



## DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
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April 4 2024

### TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

#### House Bill 2042 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 2042 HD1 – Relating to Mental Health.

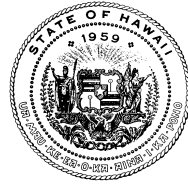
This bill appropriates funds to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State.

DCAB urges the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the Department of Health to use the appropriated funds on proven strategies and programs that serve as many youths as possible.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW  
Executive Director



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

**Testimony of Tia L.R. Hartsock  
Director, Office of Wellness and Resilience**

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
April 4, 2024, 10:15 a.m., State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**H.B. No. 2042, H.D.1, Relating to Mental Health**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** H.B. 2042 H.D.1, Relating to Mental Health so long as it does not adversely impact priorities identified in the Executive Supplemental Budget Request for FY2025. The OWR defers to the Department of Health on costs and implementation.

The OWR appreciates the legislature acknowledging the importance of addressing mental well-being amongst our youth. Without treatment, repeated childhood exposure to traumatic events can affect the brain and nervous system and increase health-risk behaviors. On top of this, with the pandemic and Maui wildfires happening close to one another, Hawai'i is facing cascading trauma, a phenomenon when traumatic events occur one on top of another making it harder for people to recover. It is vital that mental health and wellness supports are established and accessible for our youth.

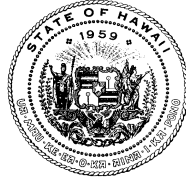
In addition, H.B. No. 2042 No. H.D.1 recognizes the importance of mental wellness programs to be community-based. We applaud this and recognize community-based programming as "peer support", one of the six-principles of trauma-informed care. Peer support is integral to the organizational and service delivery approach and is understood as a key vehicle for building trust, establishing safety, and empowerment. By passing this measure, the legislature will be taking a step to help create a more trauma-informed approach for the well-being of our youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

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



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

**Testimony COMMENTING on HB2042 HD1  
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: April 4, 2024

Room Number: 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) respectfully requests that the  
2 funding for youth mental health wellness not supplant the requests outlined in the Governor's  
3 executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department offers comments on HB2042.

5 **Department Testimony:**

6 Community-based child and adolescent mental health services can promote resilience and  
7 wellness to better withstand stresses later in life.

8 Recent disasters in Hawaii have highlighted the importance of protective factors for our youth,  
9 and community-based mental health promotion plays an important role in increasing protective  
10 factors and healthy behaviors. Psychoeducation and skill building can provide children and  
11 adolescents with the tools they need to take care of their mental health and well-being in the  
12 face of adversity.

13 Should the department receive an appropriation to contract for the provision of youth mental  
14 health and wellness services, the contract awarded would be the result of a competitive  
15 procurement process.

- 1 **Offered Amendments:** None.
- 2 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**HB 2042 HD1**  
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

April 4, 2024

10:15 a.m.

Conference Room 211

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB 2042 HD1, which would appropriate funds to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State. **This crucial piece of legislation addresses the pressing need for enhanced mental health resources for Hawai'i's youth, especially focusing on at-risk populations such as Native Hawaiians.**

This legislation underscores the dire need that OHA wishes to highlight. We understand that our Native Hawaiian youth are three times less likely to receive treatment for mental health services.<sup>1</sup> This is despite 2021 State Department of Health data that noted that Hawaiian high school students lived with depression at a nearly comparable level as the general student population. The issue is especially critical for Native Hawaiian students though as they are more likely to attempt suicide according to the same Department of Health data. Thus, the need for our youth to get mental health support can be a matter of life and death for Hawaiian families.

OHA supports the funding increased proposed in HB2042 HD1. We believe that the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) can help make a difference to address the very real needs of our community. We are especially hopeful that CAMHD uses the increased funding to support community-based and culturally relevant programs and services to the youth they serve. We appreciate that the bill mentions the dire need of our community and look forward to CAMHD's work to support our youth. By prioritizing the mental health and wellness of our youth, especially Native Hawaiians, this legislation aligns with the core values of compassion, community, and collective responsibility.

OHA defers to the Department of Health on costs and implementation. We believe that supporting the mental and emotional well-being of our keiki is a worthy investment.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mental and behavioral health - Native Hawaiians/pacific islanders. Office of Minority Health. (2019).*  
<https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/mental-and-behavioral-health-native-hawaiianspacific-islanders>



**HB 2042 HD1**  
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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However, we recognize the constraints of our state budget given the costs borne from the Maui fires.

OHA would also support the amendment DOH previously requested to include a provision ensuring any contract awards be done through a competitive process.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** HB 2042 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

April 2, 2024

TO: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Committee on Ways and Means

FR: Greg Waibel  
President and CEO  
YMCA of Honolulu

RE: TESTIMONY-HB2042, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH – SUPPORT

In a study conducted as part of the Global Burden of Disease<sup>1</sup>, mental health experts from across the country expressed a very high level of concern that we are in a second pandemic of mental health problems with not enough resources and approaches to help people. The voice of people who are seeking help include feelings of being stuck, empty, uncertain, anxious, overwhelmed, burned out, stressed, isolated, done, and depressed. The surveyed mental health professionals think the state and federal government must provide more resources.

The need is evident daily in our communities and if it continues unaddressed will cause permanent damage to youth mental health. People who have a clinical diagnosis have access to care through Medicare/Medicaid/private insurance. We know that we task our schools to do so much more than academics and students have needs that go well beyond their academics into their social/emotional supports, physical health, etc.

The mental health crisis is not one solved by one organization and one strategy alone. Just as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted many aspects of our community, the solution to this crisis will also need to be multifaceted, collaborative, and innovative. As a community-based organization that provides critical services to thousands of youth in our state, we are well positioned to meet youth “where they are” in ways that are comfortable and are relevant to the unique cultural identities of those who will be served. We approach our work with trained professionals and evidence-based practices to support the mental wellness support that our youth need. The YMCA has a track record of success in working with youth and can offer a community-based approach, providing programs to help youth at various points in their mental wellness pathway. We have been working in the mental wellness pathway in prevention and intervention for 2 years. The program that we are seeking support from the legislature has been initiated through a Federal earmark through Congressman Case in 9 DOE middle and high schools. Our DOE schools have embraced our help and we have found where our program fits within their behavior health supports. This bill would expand our reach across the state and allow us to serve additional teens in a variety of experiential and therapeutic activities to help participants develop protective factors such as self-awareness, self-esteem, social skills, appropriate coping mechanisms

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

and stress management tools to address their mental health and wellness needs. The program is conducted in person in Department of Education Schools and other community based locations where services are easily accessible and take place outside normal school hours. Program staff will conduct pre- and post-program surveys to measure participant outcomes and help them develop strategies and start habit formation for managing their mental health after completing the program. We also do social prescribing to connect participants with their passions and other youth who share their passions and interests. Participants are referred to clinically appropriate care and resources if determined necessary. We track the outcomes to ensure effectiveness. We will use pre- and post-evaluation data, participation data, along with feedback from participants and those making referrals or working with the youth in the schools, homes, and other programs to help inform improvements to the program. We have developed this curriculum and outcome measures in conjunction with mental health experts for age appropriate delivery.

Since the Y began to deliver specific mental wellness programs we have served over 1,000 youth in the prevention space. Our curriculum and protocols were developed with the help of qualified mental health professionals and in consultation with schools on best practices and proven techniques. We understand assessment and treatment models, and we are partnering with licensed clinicians to guide our approach, tools, and curriculum. We are grateful for your consideration as we all work together to ensure the mental wellness of Hawaii's youth.





## **HB2042 HD1 Funds for Youth Mental Health**

### **COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Thursday, Apr 4, 2024: 10:15: Room 211

### **Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB2042 HD1 with Amendments:**

*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.*

HSAC agrees that community-based programs must be expanded to attend to the youth behavioral health crisis following COVID's isolation.

**There is a youth crisis that services are needed for mental health, substance abuse and suicidal ideation!**

**AMENDMENTS: HSAC concurs with the Department of Health that these valuable services be awarded through a competitive process as required by the State's procurement laws.**

The YMCA pilot project last year has shown that a model of this kind can be effective to address mental health challenges as well as wellness and environmental issues.

- The pilot screened a large number of youths to help them be more aware of their mental health status, needs and preventive factors.
- Enrolled some of them in either a one-week prevention program or a 13-week intervention group program depending upon need.

Moreover, this youth service can identify, assess, and refer to kids to higher level services for needed substance abuse or mental health treatments to prevent problems before becoming more serious as adults.

With such a high number of youths having positive results, this funding to go to CAMHD would be well worth an investment into our youth's mental health.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.



## HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

Vonnell Ramos, President  
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President  
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer  
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive  
Director

### Network Membership

*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii  
Big Island Substance Abuse  
Council*

*Bobby Benson Center  
Child and Family Service  
Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii  
Collins Consulting, LLC  
Domestic Violence Action Center  
EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.*

*Family Programs Hawaii  
Family Support Hawaii  
Friends of the Children's Justice  
Center of Maui*

*Get Ready Hawaii  
Hale Kipa, Inc.  
Hale 'Opio Kaula, Inc.  
Hawaii Children's Action  
Network*

*Hawaii Health & Harm  
Reduction Center  
Hawaii Island Community  
Health Center*

*Ho'ola Na Pua  
Ho'okele Coalition of Kaula  
Ka Hale Pomaika'i  
Kahi Mohala  
Kokua Kalih Valley  
Kaula Planning and Action*

*Alliance  
Maui Youth and Family Services  
Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native  
Hawaiian Health Care  
Systems*

*P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.  
Parents and Children Together  
PHOCUSED*

*PFLAG-Kona, Big Island  
Planned Parenthood of the  
Great Northwest, Hawaii  
Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana  
Residential Youth Services  
& Empowerment (RYSE)*

*Salvation Army Family  
Intervention Services  
Sex Abuse Treatment Center  
Susannah Wesley Community  
Center  
The Catalyst Group*

April 2, 2024

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
And members of the Committee on Ways and Means

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2042 HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) strongly supports HB 2042 HD1  
Relating to Mental Health.

According to the 2021 Surgeon General's Advisory on Youth Mental  
Health, recent national surveys of young people have shown alarming  
increases in the prevalence of certain mental health challenges.

35% of middle and high school youth in Hawaii experience persistent  
depression; 7% of high school and 11% of middle school students in  
Hawaii reported having attempted suicide.

23% of middle school students report that their mental health was  
most of the time or always "not good" in the prior 30 days. Youth  
mental health issues are a risk factor for high-risk substance use.

The TeenLink Hawaii website continues to get 2,000 site visits on  
average each month. The top topics/pages visited included Suicide;  
Health and Wellness Toolkit; Sleep; Stress; Mental Health; and Self-  
Care.

A Hawaii Department of Health report using 2020 data estimates that  
11,000 of Hawaii's youth experienced at least one major depressive  
episode in the prior year. Of those who experienced a major  
depressive episode, approximately 6,000 did not receive mental  
health services in the prior year.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2042 HD1:  
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

**TO:** House Committee on Finance  
**FROM:** Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii  
**Hearing:** **Friday 04/04/2024; 10:15 AM;**  
**State Capitol Conf Rm 211 & via videoconference**

Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members, Committee on Finance

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 2042 HD1**, which provides funding to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has a long history of providing services for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD).

Enhanced mental health services are urgently needed, especially for Hawaii's youth. The effects of the pandemic have exacerbated existing challenges for today's youth, resulting in a notable increase in mental health issues. We understand that promoting youth mental wellness necessitates a holistic, community-based approach that encompasses various dimensions of well-being. We commend the efforts of the YMCA of Honolulu, who has demonstrated the effectiveness of proactive mental health programming through its pilot initiatives. The work has helped to increase awareness of mental health conditions, taught coping skills, and expanded positive support networks for participating youth.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division and their efforts to increase services throughout the state. Funding is needed to strengthen and increase capacity and expand outreach services to target the most at-risk youth.

We strongly encourage your support of this bill and seek your aid in ensuring its passage during this legislative session.

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



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822  
Phone (808) 527-4813



## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

### Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 10:15am

HB2042 HD1

#### ADVISORY BOARD

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Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means.

Mental Health America of Hawaii is in strong support of HB2042 HD1 which appropriates funds to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State.

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

#### PRO BONO LEGAL COUNSEL

Paul Alston

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Considering the ongoing youth mental health crisis resulting from the global pandemic, and now, the traumatic events of the Maui fires, the need to address youth mental health, wellness, and resilience has never been more critical. Youth are especially impacted by disasters of this scale with the most manifested conditions being trauma, depression, anxiety, and substance use, with further impact trickling down from those who take care of them. In addition to the impacts of the fire, youth were already, and continue to be, severely impacted by the pandemic, with the CDC noting that COVID-19 created traumatic stressors for youth mental wellbeing. *Evidence has demonstrated that there is a critical need for mental health and resilience education and suicide prevention programs for all youth.* Late last year, the SAMHSA released its *National Guidelines for Child and Youth Behavioral Health Crisis Care* to express the need to improve prevention efforts and crisis response for children and youth. Earlier that same year, the US Surgeon General declared a youth mental health crisis in the U.S. According to the Hawaii Department of Health's Injury Prevention and Control Sections EMS & Injury Prevention System Branch, death by suicide was the leading cause of fatal injuries in Hawaii between 2016 and 2020.

## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

During the same period, suicide was the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of fatal injury for those 0 – 15 years of age, and the 1<sup>st</sup> leading cause for those between the ages of 16 and 29.

We urge your positive review of this measure and are grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,



Bryan L. Talisayan  
Executive Director

[bryan.talisayan@mentalhealthhawaii.org](mailto:bryan.talisayan@mentalhealthhawaii.org)



# HEALANI

LAND COMPANY INC.

April 3, 2024

TO: Representative Dell Au Belatti, Chair Committee on Health and Homelessness,  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair Committee on Health and Homelessness

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB2042, which appropriates funds to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State. I am writing as both a local real estate business impacted by individuals with mental illness, a native Hawaiian non-profit working to support individuals with mental health issues, a board member of the metro YMCA, and a parent. Unfortunately we have seen an increasing need for mental health services to support our community which has been exacerbated by COVID. The YMCA has programs specifically helping youth develop the skills, tools and support system to address their mental health challenges with very positive and long-term impacts. These programs have expanded to neighbor island communities where the need is great and it would be wonderful to see these opportunities receive the required support to continue and expand. I strongly urge you to pass this much needed legislation.

Mahalo,  
Stacy Philippou  
President and CEO  
Healani Land Company

**LATE**

**HB-2042-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 11:53:37 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Ishizaka	Testifying for YMCA of Honolulu	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Ways and Means Committee Members,

My name is Kyle Ishizaka; and I provide leadership to our mental health wellness programming at the YMCA.

I'm here today asking for your support of HB 2042, which will expand Mental Health Programs statewide to provide screening, prevention, and intervention services to youth.

As a legislative body, you indicated you had 3 priorities you wanted to address in this session:

- 1) Maui Wildfire Recovery and Relief
- 2) The Issue of "Houseless-ness" and affordable housing AND
- 3) Mental Health

This bill, HB 2042 is actually a trifecta that addresses all three legislative priorities in one form or another.

Youth and adults that are "Houseless", suffer from some form of Mental Wellness issue.

Many individuals, both adults and youth, suffer emotionally, mentally, financially, and physically from the direct, as well as, indirect effects of the Maui Wildfires.

The Y currently delivers intervention level Mental Health programs to 9 DOE schools on Oahu.

Through the Maui Relief Fund, the Y has initiated and extended this Mental Health Program to three schools on Maui.

Three weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with a Principal from a Lahaina school. As we talked, I could hear how the trauma associated with the fires was impacting the youth and their families of the community. The principal shared how they went to the school, which is located above the access road/highway on the day of the fire. The school is above Lahaina on the mountainside, and the principal shared how they watched the fire go through the community below.

The principal went on to share how she appreciated that school started again in October because it was nice to hear the students in the halls laughing. A sense of normalcy was returning.

Mental Health services to teens is a component that can support youth address the trauma and issues experienced in their lives and live a life of normalcy.

This bill addresses your legislative priorities and would have a positive impact on the future of our youth.

This bill can help youth deal with issues they may face connected with becoming houseless in the future, it can further assist teens on Maui and throughout the state, and most importantly, addresses youth who need help with their mental health concerns.

Thank you



**HB-2042-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 10:40:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Benjamin Ancheta Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2042, which prioritizes the mental health of Hawaii's youth. The COVID pandemic made isolation and mental health a much larger issue for our keiki. I support mental health assessments and support for those who need it most.

**HB-2042-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 10:42:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Monty Pereira, GM and Sales & Marketing Director at Watanabe Floral and concerned citizen. I fully support this measure to appropriate funds for adequate mental health care for our youths. Covid has only exacerbated the issue of mental health in teens. As a board Chair at the Leeward YMCA and as a long time coach in our community, I see how many of our teens are struggling with some form of mental disorders. If not addressed, these issues will begin to further permeate in our schools and eventually into the workforce and community at large. Let's invest in the future of Hawaii by addressing this mounting issue impacting so many youths.

Thank you so much!

**HB-2042-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 12:51:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Aimee Malia Grace, MD, MPH, FAAP, and I am a pediatrician and health policy/public health professional writing in my individual capacity. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the national American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention.

I strongly support this bill. Our youth are facing tremendous mental health challenges, and we need to invest in community resources that are effective to help them and their families. We are blessed with a wonderful YMCA of Honolulu that needs further investments to provide these critical services.

Thank you for your support.

**LATE**

April 3, 2024

TO: House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Re: Support of House Bill 2042

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Committee on Health & Homelessness,

As a former teacher in both the Department of Education and Private schools, I ask that you support HB 2042 in appropriating funds to address the alarming data that shows our teens in distress. As we navigate through the complexities of modern technology with social media and the added stress that COVID brought, it is imperative that we, as the adults with the means, to prioritize the well-being of our youth.

We all remember our ups and downs of our teen years. However, this generation of youth are dealing with challenges that we never faced. The academic pressures and social anxieties and family conflicts during and after COVID can be seen and felt in all communities. We have witnessed a concerning rise in mental health issues which includes depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation.

Investing in our communities, in our teens mental health is not just showing compassion, but is a strategic long term investment in our future of our communities. Research has shown that early intervention and support can mitigate the long-term negative impact on teens, families and communities. With this funding, we can assist teens with better academic outcome, increase their positive impact in our communities and build healthier relationships.

Investing in teen mental health is vital to our island community. I respectfully request your support to pass HB 2042 and be a part of moving forward in laying the foundation to a healthier and more resilient future of Hawaii.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Mahalo,  
Nicole Matsumoto

**HB-2042-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 10:43:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Don Baluran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

The youth today are living and facing a different type of world today full of fear, anxiety, depression, and hopelessness with wars, mass shootings, crime, pandemic, natural disasters, etc.

The internet, social media, and negative news definitely does not help and contributes to the decline of their mental health.

Coping, communication, interpersonal, and social skills to process and manage life's circumstances are lacking and help is much needed.