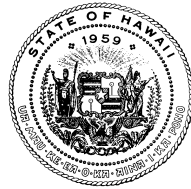


JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA
MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I



KATHERINE AUMER, PhD
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
LUNA HO'OMALU O KA PAPA

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378, Room 256
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
Testimony to the
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
In Support of S.B. 1442 S.D.2 H.D. 1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS
March 25, 2025 2:00 p.m., Room 325 and Video

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ChairTarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii law, HRS §334-10, established the State Council on Mental Health as a 21-member body to advise on the allocation of resources, statewide needs, and programs affecting more than one county as well as to advocate for adults with serious mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbances, individuals with mental illness or emotional problems, including those with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Members are residents from diverse backgrounds representing mental health service providers and recipients, students and youth, parents, and family members. Members include representatives of state agencies on mental health, criminal justice, housing, Medicaid, social services, vocational rehabilitation, and education. Members include representatives from the Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances and county service area boards on mental health and substance abuse.

The Hawaii State Council on Mental Health ("Council") strongly supports SB1442 HD1, which seeks to clarify and update the responsibilities of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) within the Department of Health to better reflect current mental health systems of care for Hawaii's children and adolescents.

Mental health challenges among youth in Hawaii have become increasingly complex, requiring a comprehensive, coordinated, and evidence-based approach to ensure that children and adolescents receive the appropriate services and support. By modernizing the statutory language governing CAMHD, this bill ensures that Hawaii's mental health care framework aligns with best practices and evolving community needs.

SB1442 H.D.1 is critical because it:

1. **Clarifies CAMHD's role** in delivering high-quality mental health services, ensuring efficiency and accountability in service delivery.
2. Supports a system of care model that **prioritizes early intervention, family involvement, and culturally competent services.**
3. **Improves coordination between CAMHD and other child-serving agencies,** strengthening Hawaii's overall mental health system.

The Council remains committed to advocating for policies that enhance mental health care access and effectiveness for Hawaii's youth. We believe SB1442 HD1 is a vital step toward ensuring that every child in our state has access to the support they need to thrive.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB1442 HD1.

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

VISION: A Hawaii where people of all ages with mental health challenges can enjoy recovery in the community of their choice.

MISSION: To advocate for a Hawaii where all persons affected by mental illness can access necessary treatment and support to live full lives in the community of their choice.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 1442 SD 2 HD 1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 25, 2025

2:00PM

Room 325

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB 1442 SD 2 HD 1 which clarifies and updates the responsibilities of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) of the Department of Health to reflect the current systems of care that address the mental health needs of children and adolescents in the State. OHA has long advocated for meaningful policies which include targeted and systemic actions to address mental health associated disparities, reduce the health inequities of Native Hawaiians, and protect and uplift the health and vitality of the lāhui (people). Updating how critical services are provided to youth will create long-term benefits that span future generations by interrupting cycles of violence and intergenerational trauma.

The deliberate attempts to destroy Native Hawaiian knowledge systems—through suppression of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i (the Hawaiian language), restricted access to the ‘āina (land and sea), and the degradation of culturally significant resources have exacerbated the disproportionate health disparities faced by Native Hawaiians. Studies show higher rates of chronic illnesses—diabetes, heart disease, and obesity—are linked to the disruption of traditional practices.¹ Intergenerational trauma also manifests in high rates of mental health challenges among Native Hawaiians, including among Native Hawaiian youth. Data indicate Native Hawaiian youth are more likely to experience sadness, depression, and suicidal ideation than their non-Native Hawaiian peers.² Additionally, Native Hawaiian adolescents face elevated risks for early substance use, exposure to drug offers,

¹ Lewis ME, Volpert-Esmond HI, Deen JF, Modde E, Warne D., “Stress and Cardiometabolic Disease Risk for Indigenous Populations throughout the Lifespan,” *Int J Environ Res Public Health* (February 2021), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7918141/>

² Cherry Y.E.W. Yamane, Jordyn Pourier, LaShai Jake, Deana Around Him, “Supporting Native Hawaiian Mental Health Through Indigenous Culturally-Driven and Land-Based Healing Approaches,” *Child Trends* (December 3, 2024), <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/native-hawaiian-youth-mental-health-indigenous-culturally-driven-land-based-healing>

and higher substance-use rates, reflecting the long-term impact of cultural trauma on behavioral and mental health.³

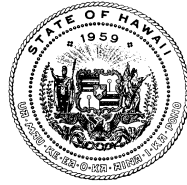
These disparate negative mental health-associated outcomes can have a deleterious effect not only on affected individuals, but on their families and the larger community. To this end, OHA appreciates CAMHD's commitment to providing culturally sensitive, child- and family centered services.⁴ **By providing culturally grounded mental health programs and interventions, SB 1442 SD 2 HD 1 will serve as a critical steppingstone toward reducing Native Hawaiian mental health-associated disparities through targeted and systemic relief.**

Therefore, the Office of Hawaiians Affairs urges this committee to **PASS SB 1442 SD 2 HD 1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

³ Cherry Y.E.W. Yamane, Jordyn Pourier, LaShai Jake, Deana Around Him, "Supporting Native Hawaiian Mental Health Through Indigenous Culturally-Driven and Land-Based Healing Approaches," Child Trends (December 3, 2024), <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/native-hawaiian-youth-mental-health-indigenous-culturally-driven-land-based-healing>

⁴ "Strategic Plan 2023-2026," Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division (February 21, 2023), CAMHD Strategic Plan 2023-2026 rev8

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**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1442 SD2 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND
ADOLESCENTS.**

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID A. TARNAS, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE MAHINA POEPOE, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Hearing Date: March 25, 2025

Room Number: 325

Department Testimony: The Department of Health (DOH) Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division strongly supports this bill. It has been 50 years since the Mental Health Services for Children and Youth statutes have been codified. The amendments proposed by this bill bring the statute up to date to reflect the current role of the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division in addressing intensive mental health needs of children and adolescents in Hawaii.

Although originally a branch of the Adult Mental Health Division, the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) became its own Division of the Department of Health decades ago as research emerged about the distinct and specialized nature of child and adolescent mental health services. Today CAMHD is the state's Medicaid provider for intensive mental health services for children and adolescents with a serious emotional disturbance (SED). CAMHD works collaboratively with other child-serving agencies and has developed a comprehensive array of treatment services for youth with SED via Purchase of Service contracts. Mental health assessments, clinical oversight, and care coordination are provided by employees at Family Guidance Centers on O'ahu, Hawai'i Island, Maui, and Kaua'i. In addition, the Family Court Liaison Branch on O'ahu provides mental health services to youth who are incarcerated or detained. This system of care is based on core values to provide child- and family-centered, culturally sensitive, least restrictive, and evidence-based mental health services. Over the past 30 years, CAMHD has leveraged federal system of care grants to actively develop and improve the child and adolescent mental health service system of care in Hawai'i based on national standards and best practices.

1 CAMHD strongly recommends including the statutory amendment in section 3, which states that
2 the provision of services would be subject to the availability of state and federal funding. This
3 language is consistent with Hawaii Revised Statutes 334-3 which describes the functions of the
4 department in mental health and states "within the limits of available funds".

5 In addition, the current array of intensive mental health services provided by CAMHD cannot be
6 sustained without a combination of State general funds, federal grants, and Medicaid
7 reimbursements. An unfunded mandate to serve all eligible youth could expose the State to
8 potential litigation. Given the current uncertainty about the future of federal grants and Medicaid
9 funding to support vulnerable populations, this risk must be soberly evaluated.

10 Finally, we respectfully request that SECTION 10 of this bill be amended to "This Act shall take
11 effect upon its approval."

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

SB1442 SD2 HD1 Mental Health CAMHD Updates

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Tuesday, Mar 25, 2025: 2:00: Room 325 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB1442 SD2 HD1:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

Updating mental health codes for children is important for several reasons:

- 1. Improved Diagnosis and Treatment** As our understanding of mental health evolves updated codes allow for more accurate diagnoses and treatment plans tailored to children's unique developmental needs.
- 2. Reflecting New Research** Advances in psychology and psychiatry reveal new conditions, refine existing ones, and improve classification methods, ensuring that children receive appropriate care.
- 3. Better Insurance Coverage** Updated codes help ensure that insurers recognize and cover new and emerging mental health conditions, reducing financial barriers to treatment.
- 4. Early Intervention** More precise coding can lead to earlier identification of mental health issues, allowing for timely intervention, which is crucial for long-term well-being.
- 5. Tracking Trends and Outcomes** Updating codes helps researchers and healthcare providers track mental health trends in children, assess treatment effectiveness, and develop better policies.
- 6. Reducing Stigma** More refined language and categorization can help reduce stigma by framing mental health conditions in a more accurate and supportive way.

Overall, updating these codes ensures that children's mental health care remains current, effective, and accessible.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.

SB-1442-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 4:30:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/25/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kate O'Connor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kate O'Connor Kaimuki SB1442

I, Kate O'Connor, am in SUPPORT of SB1442 "Relating to Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents".

Mental health services are constantly changing. State Bills and providers need to update policies and services to remain current to properly assist their clients, the youth of Hawai'i. Without continuous updates, services can become inadequate and less useful. Staying up to date with mental health can help promote quality of life for children and adolescents.

Children and adolescents in Hawai'i face disparities when it comes to finding support services. There is a shortage of mental health providers throughout the island, which leads to longer wait times and difficulties with being paired with a mental health professional. SB1442 upholds and updates the responsibilities of the Child and Adolescents Mental Health Division (CAMHD) to lessen these disparities.

These updates to SB1442 provide greater assistance to children and adolescents in Hawai'i, especially those who face day to day disparities that no child should have to go through. Thank you for taking the time to consider passing this bill.