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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
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March 22, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair
House Committee on Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: HCR 67 – URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO WORK WITH THE YMCA OF HONOLULU TO SUPPORT THE MENTAL WELLNESS OF THE STATE'S YOUTH.

HEARING: March 24, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent and offers comments.

PURPOSE: HCR 67 asks the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services to work with the YMCA of Honolulu to support mental wellness of the state's youth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the mental well-being of people of all ages in our state. However, none more than our youth and children. DHS is grateful for the dedicated work and vital role the many community providers play in the lives of all of Hawaii's families. We remain committed to working with all community partners to support the mental wellness of the State's youth and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HCR-67

Submitted on: 3/21/2022 3:13:06 PM

Testimony for PDP on 3/24/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch Jr	Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i (formerly the LGBT Caucus) Hawai‘i’s oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports HCR 67.

We hope you all will support this important resolution.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.
Chair and SCC Representative
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

March 22, 2022

TO: Chair Linda Ichiyama
Committee On Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness

Vice Chair Stacelynn K.M. Eli
Committee On Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness

FR: Greg Waibel
President and CEO
YMCA of Honolulu

RE: HCR 67 Urging the Department of Health and Department of Human Services to Work
with the YMCA of Honolulu to Support the Mental Wellness of the State's Youth. -

SUPPORT

In a recent study conducted as part of the Global Burden of Disease¹, mental health experts from across the country expressed a very high level of concern that we are in a second pandemic of mental health problems with not enough resources and approaches to help people. The voice of people who are seeking help include feelings of being stuck, empty, uncertain, anxious, overwhelmed, burned out, stressed, isolated, done, and depressed. The surveyed mental health professionals think the state and federal government must provide more resources.

Additionally, according to a recent article by Civil Beat², "depression and anxiety have doubled during the pandemic... while negative emotions and behaviors, such as impulsivity and irritability associated with ADHD, have moderately increased. In early 2021, emergency room visits for suicide attempts shot up 51% for adolescent girls and 4% for adolescent boys compared to the same time period in early 2019."

The need is NOW and if it continues unaddressed, will cause permanent damage to our kids' mental health.

Currently, medically diagnosed patients can receive care through Medicare/Medicaid/insurance and schools are limited in the supports they can offer, especially while trying to regain

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)02143-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)02143-7/fulltext)

² <https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/12/anxiety-and-depression-youth-mental-health-got-worse-during-the-pandemic/>

academic ground that was lost to the pandemic. The need is so great and the current resources gap leaves a void for so many youth who need help with their mental wellness. The mental health crisis is not one that can be solved by one organization and one strategy alone. Just as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted many aspects of our community, the solution to this crisis will also need to be multifaceted, collaborative, and innovative.

A 2021 Advisory from the United States Surgeon General³ noted the increased need for mental health services for youth to combat the negative effects of COVID-19. Of particular note was the need to ensure that “every child has access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally competent mental health care.” As a community-based organization that provides a variety of services to thousands of kids on the island of Oahu, we are well positioned to meet youth “where they are” in ways that are comfortable and are relevant to the unique cultural identities of those who will be served. We will approach this work with trained professionals and evidence-based practices to support the mental wellness support that our youth need.

The YMCA has a track record of success in working with youth and can offer a community-based approach, providing programs to help youth at various points in their mental wellness pathway. Our program design starts with a comprehensive mental health screening and depending on the results of this screening different program offerings would be offered. These offerings include life skill groups/activities that would focus on self-care, vision mapping, support to help them build protective factors and minimize/eliminate risk factors as well as connecting them to other resources they might need and ultimately referring them to mental health professionals if they need higher levels of service.

For decades we have been providing supportive services to thousands of youths who have been dealing with substance abuse as well as kids in every situation in our community. We understand assessment and treatment models, and we will be partnering with licensed clinicians to guide our approach.

We ask through this resolution to have the Departments of Health and Human Services work with the YMCA of Honolulu to find approaches and recommendations to help our youth with their mental wellness.

We are grateful for your consideration as we all work together to ensure the mental wellness of Hawaii’s youth.

³ <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>

HCR-67

Submitted on: 3/21/2022 5:51:22 PM

Testimony for PDP on 3/24/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aimee Malia Grace, MD, MPH, FAAP	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Aimee Malia Grace, MD, MPH, FAAP, and I am writing in my individual capacity. By background, I am a health policy pediatrician and I direct strategic health initiatives and federal relations for the University of Hawai'i System. I also serve on the Board of Directors of the YMCA Camp Erdman.

I STRONGLY SUPPORT this resolution and truly appreciate the recognition of the legislature of the importance both of the mental health crisis facing our youth, particularly in light of COVID, but also the tremendous benefits that working with the Y provides.

I strongly urge the legislature to support this resolution.

Mahalo,

Dr. Aimee Grace

HCR-67

Submitted on: 3/21/2022 8:18:27 PM

Testimony for PDP on 3/24/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anthony Guerrero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Anthony Guerrero, M.D., and I am writing in my individual capacity. By background, I am a pediatrician and child and adolescent psychiatrist in Honolulu, and I am fully aware of the mental health crisis facing our youth, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. I STRONGLY SUPPORT this resolution and truly appreciate the legislature's recognition of this important priority and of this organization's prominent role in supporting youth's well-being.

Many thanks,

Dr. Anthony Guerrero