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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that mental health is an  
2 essential component of the overall health and well-being of  
3 every resident of Hawaii. Unfortunately, there is a severe  
4 shortage of mental health specialists available to provide these  
5 much-needed services, particularly in rural communities and  
6 neighbor islands. This shortage has resulted in primary care  
7 physicians shouldering the responsibility of managing  
8 psychiatric patients in addition to their primary care patients.  
9 This creates an extremely volatile situation. Psychiatric  
10 patients have special needs that are more adequately addressed  
11 by professionals who specialize in psychiatry. According to the  
12 University of Hawaii department of family medicine and community  
13 health, twenty-five to twenty-eight per cent of psychiatric  
14 patients who have received psychiatric care from primary care  
15 physicians stopped therapy within one month and more than forty  
16 per cent stopped therapy within three months. Primary care



1 physicians often under-dose psychiatric patients and have  
2 difficulty with patients' adherence to therapy.

3 By encouraging a collaborative effort between primary care  
4 physicians and psychiatrists, the State can help psychiatric  
5 patients receive more effective treatment and primary care  
6 physicians receive guidance in proper dosing of psychotropic  
7 medications and therapy adherence. In addition to periodic  
8 face-to-face consultations with primary care physicians,  
9 psychiatrists could effectively reach more patients by  
10 consulting with primary care physicians via teleconferences and  
11 group lectures on psychiatric disorders and treatment such as  
12 anxiety disorders and treatment for depression.

13 The purpose of this Act is to establish a psychiatric  
14 health services pilot project to enable psychiatrists to  
15 collaborate with primary care physicians at federally qualified  
16 health centers to provide patients with needed psychiatric  
17 health care.

18 SECTION 2. **Psychiatric health services; pilot project;**  
19 **expansion.** There is established the psychiatric health services  
20 pilot project to enable psychiatrists to collaborate with  
21 primary care physicians at federally qualified health centers to  
22 provide patients with needed psychiatric health care. The pilot



1 program shall provide one psychiatrist in each of the areas of  
 2 East Hawaii, West Hawaii, Maui county, Kauai, and Oahu. The  
 3 program shall also provide up to four psychiatric residents to  
 4 work on Oahu. The program shall be placed in the department of  
 5 health for administrative purposes.

6 The department of health shall provide an annual report to  
 7 the legislature on the pilot program on January 15, 2008, 2009,  
 8 2010, and 2011.

9 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
 10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, or so  
 11 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008, for  
 12 the psychiatric health services project pursuant to this Act.

13 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
 14 health for the purposes of this Act.

15 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007, and  
 16 shall be repealed on June 30, 2010; provided that the department  
 17 of health shall provide the legislature with its final report no  
 18 later than January 15, 2011.

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INTRODUCED BY: John Green MD

JAN 23 2007



**Report Title:**

Psychiatric Health Services; Mental Health; UH

**Description:**

Establishes the psychiatric health services pilot project which enables psychiatrists to collaborate with primary care physicians at federally qualified health centers for psychiatric care to patients. Makes appropriation. Repealed 6/30/10.

