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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TELEPSYCHIATRY.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the neighbor islands  
2 and parts of Oahu lack access to specialty medical care. In  
3 particular, patients have difficulty accessing psychiatric  
4 services for various reasons, including the lack of providers  
5 willing to accept Medicaid or QUEST patients, lack of adequate  
6 insurance coverage, ineligibility for patient services under the  
7 department of health's mental health division, and the lack of  
8 psychiatry employment positions in rural areas. As a result,  
9 telehealth has begun to play a more significant role in the  
10 delivery of health care in recent years.

11           Psychiatric assessments via telepsychiatry are reliable  
12 and, based on feedback regarding telepsychiatry services  
13 provided on Molokai by Dr. Daniel Alicata and Dr. Chad Koyanagi,  
14 patients actually prefer the interactions over video-link to on-  
15 site visits. Also, the use of telepsychiatry in the treatment  
16 of depression compares well with the outcomes, patient



1 adherence, patient satisfaction, and costs of in-patient  
2 treatment.

3 The department of psychiatry at the University of Hawaii  
4 currently has a telepsychiatry project underway on Molokai and  
5 Maui. Other underserved areas are requesting similar  
6 telepsychiatry services in their communities. An important  
7 component of the project is the learning segment. Participating  
8 residents will work within the modality for a period of one to  
9 two years. The goal is to eventually increase the number of  
10 telepsychiatry providers in the private sector and to broaden  
11 the use of telepsychiatry, generally, to better serve patients  
12 statewide.

13 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 14 (1) Expand the telepsychiatry project to other underserved  
15 areas and to involve advanced graduate psychiatric  
16 residents in the provision of the services; and  
17 (2) Appropriate funds for the expansion of the project.

18 SECTION 2. (a) The University of Hawaii shall expand its  
19 existing telepsychiatry project, which is currently sited at the  
20 community clinic of Maui and Molokai general hospital, to:

- 21 (1) Include other underserved areas, including rural  
22 Kauai, Hawaii, and rural Oahu; and



- 1           (2) Enable advanced graduate psychiatry residents to  
2           provide telepsychiatry services under the supervision  
3           of faculty of the department of psychiatry.
- 4           (b) In addition, the University of Hawaii shall:
- 5           (1) Intersperse on-site visits with the provision of the  
6           telepsychiatry services; and
- 7           (2) Transmit the telepsychiatry services between the  
8           receiving sites and the department of psychiatry using  
9           video teleconferencing equipment and ISDN lines.
- 10          (c) The University of Hawaii shall submit to the  
11          legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
12          the 2008 regular session, an interim report evaluating the  
13          expanded telepsychiatry project using measurable criteria. The  
14          University of Hawaii shall submit to the legislature no later  
15          than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2009 regular  
16          session, a final report evaluating the expanded telepsychiatry  
17          project using measurable criteria, including any proposed  
18          legislation.

19          SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
20          revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1 or so much thereof  
21          as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008 and the same sum  
22          or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009



1 for the University of Hawaii to expand its existing  
2 telepsychiatry project.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the University  
4 of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007, and  
6 shall be repealed on June 30, 2009.



**Report Title:**

Health; Telepsychiatry

**Description:**

Requires and appropriates funds for the University of Hawaii to expand its existing telepsychiatry project to rural Oahu, rural Kauai, and Hawaii, and to involve advanced graduate psychiatric residents in the provision of the services. (HB202 HD1)

