

**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'**  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**  
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P.O. BOX 541  
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**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

**NADINE Y. ANDO**  
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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

**Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

**Before the**  
**Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection**  
**and**  
**Senate Committee on Health and Human Services**

**Wednesday, March 20, 2024**  
**1:00 p.m.**  
**Conference Room 225 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:**  
**H.B. 1830, H.D. 2, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair Keohokalole, Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

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, H.D.2, 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.

Should this bill advance, the Department respectfully requests the following amendments to facilitate provisional licensure:

- Pages 3 to 5, Part II

§451J- **Provisional license; associate marriage and family therapist; services reimbursable.** (a) The department shall grant, upon application and payment of proper fees, provisional licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist to an individual who:

(1) Has received a master's or doctoral degree from an accredited educational institution in marriage and family therapy or an allied field related to the practice of mental health counseling; that includes or is supplemented by, graduate-level course work comprising a minimum of thirty-three semester hours or forty-four quarter hours in the following course areas:

(A) ~~Marriage and family studies -- nine semester hours or twelve quarter hours;~~

(B) ~~Marriage and family therapy studies -- nine semester hours or twelve quarter hours;~~

(C) ~~Human development -- nine semester hours or twelve quarter hours;~~

(D) ~~Ethical and professional studies -- three semester hours or twelve quarter hours;~~

(E) ~~Research -- three semester hours or four quarter hours;~~

- Pages 16 to 20, Part III

**§453D- Provisional license associate mental health counselor; services reimbursable.** (a) The department shall grant, upon application and payment of proper fees, provisional licensure as an associate mental health counselor to an individual who:

(1) Has received a master's or doctoral degree from an accredited educational institution in counseling or in an allied field related to the practice of mental health counseling. that includes, or is supplemented by, graduate-level course work in counseling comprising a minimum of forty-eight semester hours or seventy-two quarter hours in the following course areas, with a minimum of three semester hours or five quarter hours in each course area as indicated below:

(A) ~~Human growth and development, including the study of life span development; strategies to facilitate that development and~~

- transitions; theories of learning and personality development; and human behavior to include crisis, disabilities, addictive behavior, and environmental factors;
- (B) Social and cultural foundations, including the study of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society, including ages; races; religious or sexual preferences; physical disabilities; ethnicities and cultures; genders; socioeconomics; intellectual abilities; and individual, family, and group strategies of diverse groups;
- (C) Counseling theories and applications, including counseling and consultation, including both individual and systems perspectives; interviewing; assessment; and counseling skills; and applying principles, methods, and theories of counseling, treatment and counseling of mental and emotional disorders, and educational techniques aimed at preventing these disorders with individuals and families;
- (D) Group theory and practice, including principles of group dynamics, group process, group leadership styles, theories and methods of group counseling, and the application of theory to the group processes;
- (E) Career and lifestyle development, including the study of vocational development theories; decision-making models; assessment instruments; and techniques, types, sources, and uses of occupational and educational information systems, career development applications, and career counseling processes, techniques, and resources;
- (F) Appraisal of human behavior, including assessment and diagnosis of disorders with an emphasis on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders' categories and an understanding of these disorders relative to the counseling context;

- ~~(G) Tests and measurements, including theoretical and historical bases for assessment techniques, and assessment methods, including analysis of various types of tests to select, administer, interpret, and use assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling;~~
- ~~(H) Research and program evaluation, including research design and methods, statistical analysis, principles, practices, and application of needs assessment and program evaluation;~~
- ~~(I) Professional orientation and ethics, including the history of the helping profession, professional roles and functions, ethical standards, confidentiality, professional organizations, and public policy process, including advocacy on behalf of the profession and its clientele; and~~
- (JA) Has at least two academic terms of supervised mental health practicum intern experience for graduate credit of at least six semester hours or ten quarter hours in a mental health counseling setting, with a total of three hundred hours of supervised client contact. The practicum experience shall be completed under the clinical supervision of a licensed clinical supervisor; and

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 its 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 \$73,406<sup>1</sup> 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.

The Department may, as done with other professions, assess a fee to the applicant, to pay back the general fund. If the Committee is inclined to do this, it may consider adding the following language to Part VI, section 34, pages 51 to 52:

- (3) Fees assessed shall defray costs incurred by the department to support the operations of the licensing programs. Fees collected shall be managed in accordance with section 26-9(l).

Lastly, for the Committee's information, the Department met with the proponents of this measure on Friday, March 15, 2024. While it understands the importance of this bill, the Department must continue to note that this would be an unfunded mandate and would require an extraordinary amount of time and effort to ensure proper implementation of these new license types.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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

## Testimony of the Board of Psychology

Before the  
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection  
and  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Wednesday, March 20, 2024  
1:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

On the following measure:  
**H.B. 1830, H.D. 2, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair Keohokalole, Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

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 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 worker intern in certain circumstances; and (4) appropriate funds.

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

The Board requests the following amendment, which would authorize provisional license holders to take the licensing exam prior to completing their postdoctoral experience:

Page 40, line 2 be deleted:

~~“[.]; provided that to be eligible to take the examination, all other requirements of this subsection must first be met.]”~~

And replaced with:

“[.]; provided that those issued a provisional license pursuant to 465- shall be authorized to take the examination upon the license being issued. Authorization for associate psychologists to take the examination shall

terminate on the date the provisional license expires, or if disciplinary action is taken on the license.”

From an administrative standpoint, this amendment would allow the holder of the provisional license, or associate psychologist, to apply for and obtain full licensure as a psychologist without the included delay caused by the applicant needing to be authorized by the Board to sit for and pass the exam before a license can be issued.

The current bill language appears overly general for its purpose regarding a proposed exemption from Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) chapter 465, for students of psychology. The language could allow students of other professions related to the practice of psychology to interpret and successfully argue for exemption from the requirements of HRS chapter 465. Consequently, the Board requests the following amendment to remedy this concern:

Starting on page 34, line 19, continued to page 35, line 8:

“(4) Any person who is a student of psychology~~[-a psychological intern, or a resident in psychology preparing for the profession of psychology under supervision in a training institution or facility and who is designated by a title as "psychology trainee", "psychology student", "psychology intern", or "psychology resident", that indicates the person's training status]~~, or enrolled in a professional psychology training program as defined by this chapter; provided that the person shall not identify the person's self as a psychologist or associate psychologist or imply that the person is licensed to practice psychology;”

The amendment will provide the Board with additional criteria to assess whether an individual meets the exemption or not. Including a stipulation that a person must be enrolled in a “professional psychology training program” will prevent students of other professions related to psychology from utilizing the exemption.

Finally, the Board is concerned with the language on page 40, lines 13 to 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 for the waiver, and therefore may require the creation of administrative rules instead to establish appropriate waiver criteria. In addition, 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, which is very concerning to the Board. Further, the current language of HRS chapter 465 already allows a state-employed psychologist two (2) years to obtain licensure. Instead, the Board requests the waiver be limited to a maximum of one (1) year, which would allow a psychologist utilizing the provision set forth by HRS section 465-7.6 up to a total of three (3) years to meet requirements for licensure. For the Committees' information, a typical applicant requires only one (1) year to complete postdoctoral training. The Board requests that the following amendment be included:

Starting on page 40, line 13, delete:

~~"[.]:  
provided that if the psychologist is not able to obtain licensure within two years, the board may grant a waiver if the psychologist can demonstrate the delay was caused by circumstances beyond the psychologist's control.~~

~~(b) [After] Absent a waiver obtained pursuant to subsection (a), after the time period in subsection (a)(2) has expired"~~

And replace with:

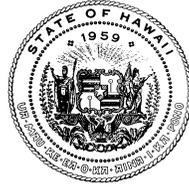
~~"[.]:  
provided that, if the psychologist is not able to obtain licensure pursuant to subsection (a)(2), the board may grant a waiver of up to one year to complete the requirements for licensure, if the psychologist is able to demonstrate that the inability to meet the requirements for licensure was caused by circumstances beyond the psychologist's control.~~

~~(b) [After] Absent a waiver obtained pursuant to subsection (a), or upon the expiration of the time period in subsection (a), paragraph (2) [has expired]"~~

Finally, the Board supports the delayed implementation date of July 1, 2026, and acknowledges the appropriations request by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and its Professional Vocational Licensing Division (Division). If passed, this bill will represent the development of at least (4) new license-type administrative operations, which will require initial time and funds to develop the license-types and associated requirements in the Division's database and hire and train additional staff to ensure the successful implementation of these new license-types in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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



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

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

**WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY  
ONLY**

**STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH**  
**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services**  
**and Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection**  
**SUPPORTING HB 1830 HD2**  
**RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

**March 20, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. in CR 225 and via Video**

**CHAIRPERSON**

Katherine Aumer, PhD

**1<sup>st</sup> VICE CHAIRPERSON**

Kathleen Merriam, LCSW CSAC

**2<sup>nd</sup> VICE CHAIRPERSON**

John Betlach

**SECRETARY**

Eileen Lau-James, DVM

**MEMBERS:**

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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

Chairs Buenaventura and Keohokalole, Vice-Chairs Aquino and Fukunaga, and Members of the Committees:

Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i State Council on Mental Health supports HB1830 HD2. 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. The Hawai'i State Council on Mental Health has heard numerous reports and public statements regarding the dearth of services and providers, especially in rural areas of O'ahu and neighboring islands. By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure options, HB1830 HD2 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 mental health providers with associate licenses, barriers to entry into the mental health profession are reduced without compromising public safety and quality of services. This is particularly important in areas where there is a high demand for services but a limited number of licensed providers. HB1830 HD2 will also address numerous financial challenges commonly encountered by psychology trainees in Hawai'i as they pursue their professional development. Emerging professionals engaged in fulfilling their supervised practice hours encounter significant financial strain, largely attributed to the exceptionally high cost of living prevalent in Hawaii. Moreover, by providing the potential for financial relief and support, this proposal can enhance the retention of local talent, particularly those individuals who possess specialized training in addressing the distinctive behavioral health challenges inherent to Hawai'i 's communities

HB1830 HD2 represents a balanced approach to addressing the challenges facing the mental health workforce. By providing a framework for associative licensing, authorizing insurance reimbursements, and funding for staff to process these applications, HB1830-HD2 ensures that individuals in Hawai'i in need of mental health services can access timely and high-quality care. We urge you to support HB1830-HD2 and help improve mental health outcomes for our communities in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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.





## 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

March 20, 2024

### TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION AND ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

#### House Bill 1830 HD2 – Relating to Mental Health

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1830 HD2 – Relating to Mental Health.

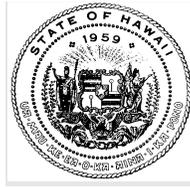
This bill establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances. Requires psychologist license applicants to possess a doctoral degree and complete 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  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1830 HD2  
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

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

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALO, CHAIR  
SENATOR CAROL FUKUNAGA, VICE CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Hearing Date: March 20, 2024

Room Number: 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined

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

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,<sup>1</sup> 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%.<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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>

<sup>2</sup> 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 individuals are unable to access needed care early on, their risk increases for escalating  
2 symptoms that require high-level, restrictive, intensive, and costly mental health services.

3         This bill supports the ability of graduate students who provide mental health services to  
4 remain in our state and provide these much-needed services, while completing their training and  
5 licensure requirements. Individuals trained at the doctoral level are difficult to recruit and retain  
6 in the state. This bill provides a reasonable path, commensurate to national standards, for  
7 doctoral level psychologists to obtain their license and while continuing to provide services for  
8 the state. It is very clear that there is a need for additional mental health providers to support  
9 vulnerable populations throughout Hawai‘i.

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

15

16 **Offered Amendments:** None.

17

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



**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 HD2**  
**RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Committees on Commerce and Consumer Protection and Health and Human Services  
Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 1:00 pm  
State Capitol Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

Chairs Keohokalole and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Fukunaga and Aquino, and members of the Committees:

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** H.B.1830 HD2 so long as it does not adverse impact priorities identified in the Executive Supplemental Budget Request for FY2025.

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 HD2 increases access to mental health professionals (MHP) and assures individuals, couples, and families can 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 HD2.

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

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2024 7:08:53 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This will increase the capacity to serve individuals who have a mental illness..

## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

### Testimony to the Senate Committees on Consumer Protection & Commerce; and Health & Human Services

#### HB1830 HD2, Relating to Mental Health

March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 1:00pm

#### ADVISORY BOARD

John Boyd  
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Edward Kubo  
Patti Lyons  
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Jerry Rauckhorst  
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Jeffrey Watanabe

Aloha Chairs Keohokalole and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Fukunaga and Aquino, and members of the committees.

Mental Health America of Hawaii is in strong support of HB1830 HD2 which establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances.

#### PRO BONO LEGAL COUNSEL

Paul Alston

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Andrew Park  
Sandra Simms

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.

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. Considering the continued impact of the global pandemic, a national youth mental health crisis, and the ongoing statewide traumatic impacts of the Lahaina fires, the need for accessible mental health services has never been more critical.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony, and encourage your positive review of HB1830 HD2

Mahalo,



Bryan L. Talisayan  
Executive Director



PRESENT MIND INSTITUTE OF HAWAII  
Lianne T. Philhower, PsyD, MPH, C-DBT  
45-270 Wm Henry Rd., Suite 207, Kaneohe, HI 96744  
Office Phone (808) 379-3031

## **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 writing for myself and on behalf of Present Mind Institute of Hawaii to express our 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:

- Allow supervising psychologists a means to support and viably train our talented and local mental health interns who are on their way to licensure.
- 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.
- Help to grow and Improve 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,  
Lianne Philhower, PsyD



**Parents And  
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1830 HD2 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

**TO:** Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino, & Members,  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Chair Keohokalole, Vice-Chair Fukunaga, & Members,  
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection

**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO

**DATE:** March 20, 2024 at 1:00 PM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1830 HD2 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](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.



## **HB1830 HD2 Provisional Licensure for Mental Health**

### COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

### COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Wednesday, Mar 20, 2024: 1:00 : Room 225 Videoconference

## **Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition supports HB1830 HD2:**

*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.



**Subject: HB1830 HD2-- Support**

To the Honorable Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB1830HD2. The Hawai'i Counselors Association (HCA) Executive Board and members support HB1830HD2. 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 HB1830HD2. 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 associate licensure for mental health professionals. We feel strongly that this 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.

HB1830HD2 will expand the quality of mental health services by allowing provisional/associate-level licensure for mental health practitioners. The intent is to create an associate license option for qualified candidates, not require associate licensure to obtain full licensure. Hawaii currently has a shortage of licensed mental health professionals, and many providers have waitlists. HB1830HD2 will help to address the shortage of mental health providers in Hawaii by allowing graduate-level mental health 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 the requests from the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) to fund necessary personnel and improvements to database infrastructure, which are crucial to the implementation of this bill. Funding to the DCCA is essential to carry out associate licensure and advancements in the mental health profession. Investing in the DCCA and the Hawai'i licensing system will go a long way in the implementation of improvements in professional services across the State.

Overall, HB1830HD2 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 HB1830HD2.

Sincerely,

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



## **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](mailto:mel@brighterbound.com)

Phone: 808-212-9687

Fax: 808-427-9891

[www.brighterbound.com](http://www.brighterbound.com)



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Fujimoto Counseling Services LLC

Hearing March 20, 2024 1:00 PM

**Testimony In Strong Support of HB1830 Relating to Mental Health**

To: The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services and  
The Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection,

My name is Jamie Fujimoto and I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and have been a therapist for 25 years and in private practice for 20 years, providing therapy to adolescents, adults, and couples in Hawai'i. I am strongly in support of HB1830, as there is a shortage of therapists in Hawai'i and an abundance of quality pre-licensed therapists currently working for various State and private agencies providing counseling to those in need. These pre-licensed therapists could help to eliminate the shortage of mental health providers in the private practice setting in Hawai'i that has become so prevalent over the past few years.

There have been multiple recent mental health crises and tragedies in Hawaii, including COVID, the Maui fires, and the more recent violent tragedies that have affected so many people throughout our State.

With the passage of HB1830, local pre-licensed therapists who are seeking their clinical hours and training would be able to be trained and mentored by local seasoned therapists like myself in the private practice setting, which would better prepare them for practicing on their own and providing quality care to our people. Training under seasoned therapists in Hawai'i would be able to help pre-licensed therapists to not only learn to be culturally sensitive to the people of Hawai'i, but also to provide quality services in the private practice setting to those in our community.

This bill is pertinent to helping to shape the future of mental health care in Hawai'i by expanding the way up and coming private practice therapists are trained as well as increasing the amount of therapists available to those seeking help with their private insurances. Please support this much needed bill.

With Gratitude,

Jamie K Fujimoto, LCSW  
Fujimoto Counseling Services, LLC  
99-128 Aiea Heights Dr., Suite 302  
Aiea, HI 96701  
(808)258-0018

Rob Mastroianni MD  
Pukalani Family Practice and Urgent Care  
81 Makawao Ave., Suite 100  
Pukalani, HI 96768  
808/573-8900

Members of the legislator,

As a physician with over 50 years practice experience, more than 20 of them in Hawaii, I would like to offer testimony in support of the legislative bill to remove the burden of GET taxes for medical practices. The GET tax burden is a great problem reducing the ability of private medical providers in maintaining financial stability in our state. We are one of the few states that legislates this type of tax on medical practices, and the deleterious effect of these laws are evident. In my practice we found it virtually impossible to attract medical professionals to join private practices because of the small margins of profit in running these businesses. The current lack of medical professionals in the private sector in our state presents a huge limitation to access of care for many individuals. Maui alone is estimated to be 40% understaffed throughout all medical specialties. I strongly urge you to vote to repeal the GET tax on medical practices and reverse many years of decreasing availability of medical practitioners and care access in Hawaii.

Rob Mastroianni MD



March 20, 2024

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Re: HB 1830 HD2 – Relating to Mental Health

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Fukunaga,  
and Members of the Committees:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1830 HD2 which establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, 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.

HMSA recognizes that Hawaii is currently in need of greater access to behavioral health care services. We've been working with provider and health care stakeholders to address the issue through various efforts including recent telehealth legislation, additional health care workforce growth initiatives, and the delivery of integrated primary care.

While we strongly support access to care, we also want to prioritize high quality care for all members.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on HB 1830 HD2.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu  
Assistant Vice President  
Community and Government Relations



# 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 COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair**

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair**

**Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair**

**March 20, 2024 1:00 P.M. Conf Rm 225 & via Video conference**

### **Testimony in Strong Support on HB1831 HD2 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

(HPA) **strongly supports HB1830 HD2 with suggested amendments** - 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 a licensing structure for Associate-level Psychologists in place.

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 measure will allow them to receive insurance reimbursement with a Provisional/Associate license for their post-doctoral/pre-licensed services.

### **WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

Not only is this measure a part of the House Majority Package, multiple state agencies have testified in support over the last three years, including: the Department of Health; the Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation; the State Office of Wellness & Resilience; the Disability & Communications Access Board; and the State Council on Mental Health.

These agencies understand the tremendous leverage and impact this bill will achieve in addressing our mental health crisis by significantly multiplying Hawaii's mental health workforce with a **pipeline of homegrown talent** – keeping them from moving to the mainland where there is more flexibility in taking exams, more paying opportunities enabled by other states' Provisional/Associate Licensing programs, and a much cheaper cost of living. All done simply with applicants' license fees to DCCA's Compliance Resolution Fund (CRF)<sup>1</sup>.

### **AMENDMENTS TO RETAIN TRAINEE EXEMPTIONS**

**First, the most immediate issue that needs to be addressed in this proposal is retaining the exemption from licensure for the trainees this proposal is meant to assist – at least until the DCCA's Associate Licensure programs are operational and Applicant-trainees' Provisional/Associate Licenses are actually issued.**

<sup>1</sup> See Hawaii Insurers Council v. Lingle for a comprehensive discussion of the CRF <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/court/hi-supreme-court/1256613.html>

Given the time it may take the DCCA to stand up the licensing operations, we are concerned that many of the students eager to set up supervised training opportunities after graduation will be unable to apply and receive their Provisional/Associate license in time for them to start. Even worse, if they wanted to stay and work in Hawaii, and provide these services free-of-charge, the repeal of their exemption will have gone into effect – making the work that is required of them to obtain full licensure **a statutory violation**. This creates yet another reason for homegrown talent to leave Hawaii – to preserve and advance their ability to actually practice their chosen profession - depriving Hawaii of their sorely needed services.

To address this, we ask this committee recognize these licenses as “conditional licenses” contemplated by Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 436B-7(2); and to **remove the stricken language in this bill that repeals trainee exemptions from licensure** [for Marriage & Family Therapists: p.8, ln 5-9; p.12, ln 1-3; for Mental Health Counselors: p. 26, ln 19 – p. 27, ln 2; for Psychologists: p. 34 ln 17 – p. 35, ln 3, p. 36, ln 20-21].

We see no legal reason – in statute nor principle - to remove these exemptions. However, we recognize that doing so (by retaining the stricken language outlined above) post-graduate/pre-licensed mental health providers are forced to apply for their Provisional/Associate License to get their supervised hours - allowing the DCCA to maximize licensing fee revenue for the CRF to operate the Provisional/Associate License program.

If the legislature chooses to retain the exemptions – as it stands in the current HD2 - **some amendments are required to avoid situations where graduates are completely barred from obtaining their supervised hours requirement while they wait for their Provisional/Associate License to be issued**. Some ways this can be accomplished is by: **(1) pinning the repeals on the date when the DCCA is able to process and issue the licenses; (2) allowing applicants to pre-pay for their license, and in exchange receive a temporary exemption until the license is issued; or (3) stagger the implementation of the Provisional/Associate license program for the 4 mental health provider professions so Hawaii is not deprived of needed services while the DCCA prepares its operations - piecemeal**.

We defer to the legislature on how to draft provider coverage during the gap period created by repealed exemptions – but believe the simplest way to avoid an “Exemption Cliff” is to remove these repeals.

In this vein, we also recognize the term “intern” is not used consistently across the four statutory codes impacted. We therefore also support the **clarifying language offered by the NASW – Hawaii Chapter to avoid confusing student social work interns for M.S.W.s seeking licensure as an L.C.S.W.**

### **ADOPT DCCA RECOMMENDATION TO ENSURE FLEXIBILITY FOR EPPP EXAM**

Also, a critical barrier that needs to be addressed in this proposal is the financial hardship and delay during a psychologist’s post-doctoral phase, and the timing of the license and examination application processes; namely – 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 website that “In most jurisdictions, you’re qualified to sit for the test once you complete the educational requirements for your doctoral degree.”<sup>2</sup> (Emphasis added.)

Currently, according to the Board of Psychology’s administrative rules, applicants must complete their 1-year postdoctoral 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 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. Prior iterations of this proposal required the board to allow full licensure candidates to take their EPPP 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. Accordingly, we support the language they have submitted to give applicants the flexibility to take their EPPP before completing their post-doctoral experience.

### **CONSIDER APPROPRIATING EXISTING COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION FUND MONIES FOR THE OPERATION OF THESE HRS 436B-7(2) "CONDITIONAL LICENSES"**

Based on their testimony and our discussions with the DCCA, we understand this proposal is not a priority for them – and that they've requested a general fund appropriation to assist in the processing of these new licenses.

However, it's important to note that according to p. 47 of the DCCA's 2023 Compliance Resolution Fund (CRF) report<sup>2</sup>, the DCCA reports as an accomplishment that it was able to process 7,653 new insurance licenses, to mostly NON-residents, without needing additional staff. In contrast, we project approximately only 500 new mental health associate licensees a year – mostly from HAWAII RESIDENTS - not out-of-state applicants as was accommodated by DCCA for insurance licenses.

According to statute and more fully described in Hawaii Insurer's Council v. Lingle, each of the impacted professions in HB1830 HD2 already has a CRF sub-account in the DCCA to draw from to help stand up the Provisional/Associate licensure programs. The prospective Provisional/Associate licenses are effectively "conditional licenses" as contemplated by HRS 436B-7(2) which the DCCA Director is empowered to issue; and it is allowable and logical to draw on these existing sub-accounts to support operations.

**While we are NOT opposed to general fund appropriations to assist the DCCA; we are concerned that such an appropriation will not square with the budget balancing done by the House Finance and Senate Ways & Means committees, causing the bill to die – like a baby thrown out with bath water.**

Too much good promises to result from this proposal – for such a relatively small monetary investment – coming predominantly from the licensees themselves. Perhaps the monies in each of the profession's DCCA CRF sub-accounts is all that is needed to institute these conditional licenses (substantially similar to standard licenses – a process presumably easy to replicate) without significant delay.

### **HB1830 HD2 REDUCES CONSUMER COSTS BY ALLOWING FOR INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

Finally, we want to stress our disagreement with assertions in DCCA's testimony: (1) indicating this proposal "should not be implemented solely for the purpose of insurance reimbursement"; and (2) their statement that "the cost of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed on to consumers." We respectfully submit, in accordance with language in this bill's extensive purpose section, that this measure has far-reaching positive implications for public health, safety, and welfare far beyond insurance reimbursements. Furthermore, consumers' out-of-pocket costs will be reduced because these services will be covered by their insurance.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important bill.

Sincerely,



Raymond A Folen, Ph.D., ABPP.  
Executive Director

**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair**

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair**

**Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair**

**March 20, 2024 1:00 P.M. Conf Rm 225 & via Video conference**

**Testimony in Strong Support with Amendments on HB1830 HD2 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) strongly supports HB1830 HD2 Relating to Mental Health, which establishes Provisional/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 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 a 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.

**AMENDMENT REQUEST: CLARIFY REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS FOR SUPERVISED MSWs SEEKING LICENSURE AS LCSW:**

There is inconsistency in the use of the term “intern” between the HRS codes impacted by this measure, and in the field, which causes confusion. Because the term is not defined, please revise the language on **page 50, line 8- 17** relating to the supervision of “social work interns” to make clear that they are already licensed, but seeking additional 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 14 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.

(In this vein, we highlight the errors in DCCA testimony which claims that authorizing reimbursements for social work interns could result in higher costs for services. We respectfully submit that authorizing reimbursements for post-grad trainees actually LOWERS consumers’ out-of-pocket costs because these services will be covered by their health insurance plans.)

**AMENDMENT REQUEST: RETAIN TRAINEE EXEMPTIONS BY REMOVING REPEALED LANGUAGE**

Perhaps the most critical issue that needs to be addressed in this proposal is retaining the exemption from licensure for the trainees this proposal is meant to assist – at least until the DCCA’s Associate Licensure programs are operational and Applicant-trainees’ Provisional/Associate Licenses are actually issued.

Given the time it may take the DCCA to stand up the licensing operations, we are concerned that many of the students eager to set up supervised training opportunities after graduation will be unable to apply and receive their Provisional/Associate license in time for them to start. Even worse, if they wanted to stay and work in Hawaii, and provide these services free-of-charge, the repeal of their exemption will have gone into effect – making the work that is required of them to obtain full licensure a statutory violation. This creates yet another reason for homegrown talent to leave Hawaii – to preserve and advance their ability to actually practice their chosen profession elsewhere - depriving Hawaii of their sorely needed services.

To address this, we ask this committee recognize these licenses as “conditional licenses” contemplated by Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 436B-7(2); and to **remove the stricken language in this bill that repeals trainee**

**exemptions from licensure [for Marriage & Family Therapists: p.8, In 5-9; p.12, In 1-3; for Mental Health Counselors: p. 26, In 19 – p. 27, In 2; for Psychologists: p. 34 In 17 – p. 35, In 3, p. 36, In 20-21].**

We see no legal reason – in statute nor principle - to remove these exemptions. However, we recognize that doing so (by retaining the stricken language outlined above) post-graduate/pre-licensed mental health providers are forced to apply for their Provisional/Associate License to get their supervised hours - allowing the DCCA to maximize licensing fee revenue for the CRF to operate the new License program.

If the legislature chooses to retain the exemptions – as it stands in the current HD2 - some amendments are required to avoid situations where graduates are completely barred from obtaining their supervised hours requirement while they wait for their Provisional/Associate License to be issued. Some ways this can be accomplished is by: **(1) pinning the repeals on the date when the DCCA is able to process and issue the licenses; (2) allowing applicants to pre-pay for their license, and in exchange receive a temporary exemption until the license is issued; or (3) stagger the implementation of the Provisional/Associate license program for the 4 mental health provider professions so Hawaii is not deprived of needed services while the DCCA prepares its operations - piecemeal.**

We defer to the legislature on how to draft provider coverage during the gap period created by repealed exemptions – but believe the simplest way to avoid an “Exemption Cliff” is to remove these repeals.

#### **AMENDMENT REQUEST: ADOPT DCCA RECOMMENDATION TO ENSURE FLEXIBILITY FOR EPPP EXAM**

We support the flexibility needed by all the mental health professions in taking their exams and improving their chances for finding work and staying in Hawaii; and thus support the DCCA Board of Psychology’s amendment to do so.

#### **AMENDMENT REQUEST: CONSIDER APPROPRIATING EXISTING COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION FUND MONIES FOR THE OPERATION OF THESE HRS 436B-7(2) “CONDITIONAL LICENSES”**

Based on their testimony and our discussions with the DCCA, we understand this proposal is not a priority for them – requesting a general fund appropriation to assist in the processing of these new licenses.

However, it’s important to note that according to p. 47 of the DCCA’s 2023 Compliance Resolution Fund (CRF) report, the DCCA reports as an accomplishment that it was able to process 7,653 new insurance licenses, to mostly NON-residents, without needing additional staff. In contrast, we project approximately only 500 new mental health associate licensees a year – mostly from HAWAII RESIDENTS - not out-of-state applicants as was accommodated by DCCA for insurance licenses.

According to statute and more fully described in [Hawaii Insurer’s Council v. Lingle](#)<sup>1</sup> each of the impacted professions in HB1830 HD2 already has a CRF sub-account in the DCCA to draw from to help stand up the Provisional/Associate licensure programs. The prospective Provisional/Associate licenses are effectively

“conditional licenses” as contemplated by HRS 436B-7(2) which the DCCA Director is empowered to issue; and it is allowable and logical to draw on these existing sub-accounts to support operations.

While we are NOT opposed to general fund appropriations to assist the DCCA; we are concerned that such an appropriation will not square with the budget balancing done by the House Finance and Senate Ways & Means committees, causing the bill to die – like a baby thrown out with bath water.

Too much good promises to result from this proposal – for such a relatively small monetary investment – coming predominantly from the licensees themselves. Perhaps the monies in each of the profession’s DCCA CRF sub - accounts is all that is needed to institute these conditional licenses (substantially similar to standard licenses – a process presumably easy to replicate) without significant delay.

**HB1830 HD2 REDUCES CONSUMER COSTS BY ALLOWING FOR INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

Finally, we want to stress our disagreement with assertions in DCCA’s testimony: (1) indicating this proposal "should not be implemented solely for the purpose of insurance reimbursement"; and (2) their statement that "the cost of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed on to consumers." We respectfully submit, in accordance with language in this bill’s extensive purpose section, that this measure has far-reaching positive implications for public health, safety, and welfare far beyond insurance reimbursements. Furthermore, consumers’ out-of-pocket costs will be reduced because these services will be covered by their insurance.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important bill.

Sincerely,

 MSW, LCSW

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LCSW

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



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

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

**LATE**

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COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

March 20, 2024 1:00 P.M. Conf Rm 225 & via Video conference

**Testimony in Strong Support with Amendments on HB1831 HD2 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports **HB1830 HD2 – with Amendments** as a critical tool in improving access and meeting the overwhelming demand for quality mental health services, particularly during and following the prolonged pandemic.

**AMENDMENT REQUEST: RETAIN TRAINEE EXEMPTIONS BY REMOVING REPEALED LANGUAGE**

Perhaps the most critical issue that needs to be addressed in this proposal is retaining the exemption from licensure for the trainees this proposal is meant to assist – at least until the DCCA’s Associate Licensure programs are operational and Applicant-trainees’ Provisional/Associate Licenses are actually issued.

Given the time it may take the DCCA to stand up the licensing operations, we are concerned that many of the students eager to set up supervised training opportunities after graduation will be unable to apply and receive their Provisional/Associate license in time for them to start. Even worse, if they wanted to stay and work in Hawaii, and provide these services free-of-charge, the repeal of their exemption will have gone into effect – making the work that is required of them to obtain full licensure a statutory violation. This creates yet another reason for homegrown talent to leave Hawaii – to preserve and advance their ability to actually practice their chosen profession elsewhere - depriving Hawaii of their sorely needed services.

To address this, we ask this committee recognize these licenses as “conditional licenses” contemplated by Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 436B-7(2); and to **remove the stricken language in this bill that repeals trainee exemptions from licensure [for Marriage & Family Therapists: p.8, ln 5-9; p.12, ln 1-3; for Mental Health Counselors: p. 26, ln 19 – p. 27, ln 2; for Psychologists: p. 34 ln 17 – p. 35, ln 3, p. 36, ln 20-21].**

We see no legal reason – in statute nor principle - to remove these exemptions. However, we recognize that doing so (by retaining the stricken language outlined above) post-graduate/pre-licensed mental health providers are forced to apply for their Provisional/Associate License to get their supervised hours - allowing the DCCA to maximize licensing fee revenue for the CRF to operate the new License program.

If the legislature chooses to retain the exemptions – as it stands in the current HD2 - some amendments are required to avoid situations where graduates are completely barred from obtaining their supervised hours requirement while they wait for their Provisional/Associate License to be issued. Some ways this can be accomplished is by: (1) pinning the repeals on the date when the DCCA is able to process and issue the licenses; (2) allowing applicants to pre-pay for their license, and in exchange receive a temporary exemption until the license is issued; or (3) stagger the implementation of the Provisional/Associate license program for the 4 mental health provider professions so Hawaii is not deprived of needed services while the DCCA prepares its operations - piecemeal.

We defer to the legislature on how to draft provider coverage during the gap period created by repealed exemptions – but believe the simplest way to avoid an “Exemption Cliff” is to remove these repeals.

**AMENDMENT REQUEST: CONSIDER APPROPRIATING EXISTING COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION FUND MONIES FOR THE OPERATION OF THESE HRS 436B-7(2) “CONDITIONAL LICENSES”**

Based on their testimony and our discussions with the DCCA, we understand this proposal is not a priority for them – requesting a general fund appropriation to assist in the processing of these new licenses.

However, it’s important to note that according to p. 47 of the DCCA’s 2023 Compliance Resolution Fund (CRF) report, the DCCA reports as an accomplishment that it was able to process 7,653 new insurance licenses, to mostly NON-residents, without needing additional staff. In contrast, we project approximately only 500 new mental health associate licensees a year – mostly from HAWAII RESIDENTS - not out-of-state applicants as was accommodated by DCCA for insurance licenses.

According to statute and more fully described in [Hawaii Insurer’s Council v. Lingle](#),<sup>i</sup> each of the impacted professions in HB1830 HD2 already has a CRF sub-account in the DCCA to draw from to help stand up the Provisional/Associate licensure programs. The prospective Provisional/Associate licenses are effectively “conditional licenses” as contemplated by HRS 436B-7(2) which the DCCA Director is empowered to issue; and it is allowable and logical to draw on these existing sub-accounts to support operations.

While we are NOT opposed to general fund appropriations to assist the DCCA; we are concerned that such an appropriation will not square with the budget balancing done by the House Finance and Senate Ways & Means committees, causing the bill to die – like a baby thrown out with bath water.

Too much good promises to result from this proposal – for such a relatively small monetary investment – coming predominantly from the licensees themselves. Perhaps the monies in each of the profession’s DCCA CRF sub - accounts is all that is needed to institute these conditional licenses (substantially similar to standard licenses – a process presumably easy to replicate) without significant delay.

**AMENDMENT REQUEST: ADOPT DCCA RECOMMENDATION TO ENSURE FLEXIBILITY FOR EPPP EXAM**

We support the flexibility needed by all the mental health professions in taking their exams and improving their chances for finding work and staying in Hawaii and support the DCCA Board of Psychology's amendment to do so.

### **AMENDMENT REQUEST: ADOPT NASW RECOMMENDATION TO CLARIFY INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PRACTICES**

We support amendments requested by the NASW to make clear that billing must be done through the supervising Licensed Clinical Social Worker as there is currently confusion in insurance billing practice – and we seek to create consistency across the professions in how reimbursement works.

### **HB1830 HD2 REDUCES CONSUMER COSTS BY ALLOWING FOR INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

Finally, we want to stress our disagreement with assertions in DCCA's testimony: (1) indicating this proposal "should not be implemented solely for the purpose of insurance reimbursement"; and (2) their statement that "the cost of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed on to consumers." We respectfully submit, in accordance with language in this bill's extensive purpose section, that this measure has far-reaching positive implications for public health, safety, and welfare far beyond insurance reimbursements. Furthermore, consumers' out-of-pocket costs will be reduced because these services will be covered by their insurance.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

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 HD2** 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 the pandemic, as well as in response to the Maui Wildfires. The consequences of these events, 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.

Circumstances call for a change in the paradigm and practices of mental health care in Hawai'i. Our current model of mental health care fails to 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 should not be an afterthought.

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

Sincerely,

*Mary A Navarro*

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

To: The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

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

Hearing: Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 1:00 PM, Conference Room 225

RE: **HB1830, HD2 Relating to Mental Health**

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AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB1830, HD2**. 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 licensing 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, HD2**.

TO: Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection & Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Amber Drake  
Clinical Mental Health Counseling Graduate Student,  
University of Hawaii at Hilo

RE: SB1830 ESTABLISHING ASSOCIATE LICENSURE FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
PROFESSIONALS

**POSITION: In support of HB1830**

Aloha Honorable Members of the Hawaii Legislature,

I am writing to express my support for HB1830, which aims to provide provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawaii at Hilo studying Clinical Mental Health Counseling and this bill would have a direct positive impact on my future career as a mental health counselor.

This legislation is vital for enhancing access to mental health services and would help ensure the professional development and support of our community. As I am learning more about the field within my graduate program, I have become more aware of the challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. We have a growing need for more mental health professionals statewide, but especially for our community in Maui after the Lahaina fires.

Furthermore, HB1830 will help address these crucial issues by creating pathways for emerging professionals and enhance accessibility to mental health services. By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential steppingstone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids in their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i. The bill'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. Nearly half of the states in America already have this program in place, and by passing this bill, Hawaii will be modernizing our practices to meet our contemporary needs.

Our community needs culturally responsive, local mental health providers, so as a state we need to incentivize providers to stay here and practice here. It is crucial to keep our talented mental health professionals in Hawai'i. This has become more apparent after the Lahaina fires, with many people coming from the mainland attempting to provide mental health services to survivors. Though these clinicians have good intentions, they are not multiculturally competent enough for our community's needs. Though I am submitting testimony as an individual, I also sit on the State Board of Directors for NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and I know that NAMI emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive care, which this bill supports by growing local professionals. This process will help ensure pre-licensed therapists adhere to

professional standards and complete their licensure hours effectively, and would promote better supervision and mentoring, all of which are vital for quality mental health care.

The current expectation for therapists to work extensive unpaid hours post-degree is discriminatory and unsustainable, especially in Hawai'i's economic climate. As a Lahaina fire survivor, I am worried how I will be able to make it financially after I graduate if I must work extensive unpaid hours. Affordable housing is difficult to come by in Maui, and many of us who lost everything in the fire are having a hard time financially with additional unexpected expenses associated with rebuilding. I am not the only aspiring mental health professional that is facing these unforeseen challenges. We need to be creative, follow the example of other states who have passed similar legislation and do our best to help improve the mental health of our state. HB1830 will help people like me, so that I can in turn, help our community.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We understand the urgency of this request and appreciate your swift action to support this crucial legislation. I respectfully urge you to vote in favor of HB1830 and help mental health professionals enhance our mental health treatment in Hawaii. Your efforts play a significant role in shaping the future of mental health care in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Amber Drake  
108 E Huapala Place,  
Lahaina, HI 96761  
[Adrake8@hawaii.edu](mailto:Adrake8@hawaii.edu)  
801-361-1791

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2024 6:39:27 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2024 8:19:03 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2024 8:32:08 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Natalia Werkoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Certified Substance Abuse Counselor, and recently received my Certification in Perinatal Mental Health. I am extremely passionate about helping improve our community's mental health. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Natalia Werkoff

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 7:45:16 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amanda Courter	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,

Amanda Courter, LCSW, HI 3947

## **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 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,

Diana Kilguss  
MFT Graduate Student  
Diana.kilguss@gmail.com

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 2:29:21 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
MARNIE HONEYCUTT, LCSW	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am completely overwhelmed trying to help/supervise others to add to the number of dwindling providers. I am desiring retirement as I never thought I would. I stopped accepting referrals almost two years ago and still get them regularly. We simply do not have enough providers to supply the demand. Please help with this grave dilemma.

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-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 1:33:57 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
kristin hennig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1830 HD1: Expanding Mental Health Services in Hawaii

Kristin Hennig, HIFUSE Project Manager, Going Home Hawaii 03/16/2024

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830 HD1, which aims to expand mental health services in Hawaii by allowing early career mental health professionals to provide therapy under the supervision of a licensed psychotherapist and ensuring reimbursement for these services by insurance companies. This bill is a crucial step towards addressing the pressing mental health needs of our community and ensuring access to quality care for all residents of Hawaii.

As a community member and having worked as in social social work, I witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by individuals seeking mental health support, particularly in terms of limited access to qualified providers. The shortage of mental health professionals in Hawaii has led to long wait times for appointments and insufficient resources for those in need. HB1830 HD1 offers a practical solution to this problem by expanding the pool of providers who can offer services while maintaining the necessary standards of care through supervision by licensed professionals.

By allowing early career mental health professionals to accumulate practice hours under the guidance of experienced supervisors, HB1830 HD1 not only addresses the shortage of providers but also ensures that individuals receiving therapy are still receiving high-quality care. This model has been proven effective in other states and has the potential to significantly improve access to mental health services in Hawaii.

Furthermore, the provision for insurance reimbursement for services provided by early career professionals under supervision is crucial for ensuring the financial sustainability of this initiative. Many individuals who require mental health support may not be able to afford it without insurance coverage, and by allowing reimbursement, HB1830 HD1 ensures that cost is not a barrier to accessing care.

Expanding mental health services in Hawaii is essential for the well-being of our community. By supporting HB1830 HD1, you have the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of

countless individuals who are struggling with mental health issues. I urge you to prioritize the passage of this bill and to invest in the mental health of our state.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of HB1830 HD1.

Sincerely,  
Kristin L Hennig

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 4:53:12 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 Sutana Gardner, MFT, MBA

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 5:12:55 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have a severe shortage of mental health providers in Hawaii, especially in rural areas like Kauai. This bill would help create a large pool of supervised providers to help close the gap. Please pass!

Judith C. White, Psy. D.  
licensed psychologist

Kapaa

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 5:45:11 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 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,

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, PhD

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 7:07:22 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 7:09:01 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
lori stitt	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,

Lori Stitt

MA Counseling Psychology Student - UH Hilo May 2024 graduate

Currently interning at CAMHD Kauai and Kauai Community College Hale Malama Mental Health Student Services

## Support for HB1830 HD2\_ – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for **HB1830 HD2**, 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 challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. HB1830 HD2 addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill'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.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, **HB1830 HD2** streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of **HB1830 HD2** 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,

Carol Anne Gordon, LCSW

Owner, May Day Counseling, LLC

808 203 3399

cagordon22@gmail.com

We appreciate your prompt response to this urgent call. Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Warm regards,

*Carol Anne Gordon, LCSW*

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 10:54:08 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Goodyear	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830, which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for psychologists, marriage and family therapists, and mental health counselors in the State of Hawai‘i.

As a clinical psychologist, I am very much aware of the shortage of mental health providers across the state and the resulting lack of availability of mental health services for many members of our communities, as well as the challenges faced by recent graduates who are entering the mental health field.

HB1830 will directly address the shortage of mental health providers by expanding the pool of available providers. By authorizing insurance reimbursements for services provided by provisional or associate-level professionals, HB1830 will make mental health care more affordable and accessible to our population.

In addition, HB1830 will help to expedite the professional development of recent graduates who are entering the mental health field.

Thank you for considering this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Brian Goodyear, Ph.D.

(808) 285-9393

bsgoodyear@aol.com

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 1:40:29 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shari Au	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Over the past 10 years in private practice I've had several PhD candidates inquire about internship in my clinic. After phoning my liability insurance I realized there was no way to bill these individuals. For that reason I could not supervise their specialization in trauma therapies despite that I specialize in trauma therapy. For that reason, I encouraged them to find a legitimate internship site where they could bill, off island. Encouraging interns to leave Hawaii has been standard procedure since they cannot bill. If this bill is passed, it opens the door to interns working in specialization clinics throughout the islands once they can bill. It become possible to retain interns or have interns return from mainland colleges. If they can earn a living while completing their internships, not only does it offer more mental health services in Hawaii, but it allows our local clinics a chance to develop mental health professionals to serve this population. I could have used the assistance but because they cannot be billed, had to decline and send them to mainland internship sites. As the only credentialed LENS provider on island, and one of few certified EMDR providers, I'm in my senior years, would welcome training others to take over, but they must be able to bill. Regards, licensed clinical trauma psychologist

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 6:16:34 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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-2**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 10:43:00 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrea	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. As a graduate student in clinical psychology, it is evident that our state is facing a large mental health crisis, and there are NOT enough providers to meet the needs of our people. There are months-long waitlists with nearly all mental health providers, and with the Maui wildfires last year, there are likely more folks in need.

This proposed bill 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,

Andrea

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 11:33:08 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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. This bill will greatly help to address the service gap/increase access to care and encourage students to stay in Hawai'i to continue to provide services to our community. The cost of living in Hawai'i is especially high, one of the highest in the nation, so this bill will acknowledge and address the financial struggles, we, as graduate students, often face.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 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,

Kendyl Oshiro, doctoral candidate in clinical psychology, (808) 348-4439

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 6:46:05 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth Claxton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for HB1830 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals

PLEASE PASS THIS BILL! It will pave the way for increased mental health support for all of Maui residents, most especially those at-risk and in-need.

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 challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. This piece of legislature addresses these crucial issues by:

1. **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill'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.
3. **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, this streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 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,

Elizabeth Claxton

Mental Health Counselor

Malama Family Recovery Center

808-269-4661

[elizabethmclaxton@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethmclaxton@gmail.com)

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 11:09:27 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sonia Z. Shalhout	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,

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.

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 mental health services' cultural competency and relevance 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 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-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 11:23:27 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Meriah Nichols	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of the associate licensing bill.

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:07:07 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jesse Hutchison	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,

Jesse Hutchison, PhD

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 1:08:46 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Britt Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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,

Britt Young, M.A., LMFT

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 1:52:36 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marsha Hee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, My name is Marsha Hee. I support HB 1830 HD2 that establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances. This is an effective and necessary step towards providing for more educated, trained professional providers ready to serve our state's underserved mental health community members. I am a family member of a loved one who lives with mental health conditions. Thank you for taking my perspective and opinion into consideration to support and pass HB 1830 HD2.

Sincerely,

Marsha Hee, Volcano HI 96785, life-long resident/citizen of Hawaii

Family member of loved one with serious mental health conditions .

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 2:41:30 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joanne Okika Shigeke Qinaau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha a nā hoa,

As a PhD student in clinical psychology at UHM, and a Kanaka Maoli born and raised on O`ahu, I want to return home to serve my community. However, the status quo makes that possibility very challenging and can partially explain why we see so much brain drain in this field.

I see this bill as critically important for a number of reasons. I personally had a very challenging time finding opportunities back home in Hawai`i for when I graduate this summer, despite the rigor of my PhD program and the training reputation of my current internship at Harvard Medical School. The board currently requires 1900 hours of clinical supervision beyond the PhD - this is *very high* compared to many continental requirements. I have already been providing clinical services for 6 years, and could easily get licensed here in Massachusetts within a matter of months of graduating, if I were to stay.

Despite this very high post-doc requirement of 1900 hours, there are very few post-doc opportunities for PhDs to fulfill this requirement. Add to this paucity of options, the challenge of finding the right match for goals, as well as adequate salary to pay basic bills in an increasingly gentrified Hawai`i. Locals like myself are increasingly being priced out of our homelands.

The status quo is unsustainable and particularly challenging for those of us from underprivileged backgrounds. This bill will at least \*partially address the reasons behind that difficulty, and why so many mental health professionals leave the islands even after training there.

**In support of rural and neighbor island wellbeing:** This proposal would expand the pool of providers on all islands, particularly on neighbor islands to help meet the demand for mental health services. Lahaina needs us now. This bill can help.

**In support of maintaining our local community, which is dwindling each day, a challenge to survive, let alone thrive:** This bill would improve on-the-job training and cultivate homegrown talent - encouraging folx to stay in Hawai`i and meet the unique needs of our community. It also means supervisors of licensure-seeking professionals will be compensated for their valuable time.

**There is no aloha without mental health:** Most importantly, this measure will benefit those seeking services by improving access and encouraging utilization of critical therapy services. We

need MORE access to culturally conscious care, better paid providers, and fewer systemic barriers to creating community-based pipelines to wellbeing services.

**I am in strong support of Associate Licensing of Mental Health Professionals and respectfully ask this committee to pass this bill.**

Mahalo piha. I hope today you can make your ancestors, and future generations, proud.

*Mālama pono,*

Jo



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

18 March 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 "Michael Miller, Rep.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 2:57:53 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angela Mulligan	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,

As a mental health provider in the state of 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,

Angela Mulligan, PCC

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:21:17 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrew Kocik	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,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1830, a crucial measure for the advancement of mental health care in our beloved, great 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 seen 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,

Andrew Kocik

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:25:36 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carlos Chavez Bugarin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Support for HB1830 – Establishing Associate Licensure for Mental Health Professionals**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1830 (Hse. Com. No. 229), which seeks to establish provisional or associate-level licensure for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists in Hawai'i, and support social workers in receiving their clinical supervision.

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 Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.

**Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill'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.

**Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** 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.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB1830 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,

Carlos Chavez Bugarin

MSW Student

Cchavezb@hawaii.edu

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:33:12 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kimberly Andrade	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,

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,  
Kimberly Andrade

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:18:50 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara Shimei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IN SUPPORT

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:18:36 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emily Polk	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,

Emily Polk

Graduate Student of Counseling Psychology

University of Hawaii at Hilo

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:19:22 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nirit Stephens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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 is a crucial 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 an intern at an agency providing mental health services to people of low socioeconomic background who've experienced trauma, I witness firsthand the challenges in accessing locally based mental health care, daily. I am confident that bill HB1830 will have a profound impact on 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.
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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,

Nirit Stephens,

Marriage and Family Intern,

Child and Family Services, Hilo, Hawai'i.

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:22:30 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Colin Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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:

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

Colin Moore, LMFT

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:06:24 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amma King	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

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- 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
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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

Pre-licensed Mental Health Counselor

JABSOM Psychiatry Support Associate

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:38:36 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fabio Cardoso	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.

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

Fabio Cardoso

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:27:04 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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,

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.

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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-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:32:52 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tanya Macri	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Tanya Macri, and I am a master social work student graduating this semester. I am writing in support of HB1830 HD2. Associate-level/provisional licensing will greatly improve access to mental health services by allowing pre-clinical licensed professionals to bill insurance for services. In addition to increasing the number of mental health professionals available, it will also increase access for those individuals whose only means to access health services is through their insurance. With the cost of living in Hawaii being a financial and mental burden on so many, removing the cost and provider shortage barriers will be of great benefit to many. Thank you for your consideration.

**ATTN:**

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole

Senator Carol Fukunaga

**HLT, CPC, FIN**

**Hearing Date:** March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024. 1300 hours

**From:** Madison Kramer, MSW Student and community member

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

As a graduate student in the field of social work, I can tell you firsthand how greatly HB1830 impacts the community and the practitioners attempting to complete licensure requirements. By enacting this bill, you would allow the residents of Hawai'i the access to more professionals. Professionals who are fresh out of school, equipped with knowledge, and supported by supervisors, and able to alleviate some of the mental health care crisis we are seeing. As I am sure you are all aware, an increase in the need for mental health service providers skyrocketed as a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic. Honolulu Civil Beat reported the ratio of clients to therapists is 320-to-1. This is simply unsustainable if we as a state are unable to provide efficient and appropriate intervention.

HB1830 would enable professionals seeking further licensure to improve their quality of service without the excessive financial burden of being required to complete clinical hours uncompensated. This would also help encourage or incentivize more people from the Hawaiian community to pursue careers in the mental health and social working fields. One of the largest hinderances of becoming a mental health professional in Hawai'i is dealing with the high cost of living, all while being expected to be an unpaid intern. Allowing mental health interns to earn an income would allow more people to seek this field as a career option. With more local mental health professionals, more people within the community have access to the care they need and deserve. More social workers and mental health professionals would only help the community and it should be in everyone's best interest to encourage this growth through the adoption of this bill and others alike. Many states have similar alliances with the mental health field and are able to implement an associate license that keeps partitioners in their states. There is no clear reason not to adopt this bill. There is a clearly defined need, a population of willing graduates who want to serve the Hawaiian Islands, and evidence in other states of a successful implementation of similar proposals. What other proof is required? Hundreds of support letter have been sent during each part of the legislative process. This is clearly incredibly important to the people of Big Island specifically, and the rest of Hawai'i.

HB1830 would allow more clients to be seen, have the quality of care they deserve, and would also keep new practitioners on the Islands. New graduates are hungry to help people, but are limited by being unable to survive financially or provide for their families. This proposed solution will only benefit both sides of the mental health crisis problem here in Hawai'i and leave the entire community in a better state after its implementation.

Respectfully,

Madison Kramer

March 19, 2024

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:01:27 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laura Rosas Leong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and I support HB1830 as it would address the need for more behavioral health services in Hawaii. I am willing to supervise those still in training with a provisional role.

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:15:18 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maria	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.
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- 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,

Maria Mitsioura

**LATE**

**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 writing to express my strong support for HB1830.

By establishing provisional or associate-level licensure for mental health professionals, this bill not only broadens the scope of available care but will also address engagement in real and appropriate experience in the field of study. Meaning, the pre-licensed professionals will train in a private practice setting, if that is their goal, while also being able to receive reimbursement from insurance companies. All too often, pre-licensed professionals need to work another full-time job due to the state of our economy or need to work for an agency that pays them, but fail to receive the training they need.

Many other states already have established a provisional license for mental health professionals. I doubt that adding this license would be a hardship for the DCCA. There are approximately 5500 licenses across multi-disciplines. The provisional license only applies to new graduates or those looking to establish a provisional license. Some new graduates may not be interested in becoming licensed.

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:

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- 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, LMFT

**LATE**

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 2:01:15 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vishwani Ram-Souza	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,

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.

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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,

Vishwani Ram-Souza, LMFT, PhD

**LATE**

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:51:49 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Muftiah Martin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for introducing and considering this bill. As a provider of mental health services, I'm acutely aware of the need for more providers in order to adequately address the mental health needs of our community. This bill would go a long ways towards alleviating the burden on the existing pool of providers while also giving associates a way to make a difference in our community, ultimately this benefits the consumer of mental health services and improves the overall well being of our communities.

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:11:37 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leslie Gonzales	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

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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

**LATE**

**LATE**

**HB-1830-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 7:51:03 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/20/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Haylin Dennison	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

As you know, there is a Youth Mental Health Crisis across our state. In 2019, even prior to the pandemic, Suicide was the #1 leading cause of death for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders ages 15-24 (SAMSHA, 2019). In Hawaii, we have a shortage of mental health providers which creates a real access issue. This bill would solve that issue. I am writing to express my strong support for SB343, 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 challenges faced by emerging professionals in our field, as well as the gaps in mental health services accessible to our communities. SB343 addresses these crucial issues by:

- **Creating Pathways for Emerging Professionals:** By establishing associate licensure, this bill provides an essential stepping stone for recent graduates and those entering the mental health field. This not only aids their professional development but also helps in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in Hawai'i.
- **Enhancing Accessibility to Mental Health Services:** The bill'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.
- **Strengthening Mental Health Care Delivery:** Allowing psychologist license applicants to sit for licensing exams sooner and enabling the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers under certain conditions, SB343 streamlines the process of bringing qualified professionals into active service.

I firmly believe that the passage of this 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.

Together, we can make a significant impact on the mental health landscape of our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Sincerely,

Haylin Dennison, LCSW

**LATE**

**House Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair**  
**House Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair**

**Date:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024

**Time:** 1:00 PM

**Location:** Conference Room 225 and Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

**LATE**

### **Testimony In Support of HB1830 HD2, Relating to Mental Health**

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Deizhanna, and I am a graduate student at The University of Hawai'i at Manoa who is in favor of HB1830 HD2. I support HB1830 HD2 because it presents a crucial opportunity to address the pressing need for more mental health professionals in Hawai'i while also ensuring that those in training are supported and incentivized to remain in Hawai'i.

One of the most critical challenges facing our communities today is the shortage of mental health professionals here in Hawai'i. Due to this shortage, far too many individuals in Hawai'i struggle to access the mental health care and support they need. House Bill 1830 HD2 will help alleviate these issues by:

- **Supporting Graduate Students:** HB 1830 HD2 provides support for graduate students in the mental health field to remain in Hawai'i while completing their training and licensure. This encourages talented individuals to stay in Hawai'i and contribute their skills to the local community.
- **Establishing Provisional Licensure Requirements:** The bill establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, social workers, mental health counselors, and psychologists. Enabling professionals to practice under supervision earlier in their careers, increases access to timely and appropriate care.
- **Increasing Access to Services:** HB 1830 HD 2 expands access to mental health services by increasing the number of mental health professionals and allowing them to practice under supervision. This is crucial for treating individuals early on, preventing the worsening of mental health issues, and improving overall outcomes.

In conclusion, I urge you to support House Bill 1830 HD 2. By increasing the number of mental health professionals in Hawai'i, supporting graduate students, establishing provisional licensure requirements, and prioritizing early intervention, this bill represents a vital step forward in improving mental healthcare access and outcomes for all residents of our state.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Mahalo,  
Deizhanna Kaya-Abad