



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA
SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

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

KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: (808) 586-2850
Fax Number: (808) 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Wednesday, February 14, 2024
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 1830, H.D. 1, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Nakashima and Members of the Committee:

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

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) require psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; (3) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances; and (4) appropriate funds.

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

H.B. 1830, requires the Department to grant, upon application and payment of proper fees, provisional licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist and mental health counselor to those who meet certain requirements to obtain reimbursement for services rendered. While the Department appreciates the intent of this measure, the creation of this new license type appears contrary to the provisions of Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) section 26H-2, which provides, in part, that “the regulation and licensing of professions and vocations shall be undertaken only where reasonably necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of consumers of the services; the purpose of regulation shall be the protection of the public welfare and not that of the regulated profession or vocation.” A new licensure scheme should not be implemented solely for the purpose of reimbursement. There may be unintended consequences of regulating or requiring licensure of a currently exempted population of professionals who provide mental health services. For example, the cost of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed on to consumers.

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

The Department is unclear whether the requirement for provisional licensure in Part II and III only applies to new applications received beginning July 1, 2026. Currently, interns are exempted from licensure; those practicing under the exemptions of licensure would automatically be subject to license requirements on July 1, 2026, thereby, causing possible disruptions in patient care.

Regarding Part VI, the Department appreciates the consideration of personnel and appropriation for funding. However, the Department requests appropriation of general funds upon implementation to ensure the division can hire staff and update our system to accommodate the new licensure as revenues supporting these expenses will

not be collected until a later timeframe. Consequently, the Department respectfully requests that the following general fund amounts be inserted in the bill to ensure proper implementation:

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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

Testimony of the Board of Psychology

Before the
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Wednesday, February 14, 2024
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 1830, H.D. 1, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Nakashima and Members of the Committee:

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

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) require psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; (3) authorize insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social worker intern in certain circumstances; and (4) appropriate funds.

The Board limits its comments to Part IV of the bill:

This bill is substantially similar to S.B. 343, and is the companion bill to H.B. 1300 from the 2023 legislative session, which at the end of session, included amendments requested by the Board. Those measures contain language including a pathway for all approved applicants of the provisional license to also be authorized to take the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP), passage of which is required to be licensed as a Psychologist. The Board requests the following amendment to the current proposed language starting from the end of the current amendment on page 40, line 2:

[.]; provided further that those issued a provisional license pursuant to 465- shall be authorized to take the examination upon issuance of the provisional license.

Statistics provided by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB), the owner of the EPPP exam, show that test takers have a higher rate of passage the closer the EPPP is taken to the completion of a doctoral psychology degree. Success rates drop significantly, even if the test is taken 2 years after graduation, which is the amount of time it takes to complete the postdoctoral training hours required for Hawaii licensure. Allowing all approved applicants for the provisional license to take the exam prior to completing their postdoctoral degree could have a positive impact on exam success rates in Hawaii moving forward. Such allowance will be especially helpful if ASPPB implements their second EPPP exam in all states as planned.

Finally, the Board is concerned with the language on page 40, line 11 to line 17, which provides the Board the authority to grant a waiver for State employed psychologists who have not obtained a license to practice, and whose 2-year time frame to obtain licensure has expired. The Board is concerned that the phrase "circumstances beyond the psychologist's control" does not clearly outline or define what circumstances would qualify. Additionally, the current language does not provide a time limit on the waiver; as written the waiver could be used to retain an unlicensed psychologist indefinitely.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

February 14, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

House Bill 1830 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1830 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health.

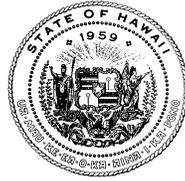
This bill establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances. Requires psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination. Authorizes insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances.

Hawaii residents find it challenging to obtain vital mental health services. The issue needs to be addressed in a variety of ways, and this bill is a positive step toward solving the problem.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE
KE KE'ENA KŪPA'A MAULI OLA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
415 S. BERETANIA ST. #415
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B.1830 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Representative Nakashima, Chair
Representative Sayama, Vice Chair
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

February 14, 2024, at 2:00 pm

Room Number: 329

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** H.B.1830 HD1.

Established through Act 291 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022) the overall aim of the OWR is to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. OWR is focused on breaking down barriers that impact the physical, social, and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people. OWR explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support.

Reflecting on the Maui Wildfires, the long-lasting effect this traumatic event has placed on the lives of our families and our communities, coupled with the preceding unresolved traumatic events like the pandemic, a new type of trauma phenomenon called cascading trauma is occurring. Prioritizing access to mental healthcare is crucial to address cascading trauma.

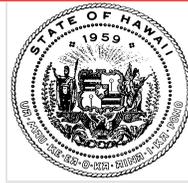
H.B.1830 HD1 increases access to mental health professionals (MHP) and assures individuals, couples, and families are able to acquire their services and support, regardless of their financial situation. This bill also provides support and removes barriers for our mental health professionals. Allowing provisional licensures ensures our next generation of MHPs are adequately trained and prepared to provide high-quality service, in addition to relieving potential financial burdens for them and their clinical supervisors.

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is an approach to understanding and responding to the widespread impact of trauma. By passing this bill, the State would be upholding the TIC principles of Safety, Peer Support, Empowerment, and Voice and Choice, which strengthens our pathway towards a trauma-informed state. As such, the OWR supports H.B.1830 HD1.

Mahalo

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tia L R Hartsock".

Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA
Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience
Office of the Governor



LATE

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

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1830 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE MARK M. NAKASHIMA, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON D. SAYAMA, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON: CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health supports this measure and offers comments.

3 **Department Testimony:** There is a clear workforce shortage of mental health providers in the
4 country and particularly in the state of Hawai'i. In 2022 it was estimated that there were 284
5 providers per 100,000 individuals with a mental health concern in the state,¹ which falls within
6 the second worst quartile compared with other states nationwide. As of November 1, 2023,
7 findings indicate that the percentage of need for mental health professionals met in Hawaii is
8 14.1%.² This data suggests a broad need for additional mental health services across the state.

9 For Hawai'i to achieve behavioral health equity, more effective systems and policies are
10 direly needed to proactively address workforce shortages of mental health providers. When
11 individuals are unable to access needed care early on, their risk increases for escalating
12 symptoms that require high-level, restrictive, intensive, and costly mental health services.

13 This bill supports the ability of graduate students who provide mental health services to
14 remain in our state and provide these much-needed services, while completing their training and

¹ Hawai'i Health Matters, Mental Health Provider Rate. Mental Health Provider Rate, 2016-2021. Published April 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.hawaiihealthmatters.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=319&localeId=14>

² Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Published November, 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/mental-health-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Percent%20of%20Need%20Met%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

1 licensure requirements. Individuals trained at the doctoral level are difficult to recruit and retain
2 in the state. This bill provides a reasonable path, commensurate to national standards, for
3 doctoral level psychologists to obtain their license and while continuing to provide services for
4 the state. It is very clear that there is a need for additional mental health providers to support
5 vulnerable populations throughout Hawai‘i.

6 This bill also addresses provisions for retaining providers trained as master’s level
7 Marriage and Family Therapists, Mental Health Counselors, and Social Workers. The provisions
8 in this bill for each of these professions, including psychologists, will help retain mental health
9 providers trained in or working in the state of Hawai‘i so that needed services can be delivered to
10 the people that need and deserve to have access to these mental health supports.

11

12 **Offered Amendments:** None.

13

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

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

LATE

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

**WRITTEN
TESTIMONY
ONLY**

**STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
Testimony to the House Committee on
Consumer Protection and Commerce
SUPPORTING HB 1830 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

February 14, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. in Rm 329 and via video

CHAIRPERSON

Katherine Aumer, PhD

1st VICE CHAIRPERSON

Kathleen Merriam, LCSW CSAC

2nd VICE CHAIRPERSON

John Betlach

SECRETARY

Eileen Lau-James, DVM

MEMBERS:

Antonino Beninato

Naomi Crozier, CPS

Jon Fujii, MBA

Heidi Ilyavi

Jackie Jackson, CFPS

Lea Dias, MEd

Jean Okudara, CSAC

Ray Rice, MEd

Mary Pat Waterhouse

Kristin Will, MAEL, CSAC

Fern Yoshida

IMMEDIATE PAST

CHAIRPERSON:

Richard I. Ries PsyD, MSEd

EX-OFFICIO:

Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director

Behavioral Health Administration

WEBSITE:

scmh.hawaii.gov

EMAIL ADDRESS:

doh.scmhchairperson@

doh.hawaii.gov

Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii law, HRS §334-10, established the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH) 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 State Council on Mental Health members unanimously support the intent of HB1830 HD1. One of the most pressing issues in the field of mental health is the shortage of qualified professionals, particularly in underserved areas throughout the islands of Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure requirements, this measure facilitates the entry of new professionals into the workforce while ensuring that they receive appropriate supervision and support. This not only addresses the shortage of mental health providers but also enhances the quality of care by allowing new practitioners to gain valuable experience under supervision. Furthermore, by authorizing insurance reimbursements for services provided by supervised interns removes barriers to entry into the mental health profession. This is particularly important in areas

where there is a high demand for services but a limited number of licensed providers. Additionally, the provision that allows the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists is a sensible measure that recognizes the diverse backgrounds and experiences of individuals entering the field. This flexibility enables qualified professionals to obtain licensure more efficiently without compromising public safety or the integrity of the profession.

This measure represents a balanced approach to addressing the challenges facing the mental health workforce. By streamlining licensure requirements, authorizing insurance reimbursements, and providing flexibility for licensure waivers, this bill ensures that individuals in need of mental health services can access timely and high-quality care. We urge you to pass HB1830 HD1 and help improve mental health outcomes for our community.

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.



Subject: HB1830 HD1-- Support

To the Honorable Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB1830. The Hawai'i Counselors Association (HCA) Executive Board and members support HB1830. HCA currently has over 100 members who provide mental health counseling and related services to the community or are enrolled in graduate programs. Almost a third of our members are graduate students who would benefit directly from the passing of HB1830 HD1. This does not include recent graduates who are currently working on their post-graduate experience. The HCA Executive Board and the majority of members (who have provided feedback) expressed strong support for HB1830 HD1. We feel strongly that the bill would open opportunities for graduates of mental health-related programs to enter the field while increasing access to mental health services in our communities, particularly underserved populations. These benefits are seen in over 20 other states that have already established associate-level licensure for mental health professionals.

The intent of HB1830 HD1 is to expand the quality of mental health services by allowing provisional/associate-level licensure for mental health practitioners. Hawaii currently has a shortage of licensed mental health professionals, and many providers have waitlists. HB1830 HD1 will help to address the shortage of mental health providers in Hawaii by allowing graduate-level professionals to enter the field at an associate level, thus increasing the number of qualified professionals in the mental health field. It will also create a career pathway for graduates of mental health-related programs, including social work, mental health and professional counseling, marriage and family therapy, and clinical psychology.

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

Overall, HB1830 HD1 will create more job opportunities for pre-license mental health professionals while also addressing the need for more providers and improving access to services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1830 HD1.

Sincerely,

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



**Parents And
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1830 HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

TO: Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Sayama, & Members,
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: February 14, 2024 at 2:00 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1830 HD1 Relating to Mental Health, which establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists. This bill also clarifies the ability of a licensed social worker to bill under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Several of PACT's programs provide counseling in their areas of focus and we are painfully aware of the mental health workforce shortage that is coinciding with a growing need for services. The passage of this bill will help to increase access to mental health services and decrease time spent on waiting lists when people are most in need of help. Provisional licensure can allow organizations like PACT to assist entry-level mental health professionals complete their training requirements and retain them in the local workforce while they provide competent and closely supervised clinical services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 6:40:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will help our capacity to treat mental health issues.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 6:42:04 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

Helping Hawai'i Live Well

Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce February 14th, 2024; Videoconference HB1830 HD1 Relating to Mental Health

ADVISORY BOARD

John Boyd
Peter S. Ho
Timothy Johns
Edward Kubo
Patti Lyons
Sherry Menor-McNamara
Jerry Rauckhorst
Roy Sakuma
Jeffrey Watanabe

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce.

We write in strong support of HB1830 HD1 which establishes provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists.

Mental Health America of Hawai'i (MHAH), an affiliate of the renowned national organization, is a highly regarded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the State of Hawai'i. For nearly 80 years, MHAH has been fulfilling its mission "to promote mental health & wellness through education, advocacy, service, and access to care" through its vision of 'mental wellness for all.' We endeavor to reduce the shame and stigma of mental illness and improve the overall care, treatment, and empowerment of those with or at risk for mental health challenges across all stages of life in Hawai'i.

PRO BONO LEGAL COUNSEL

Paul Alston

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Phyllis Dendle,
President
Mary Pat Waterhouse,
Vice President
Andy Downes,
Secretary
Kimberly Miyoshi,
Treasurer
Adam Coles
Nolan Hong
Beth-Ann Kozlovich
Ryan Kusumoto
Ann Mahi
Peggy Mierzwa
Elizabeth Naholowa'a Murph
Sherry King Niethammer
Andrew Park
Sandra Simms

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i. This is particularly critical given the existing youth mental health crisis and ongoing trauma for those who were directly and indirectly impacted by the Maui fires.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation, and we are grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,



Bryan L. Talisayan
Executive Director



Strong Support for [Associate Licensing bill \(HB1830\)](#)- Relating to Mental Health

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

My name is Melissa Bartholomew and I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Hawai'i as well as the Founder and Owner for the Mental Health Group Practice, Brighter Bound in Hilo, HI. I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i. As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Private Group Practice owner I have witnessed firsthand the high need of individuals seeking mental health care and challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field.

Upon entering private practice, I had a full caseload within several months due to the high demand of those seeking mental health counseling. All of the therapists at my practice also have full caseloads almost immediately after starting as well. It is very difficult to keep up with the demand of clients that need to be seen. It is not uncommon that prospect clients tell me that they have already called 10 other therapists that are all full. Or, that they have called 5+ people without anyone returning their call. Most people want to utilize their insurance to pay for mental health counseling. Without their insurance, the average counseling session costs around \$125 in our state, which most people cannot afford.

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

HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. Helps address the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. Helps community members get affordable healthcare when they need it.
3. Reduces the risk of burnout for mental healthcare professionals by making the path to licensure more obtainable.

4. Allowing a pathway for pre-licensed professionals to accept insurance which is crucial to the items listed above.

5. Improving Hawaii's Economy

6. Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 will be a significant step forward in addressing the mental health concerns in Hawai'i. I look forward to a day in Hawai'i where I don't have to put someone on a waiting list, or "wish them the best " in finding a counselor when they need the help now. I hope that you will not only pass this bill but also rush it to be passed as soon as possible. This will not only have an immediate positive impact on our communities but also benefit the mental health professionals as well. Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Bartholomew". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa Bartholomew, LMHC
Founder and Owner of Brighter Bound

Email: mel@brighterbound.com

Phone: 808-212-9687

Fax: 808-427-9891

www.brighterbound.com

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 11:39:55 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I appreciate everyone's efforts in supporting this bill. I am in full support of it because it will help to create more therapists to serve the beautiful people of Hawaii. There is a severe shortage of therapists which has led to us having very long waitlists as a Center. We would be happy to hire and offer supervision to people who have graduated from psychology programs and are working toward full licensure but we cannot because insurance currently will not reimburse for their services. This bill will help our communities to heal and grow. Mahalo



HB1830 HD1 Provisional Licensure for Mental Health

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Mark M. Nakashima, Chair

Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair

Wednesday, Feb 14, 2024: 2:00 : Room 329 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition supports HB1830 HD1:

ALOHA CHAIRS, VICE CHAIRS, 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.

Having an associate licensing structure makes sense given the workforce shortage that will only get worse over the next decade. While the behavioral health workforce is shrinking, the percentage of Americans with chronic illness is rising to about 50%, depression has now become the number one disability in the U.S., and all this while many people are suffering from the lingering effects of the pandemic as well as the emotional trauma of the wildfire disaster.

Our community needs more support in behavioral health in all areas and is even more desperately needed in underserved rural areas.

We must increase access to critical mental health conditions that include co-occurring disorders (substance use disorders and mental health conditions). We must rise above limiting stigma because we have the behavioral technology to effectively address trauma and how it manifests in behavioral health conditions - if we just had more workforce.

We appreciate this bill to increase our workforce development because providers, and the community we serve, are in dire need of more help.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.



February 14, 2024

The Honorable Mark M. Nakashima, Chair
The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Re: HB 1830 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health

Dear Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1830 HD1 which will establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, while authorizing insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances.

Hawaii is currently in need of greater access to behavioral health care services and HMSA understands that. We've been working with our provider community to address the issue through various efforts including recent telehealth legislation, support of the interstate physician compact, and the delivery of integrated primary care.

While we understand the need to provide access to more mental health providers, we also want to ensure that our members are receiving high quality care from their health care provider. Our concern with the current legislation is that without established criteria and scope of service, we believe more clarity is needed to define the circumstances that would be eligible for reimbursement to those with provisional or associate licensures.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on HB 1830 HD1.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 1:03:33 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Okumura	Ho'oulu Counseling	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is *Catherine Okumura*, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist residing and practicing in Kailua-Kona, HI. I am also the owner of Ho'oulu Counseling LLC, a group practice, that includes 5 licensed practitioners and 1 Marriage and Family Therapist Intern.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent

- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Catherine A Okumura

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 1:28:17 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik Acuna	Trauma Healing Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Erik Acuna, LCSW

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is *Kaliko Allen*, a *Mental Health Counselor* residing in *Makiki in Hawaii*.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Kaliko Allen



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

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

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

Representative Mark M. Nahashima, Chair

Representative Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair

February 14, 2024 2:00 p.M. – Rm 329 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1830 HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports **HB1830 HD1** as a critical tool in improving access and meeting the overwhelming demand for quality mental health services, particularly during and following the prolonged pandemic. Here's a snapshot of recently recorded ratios of clients/patients to mental health providers in Hawai'i:

Hawai'i 320:1

Honolulu 370:1

Kauai 480:1

Maui 550:1

Moloka'i has no registered providers.

Obviously, this demand far exceeds the viable supply of mental health providers. Among other provisions to remove administrative barriers and increase the speed with which trained and qualified practitioners can enter the workforce, HB1830 HD1 would establish provisional/associate-level licensure requirements for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs), Mental Health Counselors, and Psychologists. This would ensure a regulatory framework that would encourage relevant and quality training to associate-level providers by authorizing insurance reimbursement for supervised care provided by these post-degree/pre-licensed mental health professionals during the 12 to 24-month period in which they are completing required supervised practice hours under the mentorship and guidance of an independently licensed mental health professional.

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

This bill would update Hawai'i's licensing statutes in ways that would not only modernize our processes, but ultimately improve the quality and utilization of mental health care provided in our state by creating a more

robust system of clinical accountability/training and a financially viable career path for local would-be providers who have a deep understanding of local cultures/customs and who in turn, may be better able to connect with clients, who in turn will be more likely to actually utilize available mental health services.

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

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

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

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

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS FOR CLARITY & CONSISTENT WITH PURPOSE

DRAFTING ERROR:

We note an erroneous reference to “mental health counseling” on p. 4, line 6 in the proposed amendment to the Marriage & Family Therapists chapter in HRS 451J; and believe what is meant is “marriage and family therapy.”

GRANDFATHERING INTERNS:

To address previously asserted concerns from the DCCA Provisional Vocational & Licensing Division over the grandfathering of current Marriage and Family Therapy Interns; we note that our intent in our support of this measure is not that interns be *required* to obtain their Associate License; but rather, that they be incentivized to do so because of the insurance reimbursements that will be enabled by holding such licenses. We recognize that requiring associate licensure would indeed result in more fees collected by the DCCA to administer the program; and we defer to the wisdom of the legislature on that matter. However, to remove the question of whether to grandfather interns, **we recommend that the language on P. 12, lines 1-3 be retained.**

CLARIFYING LANGUAGE FOR CONSISTENCY:

We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in this bill, as well as in HB1242, explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. In this

vein, we respectfully request that HB1830's purpose language be amended further to include further language to enumerate the following additional purposes:

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

We also support clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's (NASW) testimony opposing the use of the term "intern"- in both the purpose section on p. 3, line 13 and on p. 47, line 19; and p. 48, line 6 – as our statute uses this term for students, not licensees or graduates; and we agree their statute and language should run parallel in structure as ours. We also recommend NASW's suggested language on insurance billing be included as well.

SUPPORT FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS' FLEXIBILITY IN EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS:

To encourage flexibility - consistent with the laws in other states - and to incentivize our sister professionals - Psychologists, to stay in Hawaii rather than move to the mainland where cost of living is significantly less and they are permitted the ability to sit for the exam much earlier; we support their request to remove the requirement that they complete all their post-doctoral training before applying to take the exam required for full licensure.

Further justification for this change is grounded in the recommendation by the American Psychological Association (APA) that license applicants **take this exam as soon as they can after graduating**. The APA clearly states on its website¹ that "***In most jurisdictions, you're qualified to sit for the test once you complete the educational requirements for your doctoral degree.***" (Emphasis added.). Accordingly, please include language relating to their exam requirements by reverting to the original language provided in each of the house versions of HB1300 from the 2023 session, and reflected in HB1300 HD2, p.37, lines 18-20:

"The applicant shall not be required to complete the requirements of paragraph (2) to be eligible to take the examination required by paragraph (3)."

Accordingly, we also recommend revising the relevant purpose section language on p. 3, lines 8-11 to be consistent with HB1300HD2, p. 1 lines 11-13, as follows:

"(2) Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing the supervised experience required for licensure;"

¹<https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2007/09/eppp#:~:text=In%20most%20jurisdictions%2C%20you're,requirements%20for%20your%20doctoral%20degree.>

POLICY POINTS TO ADDRESS CONCERNS PRESENTED BY THE DCCA PVL

In testimony on the earlier draft of this measures, the DCCA PVL stated a number of concerns relating to the need for additional regulation under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 26H; potential increased costs to consumers; and perceived invalidation of intern exemptions from this licensure.

First, we note the extensive purpose language in this measure detailing the crisis-level need for mental health providers. While PVL states the intent of this provisional/associate-level licensure proposal is *“solely for the purpose of reimbursement”*; we respectfully submit that such a characterization unfairly casts the mental health professions as solely focused on profit. That is not why we became therapists; and we should not be required to work for thousands of hours for free, leaving droves of potential patients on waiting lists for at least 6 months or more, to prove otherwise. It is indeed in the public interest, and for the *“protection of public welfare”* that we support the limits of the brain drain of homegrown, culturally-competent talent to other jurisdictions that value them with provisional/associate-level licensure. Half the other states have NOT deemed such licenses to be harmful.

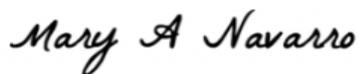
Second, the presumption that *“the costs of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed to consumers”* is actually contrary to the reality. When insurance reimbursement is provided, patients would no longer need to pay out of pocket for these supervised services – as many supervisors require to compensate for their time providing such mentorship and service.

CONCERNS FROM INSURANCE INDUSTRY

We are also mindful of comments on this bill from health insurers in prior hearings that this measure lacks “established criteria and scope of service” for which they ask more clarity to “define the circumstances that would be eligible for reimbursement.” We have discussed this with multiple providers licensed in other states who bill these supervised services under Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) used by insurers as including: **CPT 90791 (initial interview); CPT 90832 (30 minutes); CPT 90834 (45 minutes); 90837 (60 minutes); 90847 (conjoint family therapy, 50 minutes); CPT 90846 (Family psychotherapy (without the patient present); CPT 90853 (Group psychotherapy)**. We hope this provides the clarity and assurance that such services do indeed have a history of being covered in other states – which also supports justification to enable such service in Hawaii – especially for patients in serious need but without adequate coverage.

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

Sincerely,



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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Representative Mark M. Nakashima, Chair
Representative Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair

February 14, 2024 2:00 P.M. – Rm 329 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1830 HD1

The National Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) strongly supports HB1830 HD1 Relating to Mental Health, which establishes associate level licenses for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists; and clarifies the ability of a Licensed Social Worker to bill under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

This bill – along with several other measures introduced during this legislative biennium (SB343, HB1300, HB1242, HB776, and SB1444) does several important things. It creates an Associate level of Licensure for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists, based on the current LSW level of licensure for social workers, which will allow for a mechanism by which clinicians who have completed their graduate school courses can be compensated while they are receiving their required period of supervised practice.

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

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

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

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

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

Suggested Amendments to Strengthen Purpose/Legislative Intent

We would like to offer some black-letter amendments to clarify the language on **page 47, line 19- p. 48, line 6** of this bill relating to the supervision of social workers seeking licensure as a “Licensed Clinical Social Worker” as follows:

“Services provided by a supervised licensed social worker or L.S.W. [~~social work intern~~] obtaining post-masters clinical social work experience under the supervision of a Hawaii-licensed clinical social worker or individual identified in subsection (a)(3)(D) ; . . . provided further that the billed rate for the licensed social worker or L.S.W. [~~social work intern~~] is commensurate with the requisite level of training.

Accordingly, we also request the language in the purpose section on p. 3 line 13 be revised to delete the word intern and use instead “supervised licensed social worker”; and similarly, HRS 467E-6(8) should be revised to replace the phrase relating to “clinical social work interns” to reflect the current practice, which is to use the phrase: “under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker L.C.S.W.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this vein to provide more clarity, **we also recommend that existing statutory language on page 46, lines 5-19 which appears to “grandfather” potential clinical supervisors between July 1, 2004 – July 1, 2009 be repealed**, as this language is now moot and potentially confusing.

We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in this bill, as well as in HB1242 explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. **We respectfully request that HB1830’s purpose language be amended to include further language to enumerate the following** additional purposes:

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

We also support recommendations from psychologists that the requirement that they finish all their post-doctorate experience before being eligible to take their licensing exam be removed; as this incentivizes them to move to mainland where they are given much more flexibility – thus depriving Hawaii residents of their much needed, culturally-cognizant expertise. This unnecessary requirement creates another financial and logistical burden to potential providers. Removing these testing requirements would be consistent with the purpose of this measure.

Finally, to address coverage and scope of practice concerns expressed by the insurance industry, we offer the following Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes as standard practice in billing for supervised services by associate licenses in other states: CPT 90791 (initial interview); CPT 90832 (30 minutes); CPT 90834 (45 minutes); 90837 (60 minutes); 90847 (conjoint family therapy, 50 minutes); CPT 90846 (Family psychotherapy (without the patient present); CPT 90853 (Group psychotherapy). We believe this further justifies the need to enable associate licensure in Hawaii – especially for patients in serious need but without adequate coverage.

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

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

Sincerely,

 MSW, LCSW

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LCSW

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

LATE



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1830 HD1: RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

TO: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: Wednesday 2/14/24 at 2:00 PM; CR 329 & via videoconference
Chair Nakashima and Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 1830 HD1**, which establishes a provisional or associate level licensure for marriage and family therapist, mental health counselors, and psychologists. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of providing counseling services to the people of Hawai'i.

The mental health workforce has long grappled with a shortage of adequately trained mental health providers encompassing psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, counselors, marriage and family therapist, and advanced practice nurses. According to Hawai'i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center, the workforce is short hundreds of mental health providers. This ongoing challenge has been further exacerbated by the pandemic, Maui wildfires, increased cost of living, and other societal factors. Drawing on its extensive experience, Catholic Charities Hawai'i has been steadfast in offering counseling services and successfully cultivating highly qualified mental health professionals to bolster the workforce. The proposed legislation presents an opportunity for organizations like ours to enhance workforce development initiatives, thereby making a substantial contribution to improving access to mental health services across Hawai'i.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports this bill aiming to boost the workforce capacity of qualified mental health professionals, addressing the pressing mental health crisis in Hawai'i.

We urge your support for this bill and ask for your assistance in its passing during this legislative session.

Please contact our Director of Advocacy and Community Relations, Shellie Niles at (808) 527-4813 or shellie.niles@catholiccharitieshawaii.org if you have any questions.



Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521-8995

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

Representative Mark M. Nakashima, Chair

Representative Jackson Sayama, Vice Chair

February 14, 2024 2:00P.M. – Rm 329 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE

LATE

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1830 HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) **strongly supports HB1830 HD1** as a critical tool in meeting the burgeoning demand for quality mental health services – which is especially timely as the emotional and mental toll of the Maui Fires, as well as the lingering effects of the pandemic and associated hardships continue to be felt by all our residents, prolonged now for several years. These events have exacerbated the chronic shortage of mental health providers in Hawaii.

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

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

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

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

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

This bill also addresses unnecessary administrative barriers experienced by state-employed psychology post-docs. Current law allows non-licensed individuals who have earned their doctoral degree to be hired into state psychologist positions before licensure; however, these

employees must obtain licensure within two years of hire, and then cease practicing if the license is not obtained in that time period. The state has interpreted this to mean they must be terminated from their state position if this occurs.

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

Another issue that causes financial hardship and delay during this post-doctoral period is the timing of the license application process and examination requirements – the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP). The American Psychological Association recommends that license applicants **take this exam as soon as they can after graduating**, and clearly states on its website¹ that “***In most jurisdictions, you’re qualified to sit for the test once you complete the educational requirements for your doctoral degree.***” (Emphasis added.)

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

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO HARMONIZE WITH OTHER STATES TO RETAIN TALENT

Prior iterations of this proposal required the board to allow licensure candidates to take the exam as soon as they complete their doctorate, consistent with the purpose of this proposal in removing barriers to licensure. We believe this is consistent with the current Board of Psychology's view after the discussion at their last board meeting on February 2, 2024 - immediately following the last hearing on this measure. Accordingly, we recommend revising the relevant language on p. 3, lines 8-11 to be consistent with HB1300HD2, p. 1 lines 11-13, as follows:

“(2) Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing the supervised experience required for licensure;”

as well as the following language from HB1300 HD2, on p.37, lines 18-20 be used (instead of what is currently on p. 39, line 20- p.40, lines 1-2):

¹ <https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2007/09/eppp#:~:text=In%20most%20jurisdictions%2C%20you're,requirements%20for%20you r%20doctoral%20degree.>

“The applicant shall not be required to complete the requirements of paragraph (2) to be eligible to take the examination required by paragraph (3).”

We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in this bill, as well as in HB1242 explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. **We therefore respectfully request that the purpose language be amended to include further language to enumerate the following** additional purposes:

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

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

CONCERNS FROM INSURANCE INDUSTRY

We are also mindful of comments on this bill from health insurers in prior hearings that this measure lacks “established criteria and scope of service” for which they ask more clarity to “define the circumstances that would be eligible for reimbursement.” We have discussed this with multiple providers licensed in other states who bill these supervised services under Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) used by insurers as including: CPT 90791 (initial interview); CPT 90832 (30 minutes); CPT 90834 (45 minutes); 90837 (60 minutes); 90847 (conjoint family therapy, 50 minutes); CPT 90846 (Family psychotherapy (without the patient present); CPT 90853 (Group psychotherapy). We hope this provides the clarity and assurance that such services do indeed have a history of being covered in other states – which also supports justification to enable such service in Hawaii – especially for patients in serious need but without adequate coverage.

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

Sincerely,



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



LATE

To: The Honorable Mark M. Nakashima, Chair
The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

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

Hearing: Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 2:00 PM, Conference Room 329

RE: **HB1830 HD1 Relating to Mental Health**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **HB1830 HD1**. This measure establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; requires psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete certain supervised experience requirements before sitting for the licensing examination; and authorizes insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 84,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 40 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

Hawai'i's high demand for mental health services, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastation from the August 2023 fires, have highlighted our State's dire shortage of mental health professionals. The shortage most severely impacts our most vulnerable residents, Medicaid beneficiaries, and those who live in rural communities. A lack of timely access to mental health treatment can have devastating consequences on our residents.

This measure expands access to quality mental health services by addressing licensure and reimbursement limitations as well as helping to relieve the financial burden on aspiring mental health professionals. In turn, this will increase the number of local practitioners in the workforce needed to meet the demand of our community.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support** of **HB1830 HD1**.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 1:01:48 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Dr. John Souza, Jr., LMFT, DMFT a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist residing in Hilo.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. John

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:31:26 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandy West-Bey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. As a supervisor of interns, having and associated licensure provides guidance that is regulated and is so critical to the competency of future clinicians. It shows consumers that we take this profession seriously, and that there are standards set.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:51:31 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1830

Melissa Wilson (Bialuski), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist HI MFT-559

February 12, 2024

Honorable Members of the State Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1830, which proposes crucial provisions to enhance mental health services, improve professional standards, and facilitate access to care for individuals in our state. As a licensed marriage and family therapist in Kauai for the last 7 years, I believe that the enactment of this bill is essential for advancing the well-being of our communities.

The establishment of provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists is a pivotal step towards ensuring that individuals entering the mental health profession receive appropriate training and supervision. By allowing aspiring practitioners to gain practical experience under supervision, this provision not only fosters professional development but also safeguards the quality of care provided to clients.

Moreover, the requirement for psychologist license applicants to hold a doctoral degree and fulfill supervised experience criteria aligns with best practices in the field and underscores the importance of high educational standards for mental health professionals. This provision promotes competence and expertise among licensed psychologists, thereby enhancing the quality and effectiveness of psychological services delivered to individuals, couples, and families.

I also commend the inclusion of provisions authorizing insurance reimbursements for services provided by supervised social work interns under specific circumstances. Access to affordable mental health care remains a significant challenge for many individuals and families, and this provision has the potential to expand access to services by leveraging the contributions of

qualified interns while ensuring reimbursement for their valuable work. Such measures are vital for addressing disparities in mental health care access and promoting equitable treatment opportunities for all members of our community.

Furthermore, the appropriation of funds to support the implementation and administration of the proposed provisions demonstrates a commitment to investing in the future of mental health care delivery in our state. Adequate funding is essential for sustaining effective licensure systems, facilitating supervision programs, and ensuring the viability of insurance reimbursement mechanisms, ultimately benefiting both practitioners and clients alike.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB1830 and its provisions aimed at strengthening mental health services, enhancing professional standards, and expanding access to care. By enacting this legislation, we can take significant strides towards building a more resilient and equitable mental health care system that meets the diverse needs of our population.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Melissa Wilson (Bialuski), LMFT

Pilina Therapy, LLC

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:39:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Rene Harvey, a Behavioral Health Specialist for the Department of Education residing in Kahului, Maui.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's

a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,
Rene Harvey

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 5:08:38 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Rachel Ferguson, a Counseling Psychology graduate student residing in Volcano.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing

the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Rachel Ferguson

Aloha, House Committee, and everyone, my name is Madison Filanc and I am a Graduate Student studying Social Work at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. For House Bill 1830, I strongly support this proposed bill and provide testimony regarding this. I urge you to take action and pass this bill during the 2024 legislative session..

I was born and raised here on the island of O'ahu and intend to work as a social worker here upon graduation in May. I also intend to get my Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) credential in hopes of becoming a therapist. Currently, it is quite difficult to acquire a position that relates to therapy because pre-licensed positions are hard to come by. A major reason for this is that many licensed practitioners are not willing to take on pre-licensed social workers due to difficulty in billing for insurance. Consequently, many social workers end up paying a supervisor out-of-pocket to provide them with the supervision they need for their clinical license. As someone who will be graduating with my Master's in Social Work (MSW) in May, this is an even harder feat when considering college tuition loans that need to be paid back in addition to paying for supervision.

Access to mental healthcare in Hawai'i is a growing issue and the current provider-to-patient ratio shows a major need for more professionals in the field. This bill also aligns with many other states that are already establishing an associate licensure, therefore, contributing to the modernization of practice. If this bill were to pass in Hawai'i specifically, there would be more local and quality care provided to the community here on the islands. In addition, this bill creates opportunities for supervision that are billable through insurance. In turn, passing this bill improves access to care as well as affordability for more individuals seeking mental healthcare.

The passing of this bill would drastically benefit all mental health practitioners in their efforts to obtain a clinical license and provide healthcare to the community. Allowing the supervision of pre-licensed professionals to be billable for insurance will incentivize supervisors to take on more pre-licensed individuals, and in turn, allow for more needed services to be provided. As the need for mental health care continues to grow, the need for mental health practitioners is ever-growing as well. A similar bill almost passed in the legislature during the previous year, but time had run out. This year, I believe HB 1830 should take high priority as this will greatly assist all those seeking a clinical license for mental healthcare in Hawai'i.

Thank you so much for your time, and if there are any further questions I am available to answer, thank you again for considering this bill.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 7:11:38 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Whiting	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Stephanie Whiting, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, residing in Kauai.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing

the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Whiting, MS, LMHC

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 7:20:37 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amma King	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Amma King, and I am a pre-licensed counselor residing in Honolulu, HI.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Amma King

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 7:39:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allana	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

**Written Testimony in Support of HB1830 To the Honorable Committee MemberRe:
Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, My name is *Allana Coffee PHD , Psychologist*, residing in Honolulu. I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a measure for the advancement of mental health care in the state of Hawai'i. HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. This bill broadens the scope of available care & supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce. I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i. HB1830 addresses these challenges by: Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field. Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training. Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients. Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent. Improving Hawai'i's economy. I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care. Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i. Mahalo ,Allana

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is *Steven P. Katz, a Marriage and Family Therapist*, residing and working in Kailua, Oahu, HI.

Though I am writing as an individual I am also on the Board of Directors of The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). I am also the father of an adult man coping with schizoaffective disorder.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent

- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,
Steven P. Katz, MFT

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 8:01:57 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is YiLin Fang, a graduate student studying Counseling Psychology, residing in Honolulu, Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.

Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.

Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent

Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

YiLin Fang

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 8:12:02 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i. I have witnessed firsthand the increased need for mental health services and understand how important this bill will be for our community. This bill will not only increase access to care, but also support the professional development of service providers in Hawai'i. As a current doctoral student, I know how much impact this bill will have on the future of our community.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this vital piece of legislation. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Sincerely,

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

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 8:29:27 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia F Tucker PsyD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Aloha Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Cynthia F Tucker, PsyD. I am a practicing Psychologist, residing in Kailua, O'ahu.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent

· Improving Hawai'i's economy

I strongly support that the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Mahalo for your time, and kind consideration.

Very truly yours,

Cynthia F Tucker, PsyD

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 8:30:08 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Kim, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the House of Representatives' Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

I'm writing to strongly support HB 1830, HD1. I am a professor of psychology at UH Hilo and a core faculty member in the MA Program in Counseling Psychology in which we train Clinical Mental Health Counselors. As someone who is on the frontlines of training future mental health counselors, I see first hand the need for HB 1830, HD1 that will strengthen the pipeline of locally grown mental health counselors. Currently, the lack of an associate-level licensure creates a disincentive for anyone who is interested in entering the mental health field. The passing of this bill will significantly remedy this significant shortcoming in our State and guarantee a strong pipeline for future licensed mental health counselors. Thank you very much for considering my testimony.

Mahalo,

Bryan Kim, Ph.D.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 8:32:01 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is *[Your Full Name]*, a *[Your Profession/Role, e.g., Marriage and Family Therapist, Mental Health Counselor, Psychologist, concerned citizen, etc.]* residing in *[Your Location/Area in Hawaii]*.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Keolani Taitano, Ph.D

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 9:04:25 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Nancy Sidun, a psychologist residing in Hawaii Kai.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nancy Sidun

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 9:05:29 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jobe kekoa angel leialoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a passionate advocate for mental health care and the well-being of Hawaii practitioners and the Native Hawaiian community, I wholeheartedly support the passage of Bill HB1830 HD1. This crucial legislation addresses a pressing issue in our state: the shortage of mental health care providers, particularly in underserved areas and among marginalized communities.

Establishing provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists is a proactive step towards increasing accessibility to mental health services. By allowing practitioners at these levels to provide care under supervision, we can expand the pool of qualified professionals available to serve those in need. This is especially significant for the Native Hawaiian community, which has long faced disparities in accessing mental health care due to geographic, cultural, and economic barriers.

Furthermore, authorizing insurance reimbursements for services provided by these provisional or associate-level practitioners in certain circumstances is a critical measure for ensuring affordability and sustainability of mental health care delivery. Many individuals in Hawaii, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, rely on insurance coverage to access essential health services. By allowing reimbursement for care provided by these practitioners, we remove financial barriers that may otherwise prevent individuals from seeking help.

The requirement for psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete supervised experience aligns with industry standards and ensures that licensed psychologists meet rigorous qualifications to provide high-quality care. This safeguard is essential for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of mental health services in our state.

Additionally, authorizing insurance reimbursements for services provided by supervised social work interns acknowledges the valuable contributions of these emerging professionals to the mental health care landscape. Social workers play a vital role in providing support and interventions to individuals and families facing mental health challenges. Ensuring that their services are reimbursable encourages their continued participation in addressing Hawaii's mental health needs.

In conclusion, Bill HB1830 HD1 represents a significant step forward in addressing the shortage of mental health care providers in Hawaii and improving access to services for the Native Hawaiian community and other underserved populations. By supporting the passage of this bill,

we affirm our commitment to promoting mental wellness and ensuring that all individuals have access to the care they need to thrive.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 9:29:16 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judi Steinman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote in favor of HB1830 HD1. Supporting associate licensing brings more mental health care access to Hawai'i and is an important practice utilized by other states to ensure a continued flow in the mental health care workforce.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 9:39:35 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cecily Sakai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Cecily Sakai, PsyD, a Clinical Psychologist residing in Honolulu, HI.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.

- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Cecily Sakai, PsyD

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 10:21:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Andrea Ng, a clinical psychology doctoral student at University of Hawai'i, at Manoa, residing in Kaimuki.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a **lifeline** to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,
Andrea

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 4:23:04 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Warfield	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is *Sarah Warfield*, a *Licensed Mental Health Counselor* who has worked for the people of Hawaii for 8 years.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Sarah Warfield

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 7:27:00 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danni Sutana Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Danni

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 7:27:53 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brent Llaneza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I hereby support HB1830 HD1.

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Elizabeth Claxton, a Clinical Mental Health Counselor residing in Kula, Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

I am currently in the process of obtaining licensure and as a result of being unable to bill insurance, my pay is negligible. This makes the prospect of becoming a mental health provider less attractive which is the opposite of what we want to have happen here in Hawaii. We are in dire need of mental health workers and only measures like this bill will make it so potential practitioners will become educated, work, and stay in Hawaii. Please approve this bill!

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce. As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- **Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.**
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- **Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.**
- **Improving Hawai'i's economy**

I **urge** the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Claxton

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:07:26 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Dr. Janet Brito

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Gracia Stark, a recent Master of Arts graduate in Clinical Mental Health Counseling now working toward licensure as a therapist for Hale 'Opio Kauai and residing in Kauai County.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:34:49 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

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

Clinical Psychologist

Board Certified in Addiction Psychology

Past-President, Hawai'i Psychological Association

Past-President, Hawai'i Island Psychological Association

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:35:33 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meriah Nichols	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom it May Concern,

I support the passage of this bill as this bill will address:

- **Modernization of Practice:**
 -
 - This bill aligns Hawai'i with nearly half of all states that already have an associate/training license, modernizing our practices to meet contemporary needs.
- **Access to Quality, Local-Kine Care:**
 -
 - Current provider-to-patient ratios in Hawai'i show a stark need for more mental health professionals.
 - And even if we improved provider-to-patient ratios by importing therapists from the continent, Hawai'i Island's better ratios but poor health outcomes and factors indicates a gap in care utilization.
 - Local examples, like the tragedy in Lahaina, underscore the need for culturally responsive, local mental health providers.
 - NAMI's recommendations highlight the importance of culturally responsive care, which this bill supports by growing local professionals.
- **Mechanism of Accountability:**
 -
 - Interim licensing helps ensure that pre-licensed therapists adhere to professional standards and complete their licensure hours effectively.
 - This process also promotes better supervision and mentoring, vital for quality mental health care.
- **Combating Brain Drain:**
 -
 - Keeping our talented mental health professionals in Hawai'i is crucial. This bill can help reduce the brain drain that our state is currently experiencing.
 - Local upbringing often translates to a higher likelihood of professionals staying or returning to Hawai'i, vital for maintaining a diverse and culturally aware workforce.
- **Economic Impact:**
 -

- Employing local providers keeps money within the community, supporting our economy.
- Importing providers does not address the unique economic and cultural dynamics of Hawai'i.
- **Challenging the Status Quo:**
 -
 - The current expectation for therapists to work extensive unpaid hours post-degree is discriminatory and unsustainable, especially in Hawai'i's economic climate.
 - This bill addresses these barriers, making the profession more accessible and equitable.

Ongoing Advocacy Efforts:

- **Regular Updates:** As there are several bills regarding associate licensing being considered, you will receive regular emails from us to mobilize support and testify. We appreciate your ongoing engagement in these crucial advocacy efforts.

Thank you for hearing us, and thank you even more for passing this bill.

Sincerely,

Meriah Nichols

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:47:45 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name Emily Polk, a graduate student in the Counseling Psychology program at UH at Hilo, residing in Captain Cook, Hawai'i Island.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Emily Polk

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:52:57 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

Thank you for your consideration.

Marnie Honeycutt, LCSW

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:55:41 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmenne Chiasson PhD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Clinicians in all areas of Hawaii are overwhelmed by the volume of client referrals and many are no longer accepting new patients. There are many clients who are not able to access mental health, especially vulnerable populations such as the severely mentally ill, native Hawaiians, geriatric populations, minorities, and children. This lack of resources has become extreme since the Maui wildfire crisis. Many of the fire victims have not received necessary therapy that would help facilitate a faster recovery. Please fast-track this bill to help us meet the mental health needs of the population of Hawaii.

Carmenne Chiasson, PhD

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Akiko Taira, a *[Your Profession/Role, e.g., Marriage and Family Therapist, Mental Health Counselor, Psychologist, concerned citizen, etc.]* residing in Hilo on the Big Island.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Akiko Taira

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 9:26:04 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Britt Young	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha and thank you for your time:

My name is Britt Young, and I'm the founder and Executive Director for Xplor Counseling. We are a large group practice, with more than 40 clinicians, including therapists, psychologists, APRNs, and a Psychiatrist. We have five locations on Oahu and serve more than two-thousand patients.

It is essential this bill moves forward in establishing an Associate Licensure level in Hawaii. Far too many budding therapists finish their graduate work, only to find they cannot get gainful employment due to restrictions put on their ability to work, namely that they cannot accept insurance reimbursement for services. Without the ability to collect insurance payments, they have few options for employment after graduation and typically do agency work that, albeit is important, does not necessarily prepare them for work in a private practice setting, which many of them seek.

At Xplor Counseling, for example, we can only hire approximately three pre-licensed clinicians per cycle because we do not have enough self-pay clients. We get dozens of requests every year to work at our practice, but we must turn them away. Oftentimes, they tell me they may have to move to the mainland where they can work under Associate Licensure. It's unknown if they will move back to Hawaii.

Furthermore, clients who wish to see a pre-licensed therapist must pay out of pocket, which is far higher than an insurance co-pay. So, essentially, we are only able to send high-income clients to our pre-licensed clinicians, which creates a hardship for those who can't afford it.

Although the feeder schools are trying very hard to produce more qualified mental health practitioners, we are still desperately short of the number of mental health practitioners needed in Hawaii. This bill would allow post-grads to see more clients, at a more affordable rate, with the same superb supervision they would get on the mainland. It's a win-win for everyone.

Sincerely,

Britt Young, M.A., LMFT

Executive Director, Xplor Counseling, LLC

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 9:40:54 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I am writing in support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass HB1830. This proposal would expand the pool of mental health providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands, to help meet the growing demand for mental health services. This bill would also improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging them to stay in Hawaii and meet the unique needs of our community.

Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services. As a clinical psychologist, I am very much aware of the chronic shortage of mental health providers. HB1830 will help to address this problem.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brian Goodyear, Ph.D.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 9:51:21 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Lori Stitt, a Mental Health Counselor intern at CAMHD Kauai Family Guidance Center and Kauai Community College in Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it’s a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lori Stitt

UH Hilo MA Counseling Psychology - May 2024

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 10:12:34 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leslie Gonzales	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Leslie Gonzales, a mental health counseling student residing in Ewa Beach.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.

Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.

Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent

Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Leslie Gonzales

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 10:13:10 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Shannon Thornburg, a Pre-licensed Mental Health Counselor, Intern Therapist at UH-Hilo, residing in Pahoa, Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

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

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 10:13:14 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Emily Powers, an Intern Mental Health Counselor residing in Hilo, Hawai'i.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Emily Powers

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 10:42:19 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse HB 1830, a pivotal initiative aimed at establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

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

The absence of an associate license compels emerging professionals like myself to seek alternative income sources to sustain a living in Hawai'i, creating an additional layer of complexity. This reality underscores the urgency of HB 1830, as it addresses a crucial need for financial stability while simultaneously fostering a conducive environment for emerging professionals to serve their communities effectively.

Moreover, the bill is a beacon of hope for those of us who have faced challenges in finding employment that aligns with our field of expertise, hindering our readiness for licensure. HB 1830 is not just a piece of legislation; it's a catalyst for closing the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities.

I urge you to consider the significant positive impact HB 1830 can have on the mental health landscape in Hawai'i and support its swift passage.

- **Modernization of Practice:**
- This bill aligns Hawai'i with nearly half of all states that already have an associate/training license, modernizing our practices to meet contemporary needs.

• **Access to Quality, Local-Kine Care:**

- Current provider-to-patient ratios in Hawai'i show a stark need for more mental health professionals.

- And even if we improved provider-to-patient ratios by importing therapists from the continent, Hawai'i Island's better ratios but poor health outcomes and factors indicates a gap in care utilization.
- Local examples, like the tragedy in Lahaina, underscore the need for culturally responsive, local mental health providers.
- NAMI's recommendations highlight the importance of culturally responsive care, which this bill supports by growing local professionals.

· **Mechanism of Accountability:**

- Interim licensing helps ensure that pre-licensed therapists adhere to professional standards and complete their licensure hours effectively.
- This process also promotes better supervision and mentoring, vital for quality mental health care.

· **Combating Brain Drain:**

- Keeping our talented mental health professionals in Hawai'i is crucial. This bill can help reduce the brain drain that our state is currently experiencing.
- Local upbringing often translates to a higher likelihood of professionals staying or returning to Hawai'i, vital for maintaining a diverse and culturally aware workforce.

· **Economic Impact:**

- Employing local providers keeps money within the community, supporting our economy.
- Importing providers does not address the unique economic and cultural dynamics of Hawai'i.

· **Challenging the Status Quo:**

- The current expectation for therapists to work extensive unpaid hours post-degree is discriminatory and unsustainable, especially in Hawai'i's economic climate.
- This bill addresses these barriers, making the profession more accessible and equitable.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB 1830 will be a significant step forward in enhancing the mental health landscape of Hawai'i. It will not only benefit mental health professionals but, more importantly, will have a profound impact on the well-being of our communities.

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

Sincerely,

Tiffany Koch, Intern MFT

509-781-1559

kochkounseling@gmail.com

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 10:57:49 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richelle Concepcion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Richelle Concepcion, a clinical psychologist residing in Kaneohe, Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

-

Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

-

Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.

-

Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.

-

Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent

-

Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Richelle Concepcion, Psy.D., MPH

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Christen Zulli and I am a Relationship and Communications Coach with a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology from UH Hilo. I reside in Hilo, Hawai'i.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i. **Because of my age and health, I was forced to prioritize family planning over seeking licensure after obtaining my graduate degree. I am one of many individuals who wishes they could contribute their services in the mental health field, alleviating burn-out of other professionals, and receiving appropriate compensation through insurance reimbursements.**

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing "Brain Drain" of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Christen Zulli

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

THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE
REP. MARK NAKASHIMA, CHAIR
REP. JACKSON D SAYAMA, VICE-CHAIR

Testimony in support of HB 1830, HD 1 Relating to Mental Health

Hearing: Feb. 14, 2024 2:00 P.M., Rm. 329

Honorable Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama and members of the State House committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce. I am writing to personally express my **strong support** for House Bill 1830, HD1, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i.

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

HB1830 addresses these crucial issues by creating opportunities for emerging professionals. By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field in Hawai'i to receive payment for while gaining required post-doctoral experience and training (1900 hours, to be specific, for clinical psychology). This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i. Additionally, HB1830's provision for insurance reimbursements for services rendered by provisional or associate-level professionals will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to a broader segment of our population. Finally, by allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, HB1830 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service. It also appropriates funds to support administrative changes that will be required.

One thing that might not be obvious is that our post-doctoral requirements are higher than many other states – often with an additional 400 hours (unpaid?) being required for licensure in our State.

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

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

Jeffrey D. Stern, PhD
Clinical Psychologist

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Cindy H. Rote and am currently a provisionally licensed Mental Health Counselor working at UH Mānoa in student support services. After earning a second master degree in mental health counseling from UH Hilo I am currently completing hours to work towards the licensing requirement.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Cindy H Rote

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 11:37:01 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Sonia Z. Shalhout, a Graduate Student in Marriage and Family Therapy, residing in Hilo, Hawaii.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Sonia Z. Shalhout

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 11:50:26 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Lucas Morgan, PhD, a licensed psychologist residing and practicing in Maunaloa/Hawai'i Kai on O'ahu.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lucas Morgan, PhD

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

I am Sierra Baker, a graduate student pursuing a Marriage and Family Therapy degree at Capella University in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for advancing mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

As we all know, current provider-to-patient ratios in Hawai'i are dire. While importing therapists from the continent may improve these ratios, we must still address our unique challenges and cultural dynamics here in Hawai'i. We need locally based mental health professionals who understand the complexities of our communities and can provide culturally responsive care.

HB 1830 will help address this issue by establishing an associate/training license for mental health professionals, a mechanism nearly half of all states have already implemented. Doing so will modernize our practices and align them with contemporary needs.

Moreover, this bill will help combat brain drain, a phenomenon our mental health professionals are experiencing. Keeping our talented mental health professionals in Hawai'i is crucial, and this bill can help decrease the number of local professionals leaving.

In addition, this bill will have a positive economic impact by keeping money within the community. Employing local providers supports our economy and helps address our unique cultural dynamics.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to support HB1830 and step forward in modernizing mental health practices in Hawai'i, improving access to quality, culturally responsive care, and combatting brain drain. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many needing compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Sierra Baker

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 12:57:36 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I support the HB1830 HD1 bill. I am currently an MA candidate in the mental health field. I have traveled to many adverse schools and faciiliites and would hear stories from parents, families, and staff of the dire need for mental health workers in our community. If you were to search for opportunities of gaining licensure hours within just the island of Oahu, you will see the scarce amount of opportunities for our newly graduated mental health workers to gain hours needed for licensure to provide services to those in need. I have heard many stories of mental health providers leaving the islands to pursue licensure but would have little to no desire to return due to comfortability in another state and the tedious task of applying for another licensure here in Hawaii. The people we train are being pushed out due to restrictions in licensure, leaving us with short staff in CPS, schools, hospitals, and clinics.

With the passing of the HB1830 HD1 bill, we will not only be giving opportunities for our trained mental health providers to continue their training and providing their services for the people of our state, but it also includes having more accessible and affordable services for the people in our communities. When COVID-19 occurred, mental health became recognized for its importace and I can see, as a person of the community, what services for mental health can do for everyone of all demographics. Children are being cared for in ways that set them up for future success. People are finding inspiration to work in the fields their desire and the people of this island are learning to understand each other in ways they haven't been taught or known about before.

I encourage you to take into consideration the benefits of this bill and the progression it can make for our future generations.

Thank you,

Diane Manzana



Michael A. Kellar, Psy.D.
Clinical Health Psychology

13 February 2024

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
Representative Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is Michael Kellar and I am a Clinical Psychologist who has practiced in Hawaii for about 30 years and I live in Kuli'ou'ou.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Increasing the availability of safe and effective mental health care to those in need.
- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.

- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent.
- Improving Hawai’i’s economy.

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it’s a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Heller, Esq.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 1:12:18 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai’i’s economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai’i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai’i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Sadea Campbell

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 1:22:23 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Taryn Itagaki

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 1:28:51 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Written Testimony in Support of HB1830

To the Honorable Committee Members

Re: Strong Support for HB1830 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

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

My name is *Naghum Alfulaij*, a *Research Associate and a Mental Health Counseling student* residing in Honolulu, HI.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent
- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Naghum Alfulaij, Ph.D.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 1:54:50 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cody Kaneshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Cody Kaneshiro, a Clinical Psychology Ph.D. student residing in Waipahu, HI.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent

- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

In addition, as someone who is currently completing my final years of training to become a clinical psychologist, bills such as HB1830 would allow myself and other students like me the ability to seek high-quality clinical training and supervision in Hawaii through the support of current training programs and to (hopefully) expand training opportunities available locally so that trainees may develop competencies to work with the unique populations, cultures, and communities here in Hawaii. As context: there are less than 10 psychology pre-doctoral internship sites within the State of Hawaii, where cohort sizes range anywhere from four to eight trainees for each program. The pre-doctoral internship is a required, full-time, 12-month program where health service psychologists in their final year of graduate school get intensive training and supervision on providing direct patient care. Successfully completing internship is a graduation requirement in order for students to graduate with their doctoral degree in psychology. Furthermore--in order to become licensed to practice psychology--psychologists must engage in accruing several hundred hours of supervised post-doctoral training from a licensed psychologist to sit for licensure exams. In the State of Hawaii, there is only a single post-doctoral training program that is accredited by the American Psychological Association available to civilians at VA Pacific Islands Health Care System (the other is located within Tripler Hospital, but is only available to active duty service members). Notably, there are a total of six post-doctoral positions at the VA; those who are unable to seek training at the VA must either seek non-accredited post-doctoral experiences or leave Hawaii for programs within the continental US.

I am confident HB1830 would serve as a watershed opportunity for psychological training in the State of Hawaii, opening up a huge swath of new opportunities for the support and creation of local training programs staffed with psychologists knowledgeable about the unique needs of Hawaii's citizens.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Cody Kaneshiro

LATE



February 13, 2024

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Re: Personal Testimony in Support of HB1830
A Legislative Step Towards Mental Health Care Accessibility and Modernization

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

As a practicing attorney for over seven years and a recipient of mental health services, I write to express my unwavering support for HB1830. This legislation is a beacon of hope for individuals like myself, seeking to navigate the complexities of professional life while managing mental health and wellbeing. My journey, marked by the absence of any recorded medical family history, underscores the urgent need for accessible, culturally competent mental health care in Hawai'i.

HB1830 proposes a pioneering approach to address the acute shortage of mental health professionals in our state by establishing provisional licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in training. This initiative not only aligns with the modernization of mental health practices but also opens doors to high-quality, local care that respects the diverse cultural fabric of our communities. It ensures that our mental health care system evolves in tandem with advancements in the field, promoting a more dynamic and responsive approach to care.

The bill's focus on allowing insurance reimbursement for services rendered by provisional licensees is a significant step towards dismantling financial barriers to entering the mental health profession. This change promises to retain talent within our islands, directly benefiting the economic and social well-being of our communities.

The stark provider-to-patient ratios in Hawai'i highlight an urgent need for more mental health professionals. Despite the potential to improve these ratios by importing therapists, the unique cultural and socio-economic landscape of Hawai'i, exemplified by the disparities on Hawai'i Island and the tragedy in Lahaina, calls for locally trained, culturally responsive providers. This bill supports the cultivation of such professionals, echoing NAMI's recommendations for care that is attuned to the cultural nuances of our communities.

By introducing interim licensing, HB1830 ensures that pre-licensed therapists maintain professional standards and complete their licensure hours with the diligence required for high-quality care. This process not only upholds the integrity of the profession but also fosters an environment of comprehensive supervision and mentorship, which are crucial for the development of competent mental health providers.

The bill addresses the significant issue of brain drain by creating conditions that encourage our talented mental health professionals to remain in Hawai'i. Recognizing that a local upbringing often translates to a greater likelihood of professionals staying or returning to practice in our state, HB1830 is a critical measure for preserving a workforce that is diverse, culturally aware, and committed to serving the unique needs of our communities.

Employing local providers as encouraged by this bill does more than just enhance the quality of care; it supports our local economy by ensuring that financial resources circulate within the community. This approach acknowledges and respects the unique economic and cultural dynamics of Hawai'i, contrary to the temporary solution of importing providers.

Finally, HB1830 confronts the unsustainable expectation for therapists to work extensive unpaid hours post-degree. By addressing these systemic barriers, the bill paves the way for a more accessible and equitable profession, ensuring that mental health care in Hawai'i is not only of the highest quality but also inclusive and just.

As a second-generation Filipino American, I have personally witnessed the challenges faced by minority groups in accessing culturally responsive care. HB1830 represents a critical step towards bridging this gap, ensuring that mental health services are both accessible and reflective of Hawai'i's unique cultural landscape.

The positive impact of mental health services on my professional life as an attorney cannot be overstated. It stands to significantly impact individuals and professionals, like myself, by increasing access to advanced treatments, supporting economic growth, and ensuring culturally responsive care. As someone who has personally benefited from mental health services and witnessed the gaps in our current system, I urge you to support this bill. By supporting HB1830, we are not only advocating for the modernization of mental health practices but also for a future where every resident of Hawai'i has the opportunity to thrive, unburdened by the constraints of mental health challenges.

I urge you to support HB1830, paving the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Sevilleja". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

Raven J. Sevilleja, Esq.

e-mail: rjsevilleja@gmail.com



LATE

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 3:22:29 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is *Jodie E. Gerson, a postdoctoral fellow from Hawaii.*

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved state of Hawai'i.

HB1830 represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for accessible and quality mental health services in Hawai'i. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but also supports the development of a robust, culturally competent, and local mental health workforce.

As someone who has witnessed firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, I can attest to the profound impact that HB1830 will have in bridging these gaps, enhancing the availability of culturally sensitive and community-centric services, and ultimately fostering a more resilient and mentally healthy Hawai'i.

HB1830 addresses these challenges by:

- Facilitating the entry of qualified professionals into the mental health field.
- Enhancing the cultural competency and relevance of mental health services through local training.
- Ensuring that insurance reimbursements include services provided by associate-level professionals, thereby increasing affordability and accessibility for patients.
- Preventing “Brain Drain” of our local talent to the continent

- Improving Hawai'i's economy

I urge the committee to pass HB1830, not only as a legislative action but as a commitment to the health and well-being of our communities across Hawai'i. This bill is more than just a policy; it's a lifeline to many who are in dire need of compassionate and competent mental health care.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am hopeful that with your support, HB1830 will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

LATE

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 5:51:10 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Fox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1830 HD1.

I teach in the UH system and have graduate degrees in psychology and social work. My areas of expertise include cultural psychology and adaptation to stresses. Both for my classes and my own research, I follow mental health trends closely. What I am seeing in the news and in academic literature frightens me, because incredibly high rates of diagnosable-level anxiety and depression are affecting the people of Hawai‘i and especially our young people. The isolation, losses, and fears of the pandemic have been traumatic for nearly everyone and these are not illnesses that just go away without treatment. The situation is worse on Maui, due to the Lāhainā fires. My students are having great difficulty finding therapists and the same is true of friends and family.

Hawai‘i is woefully understaffed with mental health providers at this time. This leaves thousands of Hawai‘i residents without treatment options at a time when probably 70% have experienced diagnosable levels of symptoms in the past two years. Suicide attempts have increased among teens across ethnicities and all ages really need treatment access to truly recover from the damage of isolation and risk of death during COVID.

Even if it were only for a limited few years, allowing provisional licensure for mental health graduates in their final supervision stage could greatly increase the number of counselors and therapists available by allowing them to complete their supervised hours and qualify for full licensure. The post-graduates are people who have completed their academic training and practica but often have difficulty finding positions that really allow them to gain appropriate experience. Many end up spending years answering phones at worst and shuffling papers as case managers at best.

These people are by definition receiving supervision from licensed providers in their fields (e.g. Marriage and Family Therapy, Clinical Social Work, etc.). They cannot, however, receive insurance compensation, which prevents them from working as care providers at most agencies and practices. Required supervision will keep clients safe during the provisional period. I implore you to pass this bill so that they can get to work helping the people of Hawai‘i. I would be happy to provide data and other resources, if you have questions.

Mahalo for your time and attention around this important issue,

Stephen Fox, PhD, MA, MSW

LATE

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 7:03:45 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Adair-Leland Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

* MODERNIZATION OF PRACTICE

* This bill aligns Hawai'i with nearly half of all states that already have an associate/training license, modernizing our practices to meet contemporary needs.

* ACCESS TO QUALITY, LOCAL-KINE CARE:

* Current provider-to-patient ratios in Hawai'i show a stark need for more mental health professionals.

* And even if we improved provider-to-patient ratios by importing therapists from the continent, Hawai'i Island's better ratios but poor health outcomes and factors indicates a gap in care utilization.

* Local examples, like the tragedy in Lahaina, underscore the need for culturally responsive, local mental health providers.

* NAMI's recommendations highlight the importance of culturally responsive care, which this bill supports by growing local professionals.

* MECHANISM OF ACCOUNTABILITY:

* Interim licensing helps ensure that pre-licensed therapists adhere to professional standards and complete their licensure hours effectively.

* This process also promotes better supervision and mentoring, vital for quality mental health care.

* COMBATING BRAIN DRAIN:

* Keeping our talented mental health professionals in Hawai'i is crucial. This bill can help reduce the brain drain that our state is currently experiencing.

* Local upbringing often translates to a higher likelihood of professionals staying or returning to Hawai'i, vital for maintaining a diverse and culturally aware workforce.

* ECONOMIC IMPACT:

* Employing local providers keeps money within the community, supporting our economy.

* Importing providers does not address the unique economic and cultural dynamics of Hawai'i.

HB-1830-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 7:30:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charmaine Higa McMillan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it increases access to much needed mental health care across our islands