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February 11, 2016

TO: The Honorable Senator Breene Harimoto, Chair  
Senate Committee on Housing

The Honorable Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB 2090 – RELATING TO HOUSING**

Hearing: Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 2:45 p.m.  
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

**POSITION:** The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports this measure, provided that passage of this bill does not replace or adversely impact priorities identified in the Executive Budget. The Coordinator asks for the Legislature's support of the Executive Budget request, which includes \$3 million for Housing First.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to continue to administer the Housing First program, and to expand the Housing First program outside of Oahu, for chronically homeless individuals.

Housing First is an essential tool to address the needs of chronically homeless households and connect them quickly to permanent supportive housing. The state's Housing First program has permanently housed 106 chronically homeless persons since July 2014, including many individuals with serious and persistent mental illness and chronic health conditions.

The state Housing First program has not only provided housing for these individuals, but has also stabilized their health conditions and significantly reduced healthcare costs. A preliminary analysis by the University of Hawaii Center on the Family

of a subset of state Housing First clients found that estimated healthcare costs for clients dropped an average of 43% in the six months following housing placement – from an average of \$10,570 per client per month to \$5,980 per client per month. While the program is currently limited to Oahu, there is a need for Housing First statewide. This measure would enable statewide expansion of the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



## Community Health Outreach Work

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### TESTIMONY in STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2090: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Senator Breene Harimoto, Chair and Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice Chair, Committee on Housing  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair and Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair, Committee on judiciary and labor

FROM: Heather Lusk, Executive Director, CHOW Project

Hearing: Thursday, February 11, 2016 2:45 PM Conference Room 225

Dear Chair Harimoto, Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee:

The CHOW Project is in strong support of SB2090 which would appropriate 3 million for Housing First. As you know, Hawaii has the HIGHEST rate of homelessness among states in the U.S. and resources to connect the homeless to services through outreach are an essential component of our continuum of care. The Community Health Outreach Work (CHOW) Project is dedicated to serving individuals, families, and communities adversely affected by drug use, through a participant-centered harm reduction approach. CHOW works to reduce drug related harms such as but not limited to HIV, hepatitis B/C and overdose.

CHOW is proud to be a member of Partners in Care, the Oahu Homeless Service Provider Coalition and we have been very active in the role out of Housing First and have found it has been very successful at brining stability to some of our most chronically homeless clients. Our community is stronger because of programs like Housing First and support for their case management activities will only make them more effective.

- ***Cost Savings for Hawaii:*** A preliminary report on the clients within the State's Housing First program and receiving additional case management through the Hawaii Pathways Project saw a reduction in estimated net savings in healthcare costs of \$2,370 per month—a 43% DECREASE in costs in just a 6 month period
- This Hawaii study found that after deducting the cost of rental subsidies (\$1,100/mo) and supportive services (\$1,120/mo), the net savings was estimate at \$2,370 per client/month. Total savings per year for each stably housed client would be about **\$28,440 per client.**

**Housing First is evidence-based – we know it works! Please support SB 2090!**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony,  
Heather Lusk  
Executive Director CHOW Project

## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

February 10, 2016

TO:

Senator Breene Harimoto, Chair, Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice Chair,  
and the members of the Senate Committee on Housing

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair, Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro,  
Vice Chair, and the members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and  
Labor

FROM: Trisha Kajimura, Executive Director

**RE : Testimony in support of SB 2090, Relating to Housing**

HEARING AT: Thursday, February 11, 2016 2:45 pm CR 225

Thank you for hearing SB 2090, which appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to continue to administer the Housing First program and expand it outside of Oahu. **Mental Health America of Hawaii supports SB 2090.**

Mental Health America of Hawaii is a 501(c)3 organization founded in Hawaii over 70 years ago that serves the community by promoting mental health through advocacy, education and service.

The Housing First program is an evidence-based program making great strides in our community to house the chronically homeless. Putting the chronically homeless in their own units with wrap-around services to help them stay housed and start addressing their mental health and substance abuse issues saves the state the cost of emergency care and hospitalization that this group utilizes at a high rate. Funding for this program will help current clients stay housed and also bring more vulnerable and very sick people off of the streets.

The issue of chronic homelessness is not unique to Oahu and the neighbor islands also need this service. Mental Health America of Hawaii supports the funding of the Housing First program at an annual rate of at least \$3 million, preferably in the base budget, with services initiated on neighbor islands in addition to Oahu.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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February 11, 2016

To: Senator Breene Harimoto, Chair  
Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Housing

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director  
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **SB 2090, Relating to Housing - Support**  
**Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225 – February 11, 2016 – 2:45 PM**

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**On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), formerly Good Beginnings Alliance, we are writing in support of SB 2090, Relating to Housing.**

HCAN is committed to improving lives and being a strong voice advocating for Hawai'i's children. Last fall, HCAN convened input in person and online from more than 50 organizations and individuals that came forward to support or express interest for a number of issues affecting children and families in our state that resulted in the compilation of 2016 Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2016policyagenda>.

HCAN supports SB2090, which appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to continue to administer housing first program, and to expand the Housing First Program outside of Oahu, for chronically homeless individuals. However, we really need a comprehensive approach provide funds for not just Housing First. We need funding for the Rental Housing Fund, the modernization of the state's stock of public housing units, and Rental Housing Assistance Program, and other programs that help families secure safe and stable housing.

We need stable funding sources that address the chronic housing shortage and bridge the economic gap for families to afford safe and secure housing, especially those with young children. Without state investments, we could see our state continue to lead the nation in growing rates for homelessness and unsafe and unstable housing.

**Homeless Children:** Hawaii has the highest homeless rate in the nation. It's estimated that one-third of the homeless in Hawaii are children.

**Unstable Housing:** Many of our families may not be living on the street or the beach, yet they don't have permanent housing -- they stay with friends and family -- moving frequently.

**High cost of housing for families:** 60 percent of households with young children in Hawaii pay more than 30% of their income for housing.

According to a 2012 report published by Child Trends, children who experience a high degree of instability and turbulence in their lives are more likely to suffer higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems. Children who are homeless may suffer from hunger, poor physical and emotional health, and missed educational opportunities. According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, children who are homeless are twice as likely to go hungry as are children who are not homeless. Homeless children are more likely than other children to have moderate to severe acute and chronic health problems, and less access to medical and dental care. Symptoms of asthma, hyperactivity/inattention, and behavior problem are more prevalent among this group. Homeless children have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems, such as anxiety, depression, sleep problems, withdrawal and aggression. Children without stable homes are more than twice as likely as others to repeat a school grade, be expelled or suspended, or drop out of high school. A quarter or more of homeless children have witnessed violence.

We need solutions and outcomes for our most vulnerable populations. Let's help our state build a comprehensive affordable housing solution to families and keiki in our state build a pathway toward greater economic stability and a healthier thriving community.

**For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee vote to pass this bill.**



PROTECTING HAWAII'S OHANA, CHILDREN, UNDER SERVED, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

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TO: Senator Breene Harimoto, Chair  
Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice-Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Housing  
Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

FROM: Scott Fuji, Executive Director, PHOCUSED

HEARING: **Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 2:45 p.m. in Conf. Rm. 225**

**Testimony in Support of SB2090 RELATING TO HOUSING**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of SB2090, which appropriates funds to the department of human services to continue to administer the housing first program and expand it outside of Oahu. PHOCUSED is a nonprofit membership and advocacy organization that works together with community stakeholders to impact program and policy change for the most vulnerable in our community, including homeless individuals and families.

Homelessness in Hawaii requires a multitude of interventions and one that has shown sustained success is the Housing First program. Housing First combines an on-going rent subsidy with wrap-around case management. Currently the State's Housing First program on Oahu has housed some of Hawaii's most vulnerable and long-term homeless families and individuals with an over 95% retention rate for their clients.

Another important fact to take into consideration is that Housing First reduces the public cost of homelessness. Multiple National studies show that placing homeless individuals and families into permanent housing can reduce their healthcare costs by over 50%, in some instances like LA reducing it by as much as \$80,000. In Hawaii a preliminary estimate of households in the State's Housing First Program and Hawaii Pathways Project showed an estimated health savings reduction of \$2,370 per month; more than enough to cover the cost of their case management and housing costs.

Once again, PHOCUSED strongly urges your support of this bill. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact PHOCUSED at 521-7462 or by e-mail at [admin@phocused-hawaii.org](mailto:admin@phocused-hawaii.org).