
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO DISABILITY HEALTH DISPARITY.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that adults with
2 intellectual or developmental disabilities experience
3 disproportionate health disparities compared to those without
4 disabilities. Individuals with intellectual or developmental
5 disabilities are more likely than their peers without
6 disabilities to have fair or poor health, be considered obese,
7 and be diagnosed with chronic diseases, such as diabetes.
8 Intellectual and developmental disabilities are life-long
9 differences that typically arise before adulthood and can
10 uniquely influence the trajectory of an individual's life,
11 including their physical, intellectual, behavioral, and
12 emotional development. The state council on developmental
13 disabilities was created to advocate for and improve and protect
14 the lives of individuals with intellectual or developmental
15 disabilities in the State.

16 Decades of research have clearly established that members
17 of minority groups living in the United States receive poor



1 health care and have poor health outcomes resulting from social
2 determinants of health. On a national level, racial and ethnic
3 disparities in access to health care and health outcomes are a
4 persistent, pervasive public health problem. In the State,
5 underserved populations, such as Native Hawaiians and other
6 Pacific Islanders, have been historically underrepresented in
7 health care, as data does not accurately reflect the health
8 disparities currently faced by this group. Additionally,
9 individuals from the neighbor islands are also underrepresented
10 and underserved, as access to health care resources and services
11 are limited. However, even less is known about the extent of
12 racial and ethnic health disparities among adults with
13 intellectual or developmental disabilities. Accordingly, there
14 is an urgent need to create an updated, accurate set of data
15 that reflects the State's unique need to assist certain agencies
16 to better understand the needs of individuals with intellectual
17 or developmental disabilities in their communities.

18 The legislature further finds troubling gaps in the health
19 disparities of people with intellectual or developmental
20 disabilities and their social determinants of health in the
21 State. Certain recent health surveys in the State and existing



1 related initiatives do not segregate data pertaining to
2 individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, nor
3 is the data publicly available. Presently, the State relies on
4 prevalence rate data from the federal government published in
5 1994-1995 that does not reflect the State's current population
6 and its specific needs. The State's prevalence rate is 1.58 per
7 cent, which equals approximately twenty-two thousand people who
8 have an intellectual or developmental disability. Additionally,
9 the only substantial data the state council on developmental
10 disabilities collects on intellectual or developmental
11 disabilities is through the medicaid waiver program, which
12 serves approximately three thousand people. As there is a gap
13 of approximately nineteen thousand people who may have an
14 intellectual or developmental disability in the State, there is
15 little information on quality of life, health care access, and
16 health care outcomes for uncounted individuals with intellectual
17 or developmental disabilities.

18 Accordingly, the legislature finds that further research is
19 needed to understand the health disparities of people with
20 intellectual or developmental disabilities and their social
21 determinants of health. It is therefore imperative for the



1 State to establish fundamental baseline data for service
2 evaluation, policy development, and research to serve the
3 current and future needs of individuals with intellectual or
4 developmental disabilities. Accurate, current data will also
5 help the State to provide culturally appropriate health care,
6 address barriers to health care access, reduce health
7 disparities, increase employment opportunities, and support
8 individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities to
9 live healthy lives in the community.

10 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to require, and
11 appropriate funds for, the state council on developmental
12 disabilities to study the health disparities experienced by
13 individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities in
14 the State to develop data to inform the State's public health
15 policies and practices.

16 SECTION 2. (a) The state council on developmental
17 disabilities shall collect comprehensive data to identify gaps
18 in social determinants of health, especially in the areas of
19 health care access and quality and economic stability, that
20 affect health outcomes and health disparities experienced by
21 individuals with intellectual or development disabilities in the



1 State and that can be addressed with policy, legislative, or
2 stakeholder action.

3 (b) The state council on developmental disabilities shall
4 submit a report to the legislature no later than twenty days
5 prior to the convening of the regular session of 2027, which
6 shall include a list of recommendations and proposals, based on
7 the council's findings, on how state agencies and departments
8 can implement legislation and policies to reduce health
9 disparities experienced by individuals with intellectual or
10 developmental disabilities. The report shall also include:

11 (1) A definition of the State's intellectual or
12 developmental disability population for public health
13 administration purposes, including the health
14 conditions, duration, and level of severity required
15 to qualify for disability status;

16 (2) A definition of the social determinants of health as
17 used by the United States Department of Health and
18 Human Services;

19 (3) Population-level differences in the State between
20 individuals with and without intellectual or



- 1 developmental disabilities on health indicators and
2 social determinants of health, including:
- 3 (A) Access to necessary health care;
 - 4 (B) Access to preventive health care, including
5 wellness programs and emotional support services;
 - 6 (C) Health behaviors, including the percentage of
7 individuals who engage in physical activities or
8 smoke cigarettes;
 - 9 (D) Health status and outcomes, including the
10 percentage of individuals who are considered
11 obese or diagnosed with chronic diseases,
12 including diabetes, hypertension, and
13 cardiovascular diseases;
 - 14 (E) Drivers of health outcomes, including the impetus
15 to seek health care and how individuals seek
16 health care;
 - 17 (F) Emergency preparedness, including evacuation
18 planning and ability;
 - 19 (G) Health insurance coverage;
 - 20 (H) Social determinants of health and health
21 outcomes, including household income, employment



1 status, education level, access to health
2 information technology tools and systems, access
3 to transportation, and the social and community
4 environment; and

5 (I) Other indicators and determinants that contribute
6 to an individual's physical and mental health;

7 (4) Factors contributing to the population-level
8 differences, including race, ethnicity, gender, age,
9 county of residence, and economic and social
10 disadvantages and discrimination;

11 (5) A determination of the population-level differences
12 and contributing factors that are preventable or
13 avoidable;

14 (6) Any other information that would assist the State in
15 determining safe, equitable, and culturally
16 appropriate public health actions that would improve
17 health care and address the health disparities
18 experienced by individuals in the State with
19 intellectual or developmental disabilities; and

20 (7) Proposed legislation, including best practices, for
21 the State to reduce the health disparities experienced



1 by individuals in the State with intellectual or
2 developmental disabilities.

3 (c) In preparing the report, the state council on
4 developmental disabilities may consult with community
5 stakeholders on the following:

6 (1) Improvements to provider training about intellectual
7 or developmental disabilities;

8 (2) Life experiences of individuals with intellectual or
9 developmental disabilities;

10 (3) Accessibility mandates for health infrastructure that
11 include the needs of individuals with intellectual or
12 developmental disabilities;

13 (4) Communication guidelines and standards for health care
14 providers to communicate with individuals with
15 intellectual or developmental disabilities; and

16 (5) Other topics as deemed relevant by the state council
17 on developmental disabilities.

18 (d) For the purposes of this Act:

19 "Health disparities" means population-level differences in
20 health outcomes that are related to a history of social,
21 economic, or environmental disadvantages that are avoidable and



1 not primarily caused by underlying health conditions that led to
2 the disability.

3 "Intellectual or developmental disability" means a lifelong
4 physical or mental disability, or both, that typically arises
5 before adulthood that uniquely influences the trajectory of the
6 individual's physical, intellectual, behavioral, and emotional
7 development and impacts how individuals experience the world
8 around them.

9 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$550,000 or so much
11 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
12 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
13 2026-2027 for the state council on developmental disabilities to
14 collect comprehensive data and compile and submit to the
15 legislature a report pursuant to this Act.

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

18 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.



Report Title:

State Council on Developmental Disabilities; Developmental Disabilities; Intellectual Disabilities; Health Disparities; Health Equity; Report; Appropriations

Description:

Requires the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to collect data and submit to the Legislature a report focused on the health disparities experienced by individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities in the State prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027. Appropriates funds. (CD1)

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