relationship with the Almighty God. Psychedelic-assisted therapy is not a magic pill, but it was an opportunity to shift my perceptions and work on becoming the best version of myself FOR myself. With the support of trained therapists, I was finally able to reframe my traumatic experiences and find a sense of peace that had long eluded me. The therapy taught me that vulnerability is not a weakness but a strength—a crucial part of healing that allowed me to reconnect with the camaraderie I had missed since leaving the military.

As someone who has walked the line between hope and despair, I am proof that there is another way. Psychedelic-assisted therapy offered me a second chance at life, and I believe it

can do the same for many others. I humbly ask that you support this measure to allow the citizens of Hawaii the opportunity to one day experience the healing that I had to leave this country to receive.

Mahalo,
Brandon Bryan

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:11:37 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Funding for research into developing and potentially effective mental health treatment is critically important. Please support this bill.

Mahalo,

Judith C. White, Psy. D.
Kapaa

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:41:03 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Abbas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)
Senate Committee on Health

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Susan Abbas, I live on the windward side of on Oahu and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to important therapies that can make huge impact on the wellbeing of our communities. Addiction and trauma are sadly affecting too many of our community members, family members, and dear friends. In order to effectively treat the root issues, these medicines need to be given a true chance. I know they can help heal the root issues of trauma and create a safer world.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure

109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

Susan Abbas

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 6:46:01 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Patterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Robert Patterson, I live in the Diamond Head area of Honolulu on Oahu, and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access.

It is not just researchers who are highlighting the transformative impact of these therapies—individuals who have undergone treatment, including many frontline officers and veterans, also report profound benefits.

For example, a personal friend and former U.S. Coast Guard officer described his psilocybin experience as "the most significant experience of my life," leading to increased empathy, reduced anxiety, and a greater sense of contentment. It was only through this experience that he was able to find treatment for crippling anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders resulting from 20 years of work in dangerous situations.

Like many struggling with treatment-resistant mental health conditions, he found that psilocybin provided an opportunity for deep emotional healing and insight. His experience echoes the findings of scientific research, reinforcing the need to make these therapies more widely accessible under safe, guided conditions.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have expanded scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies. With growing confidence, scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic use. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses, including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD, respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA, and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and the Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health challenges becoming increasingly prevalent in our communities, everyone knows someone who could benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA, and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

Robert Patterson

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:44:41 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Menter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February 10, 2025

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Pamela Menter, I live in Waimanalo and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, and/or other breakthrough therapies. As a mental health professional, I have witnessed a great deal of treatment-resistant situations, in which patients have not been helped by traditional treatment approaches and medications developed over the past 100 years. More effective help is on the horizon with the newer breakthrough therapies, proven to literally change lives for the better by numerous academic studies.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

Pamela Menter

Testimony in Support of **SB1042**

Senate Committee on Health | February xx @ xx

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Josh Sze, I live in Hilo and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

I am a proud 10-year veteran of the United States Navy. I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which seeks to advance research into the therapeutic potential of psilocybin for mental health conditions. As someone who has personally struggled with PTSD, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, I can attest to the life-saving potential of psilocybin therapy.

Like many veterans, I returned home carrying invisible wounds. The treatments available through traditional medicine—SSRIs, mood stabilizers, and talk therapy—failed to provide lasting relief. For years, I struggled under the weight of these conditions, feeling hopeless and isolated. However, my experience with psilocybin was transformative. Under proper guidance and in a controlled setting, it provided me with clarity, relief, and a renewed sense of purpose. The experience helped me process trauma in ways that conventional treatments never could, and ultimately, it saved my life.

I have gone thru psilocybin, ketamine and MDMA treatments. Each one has been extremely beneficial in my healing process. It has opened my eyes to a whole new way of treating mental health issues. It is the reason I am still here and wasn't another victim to the VA medical system. It helped me transform my pain into purpose. I am currently going to school for Psychology so I can one day work with these substances and veterans, I know first hand the benefits of them when used in the proper set and setting.

Many of my fellow veterans are suffering, and too many have lost their battle to mental health conditions. Psilocybin-assisted therapy represents a promising, science-backed option that deserves further study and responsible implementation. I urge the committee to pass this bill and allow the necessary research to continue, offering hope to those who desperately need it.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD

respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Josh Sze

February 10, 2025

Relating to **Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura and Vice Chair Aquino,

Mahalo for seriously considering this important step forward to honor veterans and save local lives.

Hawaii has the highest concentration of active duty military per capita of any state¹ - even more than Washington DC or Virginia on a per capita basis. Roughly one of every ten Hawaii residents is a veteran.²

Over 20 veterans are committing suicide in our country every day. The number of active-duty personnel and veterans who have died by suicide is more than four times the number killed in combat over the past twenty years.³

Current treatment modalities stabilize patients so they can minimally function when they are released from the hospital. But relapses are common which destabilize families, rob patients of hope and set up conditions for suicide. Current treatments are 'band-aids' not cures.

New treatment modalities are showing remarkable, long lasting benefits, and at a fraction of the cost of current treatment.⁴

Veterans and residents deserve an opportunity to participate in this promising research. Many other states are taking similar steps.

Private donors will use this opportunity to help fund research and safe treatment protocols that save local lives. According to MAPS, an organization that has run multiple clinical trials providing veterans immediate access to breakthrough therapies under the guidance of the FDA and their supervising clinicians, the average cost of a clinical trial is \$300,000.

I will personally commit \$250,000 over 5 years to this effort if this bill passes.

With Aloha,

-Michael Mohr, Oahu resident

¹ www.security.org – Which States Carry the Highest Military Burden?

² same as above

³ <https://missionrollcall.org/veteran-voices/articles/the-state-of-veteran-suicide/>

⁴ <https://vetsolutions.org/research/>

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:57:44 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Gabriel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Tanya Gabriel, I live in Kihei and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to mental health care to assist in the processing of trauma such as that experienced with the Lahaina fires.

As a mental health professional I have first hand experience and knowledge of the need for quick and effective mental health care. Supporting this bill will improve mental health outcomes for our community in a way that talk therapy may not be able to address for some. Our community needs access to different and more impactful treatments for PTSD, depression, anxiety, and addiction.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure

109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,
Tanya Noelle Gabriel, LMHC, NCC

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:40:23 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Jessica Silva, I live in Colorado and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to breakthrough therapies.

I am writing to convey my experiences with both traditional clinical therapies and non-traditional mental health treatments throughout my husband's military career, and how they have affected our family.

My husband served as a Navy SEAL for 27 years. He completed 17 deployments, 14 of which were post-9/11 combat deployments assigned to SEAL Team 6. He sustained multiple traumatic brain injuries, physical injuries, but more subtle...the inevitable moral injuries that accompany being an eye-witness to the atrocities of war. The military was, as usual, more reactive than proactive in the provision of mental health services to their members (non-existent to the families until much later), and very little attention was paid to what sustained exposure to brutal conflict and an increased op-tempo will do to the human psyche. In addition to his personal fight, our entire family was subject to the pain of him being gone for half our kids' lives, as well as the added stress of so many casualties. Our kids were frequently seeing their mom dressed in black every time he deployed, having friends whose dads were never coming home, the news of men they knew dying. During one particular 10-year period, we experienced at least one casualty every time deployed. In 2011, we had front row seats for Extortion 17, losing dozens in one fell swoop. One morning at 3am, I received a call from a friend in Germany. "What troop is Jason?", she asked. I didn't know. She said an entire Chinook had gone down. Well, death notifications weren't made until after 6am. So I spent the next several hours sitting on the stairs by the door in the dark, waiting for the knock. I didn't learn until hours later that he was alive. When I heard his voice, I broke. Over time, it took its toll on all of us.

It was a gradual decline, a loss of resilience. It took longer and longer for him to mentally return home, until he just didn't return anymore. I saw him lose himself slowly, and I was unaware at

the time that I was losing myself too. I was helpless in the face of so much loss, an endless stream of it. His self-medication with alcohol was his way to numb, and he paired it with isolation, becoming a shadow even when he was physically present. The member of our family that had been the playful dork, the silly dad, was a reactive, unsmiling specter around whom we all walked on eggshells. I forced couples therapy. For two self admitted over-achievers, we failed spectacularly. He experienced bouts of depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, all the hallmarks of PTSD, made worse by another traumatic brain injury in 2008 when a suicide bomber set off his vest which brought down the building and sent fragments into his face, killing 2 other teammates (and the dog). One night when my son was around 8 years old, I had a hard time getting him to bed. He was being a typical silly kid, but I was tired and came downstairs and complained to my husband. He charged upstairs and pulled my son out of bed by his ankle, where he dangled in the air upside down. My son was so scared he peed his pants.

I was a single parent, even when he was home. He was so stuck in fight or flight mode that even a simple interaction would have him physically trying to escape the situation. He would literally exit the room mid-conflict.

My husband was shocked by his own behavior, but was reluctant to utilize the psychologists at the command due to the stigma that was associated with mental health, thinking he was weak, that he would lose his active status, his security clearance, and his credibility. A SEAL's worst punishment is being taken off the job. The strain showed up in our kids' behavior as well. My son was born in 2000 so all he knew was wartime. When he entered high school he started cutting himself, his grades declined, and he was getting into trouble. I was barely sleeping, waiting for the phone to ring, for CACO uniforms to show up at my door. When he was home, I worried that I would wake up to a suicide note. This was now YEARS that we were living in survival mode and we were exhausted.

When he retired in 2019, we thought we had won...we "made it", right? However, the fight for equilibrium lasted far beyond his career. There were many times when divorce was appearing to be the only way for me to survive the storm. Worse was his apathy, he would tell me to just leave. The only reason we are still married today is that neither of us quit on the same day.

The time for ghosts to appear had come. The transition to civilian life is not an easy one for any service member, but it's the closest to hell I've ever been. The effects of trauma have a way of showing up at the worst times, in the worst way. I had ceased to be a wife a long time ago. Now I was a roommate, caretaker, administrator, nurse, whipping post. His rock bottom presented itself in the form of getting arrested for falling asleep drunk in his truck on the side of a mountain highway and having to meet his son's eyes when he picked him up from the Sheriff's office.

The decision for therapy was more of an ultimatum, and so began a different kind of fight. In search of a therapist, my husband encountered new obstacles. We were stuck in the VA healthcare system, a vast and complicated warren of unknowledgeable, uncaring administrators. Providers who were not fluent in the language of the injured warrior changed frequently, and were mostly interested in prescribing medication...lots of it. Appointments were few and far between. They expect people that are secretive by nature of their job, warriors who have never been vulnerable a day in their life, to suddenly want to unpack their years of trauma to a veritable stranger. Well, that's not happening. It's a frustrating and disheartening realization that even the VA doesn't know how the VA works, yet they expect broken, hurting people fresh from decades of war to figure it out. It's no surprise when you hear veterans are blowing their brains out in the VA parking lot. We both realized quickly that medication and sporadic talk therapy were not going to be effective, and continued to feel hopeless.

The entire family was suffering and we knew we were at a breaking point. I can not stress enough the absolute brick wall that is the time of transition to civilian life. Even if you have your whole plan on paper and organized on spreadsheets, you will still feel like you have fallen down a well. So much happened at once; we were no longer allowed to live in base housing, we were having a house built, my father in law died, we both were changing jobs, our kids had left the house, and let's not forget the isolation of COVID lockdown... for someone who is struggling with just regular day to day life, with very little resilience left, this feels insurmountable. After struggling to find appropriate mental health care, my husband started hearing about Ibogaine treatment from other veterans, and we decided to figure out a way to send him to a retreat. It's not cheap, there are questions about its legality, and finding a reputable retreat center was incredibly important for safety reasons. He was able to get a grant from a fellow SEAL's non-profit to a vetted retreat center and we held our breath.

It's not magic, but it felt like it to all of us. He was given some much needed relief, a chance to hit "pause" and catch his breath for long enough to incorporate new skills he was learning through the concurrent integration process. His craving for alcohol was GONE! It's been over 4 years and it is still non-existent. Then I went, too, working with psilocybin. I released years worth of tears, from childhood trauma to hurt from my battered marriage, and the grip of helplessness eased. We were able to reconnect to our core selves, and then each other and begin our parallel paths to becoming fuller versions of ourselves, shedding the layers of guilt, shame, blame, regret, and pain that had been holding us prisoner for so long. To wake up without the weight of imminent fallout is a gift I never thought I would experience again.

Psychedelic therapy prompted massive post-traumatic growth for our whole family., and the work continues. We are the statistic we always wanted to be...still married after a SOF career. I believe it's only about 6% that can claim that. We are much more present for each other and our kids, and they have noticed the vast difference in us both. They can relax knowing they don't

have to worry about us. We are no longer stuck in survival mode. We are not only living, we are thriving. Now my husband is finding purpose in peer mentoring other veterans that seek psychedelic treatment, using the attributes that made him a great warrior on a new mission to forge a path for others in his community. I have furthered my education and am now a certified coach for first responders undergoing psychedelic therapies. It works. If you are willing to face your demons and do the work of forming new habits and practices, and are searching for a more holistic approach to real healing, psychedelics can be an incredible tool. It's attainable, and most importantly, sustainable. No more years of meds or down spiraling. No more melting down. No more thoughts of suicide. Now we focus on living...and thriving.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Jessica Silva

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:28:50 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February xx @ xx

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Alexis Mulled, I live in Hawaii Kai and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to ancient healing modalities that were always the first line of treatment.

With the pill crisis and mental illness on the rise due to the stresses put upon our country it's time to go back to our roots. It is time to expand access to psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, or other breakthrough therapies. As a alternative therapy educator, I have a masters cannabis science and therapeutics from the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy and I support progression forward.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

Alexis Muller

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1042

Submitted to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

I submit this testimony in strong support of SB1042 in my role as a steward of the Maui Breakthrough Collaborative (MBC), a coalition of mental health professionals, researchers, and community leaders committed to advancing breakthrough mental health therapies for Hawai'i's residents. This bill represents a transformative step toward modernizing our state's mental health infrastructure and ensuring that emerging, evidence-based therapies are accessible to those who need them most.

The 2023 Maui wildfires created an unprecedented mental health crisis, exacerbating PTSD, depression, and substance use disorders among those who lost homes, loved ones, and entire communities. While Maui is resilient, the scale and complexity of the trauma require a mental health response that goes beyond conventional treatments. This is why MBC has already begun mobilizing private funding on Maui, focused on culturally responsive, place-based protocols for breakthrough therapies. However, private investment alone is not enough to sustain and scale this critical work.

The Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund proposed in SB1042 provides a vital state-led funding mechanism that will allow Hawai'i to participate in phase three clinical trials of FDA-designated breakthrough therapies, expand treatment access, and establish a local provider training pipeline to ensure therapies are delivered safely and effectively. While private funders recognize the urgency of this work and have committed initial resources to launch research efforts on Maui, the state's involvement through this bill is essential to ensuring long-term sustainability, equity, and regulatory oversight.

Breakthrough therapies, including MDMA- and psilocybin-assisted treatments, have demonstrated extraordinary promise in national and international clinical trials for PTSD, depression, and substance use disorders. The passage of SB1042 will allow Hawai'i to harness these scientific advancements and integrate them into a community-driven, culturally aligned model of care. As an island state, we must ensure that innovative treatments are available within our communities, rather than forcing our residents to leave Hawai'i to access life-saving care.

Additionally, public investment through this fund will amplify private dollars, attract national research collaborations, and position Hawai'i as a leader in trauma-informed, culturally responsive mental health care. Maui's recovery is just the beginning—this funding model could serve as a blueprint for how Hawai'i advances mental health equity for all rural and neighbor island communities.

I urge the committee to pass SB1042 as a critical step toward making Hawai'i a leader in mental health innovation, ensuring that those suffering from severe trauma have access to the most effective treatments available. This is not just a policy decision; it is a commitment to the long-term healing and resilience of our people.

Matt Lorin

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:42:40 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elena Theofilatos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February 12 @ 3 pm

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Elena Theofilatos, I live on the Big Island, Puna and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to the new ways of healing their mental health conditions, especially those that have been treatment resistant.

As a therapist, I know how disheartening it is for someone to hear that they have “treatment resistant depression”. I have worked with many clients and it is such a painful thing to see how they can be on the brink of losing hope in their betterment because the traditional methods, the only available methods, such therapy and medication, have repeatedly failed to help them. I believe psychedelic-assisted therapies, particularly psilocybin, offer a promising breakthrough for individuals like that. Early research shows that psilocybin can help people confront emotional pain, gain new perspectives, and experience profound healing. I strongly support the bill to fund such therapies, as they could provide hope and transformative healing for many people in Hawai'i who have not found relief through conventional treatments.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,
Elena

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker working in private practice and working in a psychiatric unit on Oahu. I see a whole array of mental health illnesses and mental health crisis's in both practices. I know first-hand that having mental health services in the community is essential and can make a difference. We have come a long way, but we need to continue to evolve and help individuals who continue to experience distress and suffering because the modern medicines and therapeutic modalities do not help them. There are now decades of clinical evidence-based research showing how effective psychedelic assisted therapies are and how quickly it can help individuals who fit criteria no longer suffer from their mental health distress. I have witnessed my client's getting treatment with ketamine who had suicidal ideation and/or treatment resistant depression find relief from their suffering and returning to an improved functioning in their lives. Often, they need maintenance and it's also a treatment that is not fully covered by insurance as it is still considered experimental. It's not cost effective for them. Many of my clients cannot afford this treatment either. However, for the few clients who are able to fly to Oregon and get treatment with psilocybin, I have seen impressive results. They seemed to have gone the longest without needing another psilocybin session. They engaged in preparation and integration in a safe regulated environment in Oregon in one of their facilities of their choosing and not only had a powerful experience, but they walked away no longer haunted by their trauma or stressor; gaining new insight so they are no longer stuck. Their anti-depressant medication dose went down and they are engaged in maintenance therapy without being in frequent crisis. This inspired me to enroll in a yearlong psychedelic assisted therapy course through Integrative Psychiatry Institute to gain knowledge with the incredible healing properties of these medicines (ketamine, MDMA, and psilocybin) along with therapy. During the program, I participated in a psilocybin practicum in Oregon where the treatment centers are regulated by the state of Oregon. I was impressed with the emphasis on safety in a therapeutic and non-clinical setting (not in a doctor's office, but a cozy setting). Knowing the facilitators were trained with background checks put me at ease. They were there for support and to hold space to create a safe and healing experience and it was evident they were following safety protocols.

Walking away from the experience along with the preparation and 2 follow up integration sessions after the session, I was impressed and understood how most people could benefit from this treatment. Not many of my clients who are interested in this therapy can afford to fly out to Oregon or Colorado and pay for a hotel and flight along with the cost of the therapy. They have done their own research with John Hopkins and MAPS expressing their disappointment that it's not an available therapeutic modality for them and wish that it could be offered here in Hawaii. I agree, and know that this is a therapeutic modality and medicine that can help our community. Please strongly consider passing SB1042 for our community for a safer access to treating mental health.

Mahalo,
Stacy Daly

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:40:16 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)
Senate Committee on Health

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Ruta Jordans. I live in Kapaa, on Kauai and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access.

In my experience with veterans I have found that the Veterans Administration prescribes opioids and causes veterans with PTSD to become addicted to opioids which make their conditions worse.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

Please support SB1042 to help our veterans. Aloha!

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:39:27 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Janelle Bautista	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I, Maria Janelle Bautista, **SUPPORT SB 1042** relating to mental health, which will provide funding to support mental health initiatives. This bill will allow us to support our mental health providers, provide necessary harm reduction education to our communities and public schools, further research tailored to improve our community's well-being and more. This bill ensures resources for our underserved communities in Hawaii. As a Social Work student and employee working in an underserved community, I see a need for further research, access to resources, prevention efforts and more. This funding will allow us to provide this for our communities.

Respectfully, I encourage SUPPORT for SB 1042. Thank you for your consideration.

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:12:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to these critical treatments.

As a Kanaka Maoli and someone deeply rooted in my community, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of mental health struggles among our people. Our communities face generational trauma stemming from historical injustices, displacement, and the ongoing challenges of navigating a world that often does not recognize our cultural practices and ways of healing. I have seen friends and loved ones struggle with depression, PTSD, and addiction, often feeling like traditional pharmaceutical interventions do not fully address their needs.

For many, the available treatments come with severe side effects or fail to provide lasting relief. The promise of breakthrough therapies such as psilocybin and MDMA offers hope to those who have exhausted other options. I strongly believe in the need for culturally competent, evidence-based approaches to healing that integrate traditional knowledge with modern science. These therapies, when administered in clinical settings, have shown remarkable efficacy in treating PTSD, treatment-resistant depression, and other severe mental health conditions.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses, including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD, respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA, and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and the Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more pressing issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA, and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo

Mō‘ili‘ili, HI 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Executive Commission Member

Board Member, Hawai‘i Workers Center

Kanaka Maoli / Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:23:24 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea Rorer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Chelsea Rorer, I live in Waialua on Oahu and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to non-ordinary states of consciousness that can allow those who are hopeless to have a new lease on life and thrive. As a psychiatric and acute care nurse practitioner (PMHNP-BC and AGACNP-BC) with over 14 years of experience in emergency medicine, I've witnessed the constant cycle of mental health struggles and the financial strain they place on our communities. After earning my psychiatric certification and completing a yearlong training in psychedelic-assisted therapy, I opened MindWave Medicine, where we specialize in ketamine-assisted psychotherapy. The transformations I've seen in my clients are nothing short of miraculous—people who had lost hope, who thought they'd tried everything, now accessing parts of themselves they never thought possible, regaining a renewed sense of life. This is not just therapy; this is the future of healing, and it's vital that we expand access to these breakthrough treatments for the well-being of all.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive

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We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Chelsea Rorer, MSN, PMHNP-BC, AGACNP-BC

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:20:10 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Vaughan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is written as support for breakthrough therapies based on personal experience as a military spouse. Breakthrough therapy was the only therapy that made the initial "dent" in the severe depression and suicidality. It appeared to lighten the load and allowed for next step therapies to take affect and it also gave hope that symptoms could be reset. The breakthrough therapy provided an improved baseline for moving forward with follow-up therapy.

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 6:32:45 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February 12 @ 1pm

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Amanda Lillibridge, I live in Honolulu, Hawai'i and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

Outside of the undeniable science that has proven the efficacy of psilocybin and other breakthrough therapies as effective healing modalities, I can add that my anecdotal experience with the medicine has been nothing short of profound.

These modalities have played a monumental role in my own personal health journey and trauma. I can say without a doubt that I would not have found the hope, perspective shift, or healing from debilitating adolescent trauma without having encountered this medicine.

I urge you to move forward with this initiative because everyone deserves safe access to this incredibly powerful tool in what has been proven to be a broken mental health system. We can empower our community by taking this step toward offering them safe and equitable spaces to heal.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration - Please support SB1042.

With aloha, Amanda Lillibridge

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:13:32 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Spiro Theofilatos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February 12 @ 1pm

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Spiro Theofilatos, I live on the Big Island, Puna district, and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

I can say, with firm conviction, that had I not discovered psychedelics, I would not be alive today. My depression as a teenager was debilitating, with suicidal ideation being a daily reality I had to face. The absurdity of selling the hours of my life to a hostile world that *might* reward me after 50 or so years with a retirement fund or Social Security checks was simply a life path I was not willing to endure. I was not sent down the path of psychiatric drugs as my emotionally distant parents never saw my condition as serious enough to justify the expense, but thankfully, I discovered psychedelics when I was 19. My experiences changed my outlook and attitude about life so radically that not only did my severe depression dissipate, I found myself intensely motivated to master music production, and went on to release records on prominent underground labels and perform music across the United States for 15 years. When I began to see the consumption of fossil fuels as a problem that could eventually doom the planet, I stopped touring and played a significant role in building New York City's first biodiesel company. I then found myself inspired to improve the health of as many people as possible, so I launched what quickly became a successful kombucha company. Soon after, I was able to retire early and move to Hawai'i. I attribute all my great leaps forward in life to insights and inspiration from psychedelic experiences.

A robust argument can be made that psychedelics, which show enormous promise in treating mental health conditions like depression and PTSD, **threaten pharmaceutical industries that profit from long-term medication use**. Psychedelic therapy, which could provide lasting benefits from just a few sessions, doesn't fit the traditional model of ongoing prescription sales.

Research at prominent Universities like Johns Hopkins, NYU, Harvard and Stanford is showing, conclusively, that psychedelics have long lasting psychological benefits. Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui loa,

Spiro Theofilatos

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 5:00:25 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steven P. Katz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a licensed marriage and family therapist and I strongly support this bill!

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:01:09 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Loke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable members of the legislative body,

I stand before you today to share my deeply personal journey with plant medicine and the profound impact it has had on healing the unconscious wounds of my childhood. My story is one of pain, healing, and ultimately transformation, and I hope that by sharing it, I can help shed light on the potential of plant medicine as a powerful tool for emotional and psychological healing.

For much of my life, I carried the weight of childhood trauma that I couldn't fully understand. Like many others, I struggled with patterns of anxiety, fear, and self-doubt, not fully understanding that these were rooted in experiences from my early years. For years, I sought traditional talk-therapy, trying to unravel the knots of my past, but there were parts of me—hidden, unconscious parts—that felt unreachable, buried too deep to confront with just words or intellectual understanding.

It wasn't until I began working with plant medicine (Ayahuasca and psilocybin) that I encountered a level of healing that was both lasting and profound. Through my experiences, I have learned that these plant allies, often misunderstood or stigmatized, have the unique ability to help us access parts of ourselves that are otherwise blocked. For me, plant medicine opened a gateway to my subconscious, allowing me to confront the wounds of my childhood with compassion and clarity, something I never thought possible.

These plants don't just help us to see our pain—they help us feel it, in a safe and loving environment, so that we can heal it. I was able to release long-held trauma and break free from patterns I had been unable to shift for years. What's more, these experiences allowed me to develop a deeper connection to myself, to the parts of me that were once lost in the shadows of fear and shame.

The healing I have undergone is not simply emotional or mental—it is a deep, spiritual restoration. Through the guidance of skilled facilitators and a carefully curated environment, plant medicine allowed me to reconnect with my true essence, with the innate peace and wholeness I was born with. I no longer carry the emotional burdens of my past in the same way. I have become more present, more grounded, and more compassionate toward myself and others. This profound shift has affected all areas of my life—my relationships, my work, my sense of purpose.

I believe in the potential of plant medicine to help others who are burdened with the invisible wounds of childhood trauma. It is a path of healing that honors the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. I am not alone in this. Many others, from all walks of life, have found similar healing through plant medicine. It offers a chance for profound transformation, often in ways that traditional therapies alone cannot.

I ask you to consider the immense value that plant medicine could offer to those who are suffering, especially those who have tried everything else and are still seeking healing. It's not just about providing an alternative—it's about providing a solution that addresses the root causes of suffering and opens up new possibilities for well-being. It is a path that helps people reclaim their sense of wholeness, and for that reason, I believe it deserves thoughtful consideration and access.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to share my story. I am forever grateful for the healing I've experienced, and I stand in hope that others will have the same chance to heal and thrive.

With heartfelt gratitude and hope,
Christine Loke

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:56:50 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Bray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Regina Bray, a former Labor and Delivery registered nurse and now a Family Nurse Practitioner. I live in Ewa Beach, Hawaii (Oahu), and I am writing **in strong** support of SB1042, which establishes a special fund for emerging mental health therapies to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to modalities such as psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, and others.

My story: I am a 46 year old and 22 year Army Veteran. I have witnessed and experienced very traumatic events over my lifetime. Some of these graphic events were metaphorically bundled, put in a box, and tucked tightly away. During these times, I didn't realize these events, albeit tucked away, would resurface into bouts of shame, anger, sadness, loneliness, and even perfectionism. It shaped how I viewed myself and how I showed up (poorly) in my relationships. I buried myself in school and work. As time passed, I came to understand that I needed help. I began therapy and was subsequently placed on medication to help with the extreme anxiety and bouts of depression that ensued. These medications left me feeling blah. I wasn't able to get to the root of the problem. Enjoyment was a difficult emotion to feel. Love and bliss were feelings that I missed. I was no more myself than before I started therapy and medication. I actually felt worse at times. It took time to realize this. It took consuming psychedelic plant medicine for me to understand from a perspective of love and compassion that the "inner little girl" needs to break free from the pain of these experiences. But how?

In a controlled and supportive setting, a group of veterans sat in a circle in a teepee on sacred land. We took turns discussing our intentions before consuming the plant medicine. With the assistance of a trained shaman-like individual, I ingested a psychedelic medicine. I desperately needed a deep emotional and psychological healing experience. As the medicine took effect, a wave of emotions, ranging from fear and sadness, took over me. I struggled through the process of allowing the medicine to help me see and feel my truth. During my journey, I sat before an ancestor, Tata of the Yawinawa tribe. He chided me for not breaking away from my physical self. My ego. Tata lay there on his deathbed, asking me just to let go. I couldn't do as he asked so he laughed and said we'd find another way. I became hot and felt unwell and desperately wished I could do as he asked. I was scared to let go of my ego. I purged and purged, willing the medicine to work and rid myself of these feelings. I knew there was more work to be done

beyond the teachings of the medicine, something internal that I had to address to defeat the ridiculous chastising in my head that I deserved these heinous experiences. As the visual hallucinations emerged, I reflected on my internal struggles and memories. I re-experienced aspects of my trauma but also gained a newfound perspective that allowed me to confront the pain, shame, and fear head-on. My guides provided gentle guidance, helping me navigate these intense moments until I could release those unwanted feelings toward myself.

While the entire experience is challenging to put into words, I know firsthand that these modalities (psychedelics) are a necessary accompaniment to integration and therapy so that some can begin the healing journey. While I'm not "cured", I can talk about my experience without feeling deep shame. I can tell my story without big emotions. I still struggle; however, I can acknowledge this now.

My psychedelic experience left me with a sense of unity and interconnectedness. I felt supported in an environment that fostered safety and acceptance of healing. It wasn't an easy experience, but it was a necessary one to dissolve the negative state in which I remained and return with a newfound understanding. I very much understood that the shame I carried wasn't mine to carry so I was able to let go. I found internal peace with the little girl who was so scared and alone. I could reframe the experience in a way that empowered me to find self-compassion and forgiveness.

Not everyone can afford this type of healing journey. Beyond these journeys lie necessary integrative therapy to help aid the individual in finding meaning. This is a vital component of the psychedelic experience to make meaning of the experience, to process emotions, and change behaviors for continued growth. The integrative process provides support so that the person has a sense of community and validation. Unfortunately, integration is not readily available as a stigma remains with the use of psychedelics. This is why I strongly believe in the use of psychedelics alongside psychotherapy, coaching, or other modalities to keep the momentum that has been set in place.

Mahalo,

Regina Bray

LATE

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:57:40 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmela Tafoya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Have you ever known a person in excruciating PAIN? Please forward equitable treatments and a plant remedies for all to benefit by!

Jaye Olson

Ewa Beach, HI 96706

10 February 2025

Dear Committee Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Jaye Olson, and I am a resident of Ewa Beach, Hawaii. I am writing to express my support for Bill SB1042 "Mental health emerging therapies special fund", which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to care through integration before, during, and after psychedelic assisted therapy.

As a combat veteran with over 21 years of service, I've witnessed personally how psychedelics can change someone's life. I suffer from severe anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and insomnia. I've seen and done things in the Army that no human being should ever have to witness or endure. My world was crushed when a close friend took his beautiful, irreplaceable life. He was like a brother to me; he was compassionate and empathetic. He was battling inside, as were several of the leaders I knew, but seeking help for our mental health was frowned upon or viewed as weak. I told my leadership that I just lost a brother, and they said to me with little empathy, "Let's run it off." From that day on, everything spiraled out of control for me. I became numb and lost my motivation. This merely added to my years of nightmares, insomnia, high anxiety with hidden panic attacks, and a lengthy list of health conditions that I hadn't seen a doctor about. I felt helpless and alone, like I couldn't go on, and I attempted suicide twice.

I had a successful military career thus far and decided to seek assistance outside of the service. I paid out of pocket for one session and some medication, which made me feel even more distant from reality and like a zombie. I stopped taking the prescription and proceeded to pretend everything was fine. My physical and mental health rapidly deteriorated.

One of my sons was diagnosed with severe autism spectrum disorder (level 3). We established ABA services on the island and were receiving excellent care. I came down on orders to PCS, but the ABA therapy there had a year-long waitlist. After over 20 years of services, I decided to go through the Medical Board process to ensure that my son continued to receive therapy; I wasn't ready to retire. I felt like I went from hero to zero in 2.5 seconds, with no true purpose in life. When I retired, I was on over nine medications, my body felt sluggish, and my mental health wasn't improving. I wasn't adjusting to civilian life as well as I thought. Covid struck, and I enrolled in a 21-day outpatient program that was over the internet. The program was

helpful, yet there was something missing. I kept falling into a vicious cycle of weight gain, and my mental health continued to deteriorate and I felt defeated .

It wasn't until a friend of mine who suffers from similar issues as I told me about a life-changing experience he had with a plant medicine called ayahuasca. I could see the change in him that he was free from all those boulders being on top of him for the past 20 years and he wasn't so cynical. At this point in my life, I was willing to try anything even if that meant going against what I believed in.

The first time I tried plant medicine was at a veteran's retreat. My journey with the medicine was the most profound experience I had every had. At first, I was scared that I was going to have a bad experience and taken advantage of, but it was the very opposite. Through one of my experiences my intentions were able to better understand my neurodivergent son and for better health. My journey showed me where his synapsis in his brain was not connected and firing. He also has sensory overloads with screaming episodes that can last for hours. These episodes would trigger my anxiety, and I would flip out. In one of my journeys, I was able to experience and feel what my son would go through with his sensory overloads and now I am able to sympathize with him and give him the care that he needs from the care that I received while I was in the medicine. I am currently only on three meds. I still have a long way to go with my mental and physical health but I'm further along then I was before my journeys. I think if I had a better integration period, I would be farther along with my recovery.

I know without a shadow of a doubt that funding these emerging therapies is going to be life changing and saving for many to come. Funding this project will help incorporate an integration process that will be needed to help everyone in their recovery. Funding will also help with the homeless population and help those that have addiction problems because I know that plant medicine and other psychedelic medicines can help this population.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support Bill SB1042 because I know firsthand that psychedelic therapy works and is a life-transforming medicine but without the proper integration process the medicine won't be as effective as it can be. Please keep an open mind when you make your decision. That's why we need you to help us make this happen by funding this project. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Jaye Olson

Phone: 254.702.9385

Email: jayeolson34@gmail.com

LATE

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:58:28 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doora Shin	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB1042

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Wednesday February 12, 2025 at 1:00pm | CR 225 & Videoconference

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

My name is Doora Shin, and I am testifying in strong support of SB1042. This measure creates a mental health emerging therapies fund to begin clinical research and train professionals around emerging therapies and educate the public about harm reduction and mental health awareness

Academic & Medical Institutions

In addition to the facts and research showing the safety and efficacy of emerging or breakthrough therapies in treating some of the most common mental illnesses, we also see a large number of academic institutions and medical hospitals opening up psychedelic research and healing centers. These include but are not limited to:

1. Yale Program for Psychedelic Science
2. The Johns Hopkins Center for Psychedelic and Consciousness Research
3. University of California: Berkeley Center for the Science of Psychedelics
4. Massachusetts General Hospital: Center for the Neuroscience of Psychedelics
5. The Center for Psychedelic Medicine at New York University's Department of Psychiatry
6. The Centre for Psychedelic Research at Imperial College in London
7. The Center for Psychedelic Research and Therapy at The University of Texas at Austin's Dell Medical School
8. Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine: Center for Psychedelic Psychotherapy and Trauma Research
9. Treatment & Research In Psychedelics program at Pacific Neuroscience Institute
10. University of Wisconsin: Transdisciplinary Center for Research in Psychoactive Substances

The movement to create safe, therapeutic access to emerging and breakthrough therapies is one that is growing across cities, states, at a federal level, and within academic and medical institutions. Following in the steps of both Oregon, Colorado, Texas and under guidance from those who helped to design and implement those State programs, the passage of SB1042 would allow for our community members who are suffering to have access to these therapeutic options

and find the relief they need. We all know someone who stands to benefit from effective therapies to depression, addiction, PTSD, anxiety, and more. That's why we support this bill, and we ask that you pass SB1042 so we can adequately prepare Hawai'i to offer safe access to these therapeutic options.

Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony in strong support of SB1042.

Doora Shin

Community Member and Project Manager of Clarity Project

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February 12 @ 1pm

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Josh Sze, I live in Hilo and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

I am a proud 10-year veteran of the United States Navy. I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which seeks to advance research into the therapeutic potential of psilocybin for mental health conditions. As someone who has personally struggled with PTSD, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, I can attest to the life-saving potential of psilocybin therapy.

Like many veterans, I returned home carrying invisible wounds. The treatments available through traditional medicine—SSRIs, mood stabilizers, and talk therapy—failed to provide lasting relief. For years, I struggled under the weight of these conditions, feeling hopeless and isolated. However, my experience with psilocybin was transformative. Under proper guidance and in a controlled setting, it provided me with clarity, relief, and a renewed sense of purpose. The experience helped me process trauma in ways that conventional treatments never could, and ultimately, it saved my life.

I have gone thru psilocybin, ketamine and MDMA treatments. Each one has been extremely beneficial in my healing process. It has opened my eyes to a whole new way of treating mental health issues. It is the reason I am still here and wasn't another victim to the VA medical system. It helped me transform my pain into purpose. I am currently going to school for Psychology so I can one day work with these substances and veterans, I know first hand the benefits of them when used in the proper set and setting.

Many of my fellow veterans are suffering, and too many have lost their battle to mental health conditions. Psilocybin-assisted therapy represents a promising, science-backed option that deserves further study and responsible implementation. I urge the committee to pass this bill and allow the necessary research to continue, offering hope to those who desperately need it.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD

respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Josh Sze

LATE

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 1:22:10 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB1042, but hesitate Dept of Health being in charge, although Dr. Fink may be capable. I see funding allocated but misapropriate by those below the director and reports don't even reach the top in different Divisions, such as what I saw in the \$11.2 million grant Mental Health Transformation State Infrastructure Grant/MHTSIG 1 of 9 in the nation, can be appropriated for 5 years about 2006-11. Also a great nationally recognized Community Plan to improve the worst State Hospital in the nation created by Dr. Tom Hester, for the whole community can be replaced, even after federal and court-ordered monitoring. Some special trust would be needed and I would say not under the Department of Health.

LATE

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)
Senate Committee on Health

It's a cliché that just before you die, your life flashes before your eyes. My name is Elizabeth Snider and in April 2020, after sustaining two consecutive, life-threatening impacts that knocked me unconscious for more than 10 minutes, I can tell you- my life didn't flash, but it did stop. The impacts I suffered in a car accident resulted in a traumatic brain injury, specifically known as post-concussive syndrome and post-concussive PTSD, which provisionally delayed my reaching professional milestones and disrupted me from meeting my own basic human needs. I was unable to recall memories each morning, from the night before. I went from being a competitive PhD candidate with a minor in statistics, to not being able to spell my own name, write the date in correct order, or count simple math. The injury and lack of successful treatments made it necessary to withdraw my research applications and subsequently prevented me from entering graduate level research until this year. However, the injury did not damage my passion for research. Utilizing the treatments required for my recovery, I retrained myself over the last few years. In the process, I strengthened my commitments and developed deeper insights into the field of developmental psychology and neuroscience where there is clear overlap and undeniable need for expansive research when we combine psychedelics. More than two-thirds of the top 11 leading causes of death in the US are directly and indirectly reducible through the modern research SB 1042 makes possible.

Prior to my injury, after earning my baccalaureate degree and stabilizing financial support for my family, I had applied to graduate programs. Paradoxically, after the accident, when I regained consciousness, I could not recognize my name, no matter how loudly it was shouted. When I regained comprehension of my name, I misspelled it for months. Executive function and cognitive control eluded me. My sympathetic nervous system was failing me. I struggled for more than a month to recall simple details of my identity from before the collision, and I woke up unable to recall each yesterday. My identity seemed an unattainable remnant of who I had been. But terrible as this was, I forged vital connections and insights furthering both my progress and professional goals through modern and experimental medical modalities.

At my core, I am a researcher, and despite medical professionals giving me bleak prognosis, I persisted through experimental medicine and treatments. Although I was initially forced to step away from academic coursework and conventional research work, I regained my cognition and memory through research, self- advocacy and cutting-edge, experimental functional medicine and psychedelic treatment. Each day of those 40 months, I remained a student, learning about conditions and treatments. I remained a researcher, conducting a longitudinal case study on

myself. Every day, I assessed my condition, and identified varying control-group items and experimental conditions within my environment. I utilized my knowledge of research to scour reports in journal articles and cold-call clinics across the U.S. in search of viable treatment options. I devised strategies to obtain services and became an unwavering advocate for myself and others with similar ailments who were in desperate need of new combination treatments and psychedelic treatments. I understood from my previous research experiences that even insignificant findings could be utilized to inform what would work. I remained honest with myself and my care teams in relaying findings, despite my varying emotional states. Whenever doctors advised me to file for disability, I doubled down on research to treat and recover myself. Fueled by hope and new perspectives provided to me by psychedelic treatments and integration and my renewed passion for psychology, I was surviving by my scientific research habits colliding with new treatment modalities and psychedelics.

I discovered training for specialized injury and mental health treatment in a diverse and multi-disciplinary approach to the brain (Vasterling et al., 2012). I received my final functional neurology treatment with a newfound concernment in neuroscience and psychedelics. By learning how to use the neurological mechanisms of action in combination with psychedelics and modern medical treatments, my life was saved when I converted traumatic experiences into strength and recovery, and to advocate, heal and thrive. I identified the necessity to study how neural plasticity occurs beyond the context of particular diagnosis and how psychedelics influence and maximize the healing potential of neurological treatments. How I overcame my own near-death experience and survival-challenges, psychedelics and experimental functional medicine will remain a vital part of societal research and education.

Through intentional metacognitive practices in combination with these alternative modalities, I have fortified my cognitive capacity and emotional stamina to be successful in a multitude of environments including a rigorous graduate school environment. Those I treated with using these modalities also all have notable improvement. My experiences have taught me that research and cutting-edge medical options are not only immediately life-saving, this research is also life-changing, and we are determined to further this science and education for our future generations. My own lived experience originating from, identification with and record of working with underrepresented populations has sharpened my understanding of the absolute necessity for SB1042, now.

In an ever-changing world, the reliable piece I know is that SB1042 will save lives and prevent future harm here, now, in the state of Hawai'i. SB1042 is an asset to this state and Hawai'i citizens as well as far reaching beyond to save lives nationally.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,
Elizabeth Snider

Vasterling, J. J., Bryant, R. A., & Keane, T. M. (2012). *Ptsd and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury*. Guilford Press.

LATE

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 10:43:38 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

My name is Erica Yamauchi, I live in the Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise area of Honolulu and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to innovative mental health treatments.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise

LATE

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 11:41:04 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sam Tramonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Sam Tramonte and I live on Maui. There are no words in our language to express the positive impact and lasting positive results from breakthrough therapies, especially with the medicines of MDMA, psilocybin, and ketamine. Our descendants will one day wonder why it took us so long to legalize these gifts when we could have done so sooner and helped our fellow humans to heal, move away from addictions, be more complete individuals, and access the vibrancy from within that these medicines afford us.

Navigating life in our current society is not always easy. These medicines help one to navigate with better insights, more heart, a more direct connection to a higher power, and teach us how to be more loving, gentle, humble, and well rounded individuals who act from a place of integrity and heart.

Withholding the research and access to our community is withholding progress to all of what we love. I hope and pray there is an opening so that all of our relations get to benefit from what these medicines and these expert practitioners have to offer. It is past time. There has been enough suffering.

My vote is for us to grow into the next evolution of homo sapiens so we can get closer to our self defined designation of being wise(sapiens). A wise choice is to make healing more readily available to all. The proof is there. It has always been there, with some of these medicines for millennia. Our descendants are counting on us.

LATE

SB-1042

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 11:46:32 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shayla Curtis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)
Senate Committee on Health**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Shayla Curtis, I live in the Tantalus area on the island of O’ahu, and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies for mental health, such as psilocybin therapy.

I am a registered nurse who has been working in the intensive care unit (ICU) for several years. I was also a part of Oregon’s legalization efforts for measure 109 during 2019 and 2020. This measure, which has since successfully passed into law, is an established psilocybin therapy program serving people with a wide array of mental health issues. These two experiences, being a nurse in the ICU and being involved in the passing of Oregon’s psilocybin therapy program, have synergistically fueled my passion for breakthrough therapies that can alleviate human suffering. I have personally witnessed and experienced the transformative and profoundly healing properties of psilocybin. It is an incredible medicine from the earth that I believe can bring back wellness and vitality to humanity at large. I have also personally witnessed the immensity of human suffering that exists during my time working as a nurse in the ICU, where illness, disease, and death pervade. There are breakthrough therapies that can alleviate the mental suffering I see on a regular basis. Knowing this while simultaneously knowing that it is not readily available for those who need it, makes it an excruciating experience. Our ohana here need help, desperately. I feel that it is so crucially important to consider the passing of SB1042 because it will allow Hawai’i to make a step in the direction of truly healing our community.

Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. As a result, psilocybin is increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD, when administered in clinical

settings. These positive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin it's Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

With mental health becoming a more pervasive issue in our communities, and as I have come to realize in my ICU work, it is imperative that we consider any and all efforts to support the people of Hawai'i . Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Shayla Curtis

LATE

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)
Senate Committee on Health | February 12th 2025

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Erica Harvitt, I live in Manoa and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to psychedelic medicine for mental health. I am an occupational therapist and a doctoral candidate at Boston University researching psychedelics for mental health.

In 2020 I began my own personal journey into psychedelics in an effort to decrease my own CPTSD after years of traditional therapy and medications had failed to help. I spent a month in Jamaica at a psilocybin retreat, which greatly changed my perspective on how I see the world and how we are all connected, with the long-term result of me learning to give others much more gratitude and grace, especially when they are unable to bestow it on me.

Two years later I spent a month in Peru at an Ayahuasca retreat. Though the integration of this medicine tends to be long, I have come to realize that my biggest lesson there was that the only way forward is to face my fears, and that I have the strength to get through them.

The next summer I spent two weeks in Columbia at a 1 on 1 session with an elder female facilitator I had met in Peru. Here I learned more deep love and gratitude for those around me, and that have come before me.

Not only has my PTSD had decreased significantly in these past five years, but I have grown in innumerable other ways that are hard to articulate.

Unfortunately, due to legal restrictions in the US, psychedelics are very difficult and expensive to access, causing the patient to have to leave to country to legally procure access to most of these medicines.

Most Hawaiians can not afford the thousands of dollars it costs to travel to receive the healing that I have been so blessed to experience.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and

non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need.

If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,
Erica Harvitt OTR/L,
Boston University, OTD(c)