

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony SUPPORTING SB2560, S. D. 1
Relating to Mental Health

SENATOR JILL N. TOKUDA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Hearing Date: February 29, 2016, 9:15 a.m. Room Number: 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined at this time.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports this measure and would
3 like to offer comments.

4 The DOH's mission is to focus on individuals with serious and persistent mental illnesses
5 (SPMI) who are forensically encumbered, uninsured, or who live in rural areas with very limited
6 access to mental health services.

7 The DOH already provides substantial, significant services to individuals who are
8 homeless. We do this through our administration of a Federal Grant, our homeless outreach
9 contracts, and through our many other programs which, in providing general safety net support
10 for individuals with mental health challenges, help to get and keep people in housing. We
11 provide these services with the collaboration of other state agency partners and the provider
12 community. It is a shared responsibility with many others.

13 One potential concern is the bill may conflate the issue of homelessness and mental
14 health services. The reasons people are homeless are complex, it is not just about mental health

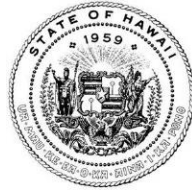
1 supports. It is about the affordable housing shortage, poverty, and access to health care, to name
2 a few reasons. Homeless people may qualify for or have health insurance to cover medically
3 needed mental health supports. Many individuals who are homeless may have mental health
4 challenges, but it is not clear that they have SPMI or would generally qualify for DOH mental
5 health continuing supports.

6 The bill should clearly specify and focus on individuals with SPMI challenges and for
7 whom these challenges prevent the person from obtaining housing and residing successfully in
8 the community. The DOH's Adult Mental Health Division's (AMHD) resources may need to be
9 reallocated to fund this service.

10 The DOH continues to discuss with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and other
11 partners regarding roles, health insurance access, and to review appropriations for housing,
12 community based support services and resources, with goals of continued collaboration.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

14 **Offered Amendments:** None.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 29, 2016

TO: The Honorable Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: SB 2560 SD1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Hearing: Monday, February 29, 2016, 9:15 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget. The Coordinator defers to the Department of Health (DOH) regarding specific details relating to the administration and implementation of the proposed services for homeless individuals with serious and persistent mental health challenges.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds for the DOH to provide treatment and care for homeless individuals with serious and persistent mental health challenges as a part of its comprehensive mental health system.

The Coordinator notes that this measure includes specific language to address homeless outreach services for homeless individuals with serious and persistent mental health challenges. Both DOH and the Department of Human Services (DHS) currently contract nonprofit organizations to provide homeless outreach, including services specifically targeted for individuals with serious and persistent mental health challenges. The Coordinator notes that DOH and DHS work closely together to align and target their services for homeless individuals, and asks for the Legislature's support of the Governor's Executive Budget request, which includes \$2 million to DHS for homeless outreach services.

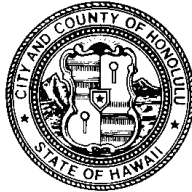
The Coordinator also notes that this measure is in alignment with Goal 1, Objective 1 of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, which is to “Refocus homeless services into a crisis response system that prevents homelessness and rapidly returns people experiencing homelessness to stable housing.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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KIRK CALDWELL
MAYOR



GARY K. NAKATA
DIRECTOR

BARBARA YAMASHITA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TESTIMONY OF GARY K. NAKATA, DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2016 – 9:15 A.M.
Conference Room 211

SENATE Bill 2560, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Position: Support

TO: The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 2560 requires and appropriates funds for the Department of Health to provide treatment, care, and outreach for individuals with serious and persistent mental health challenges experiencing homelessness as a part of its comprehensive mental health system. The Department of Community Services supports this effort to better address the needs of this vulnerable population.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 768-7760.



HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

SB2560 SD1 TREATMENT FOR HOMELESS WITH SEVERE AND PERSISTENT MENTAL ILLNESS

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS: Senator Tokuda, Chair; Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

- Monday, February 29, 2016 at 9:15 a.m.
- Conference Room 211

HSAC Supports SB2560 SD1:

Good Morning Chair Tokuda; Vice Chair Dela Cruz, And Distinguished Committee Members. My name is Alan Johnson, Chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition, an organization of more than thirty treatment and prevention agencies across the State.

Effective, appropriate and accessible treatment for homeless people addresses substance use disorders because many homeless experience multiple, complex needs and often encounter significant barriers in receiving the services they need.¹

DrugFacts

- Many people who suffer from mental illness are addicted to drugs. People who suffer from mood and anxiety disorders are roughly twice as likely to be addicted to drugs. The interactions between mental illness and drug addiction can worsen the course of both. Moreover, drug addiction results in compulsive behaviors that weaken the ability to control impulses, despite the negative consequences.²
- These comorbid disorders share risk factors: overlapping genetic vulnerabilities, overlapping environmental triggers such as stress and trauma, involvement of similar brain regions, and both are developmental disorders that often begin in younger years.
- Addressing the whole person's needs in their environment must include a homeless person's substance-related issues.

¹ Providing Treatment for Homeless People with Substance Use Disorders (2003) Suzanne Zerger, Ken Kraybill, National Health Care for the Homeless Council. <http://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/CA05RCasestudies-FINAL5.pdf>

² National Institute of Drug Addiction: Drug Facts: Comorbidity: Addiction and Other Mental Disorders (2011). <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/comorbidity-addiction-other-mental-disorders>

- Best practices provide interdisciplinary teams that are typically made up of medical, mental health, substance use, and social service providers. Providers work collaboratively to address all aspects of the homeless person's care.



A continuum of comprehensive services is needed to address serious and persistent mental health by prioritizing access to appropriate housing as well as providing comprehensive, well-integrated, client-centered services with uniquely-qualified staff that includes the specific approaches for substance use disorders.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify and are available for questions.