



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

**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 0035 H.D.1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN M. MIZUNO, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date and Time: Thursday, January 30th, 2020 at 9:00a.m

Room: 329

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health ("Department") strongly supports this
2 measure and offers the following testimony.

3 **Department Testimony:** The subject matter of this measure intersects with the scope of the
4 Department's Behavioral Health Administration ("BHA") whose statutory mandate is to assure a
5 comprehensive statewide behavioral health care system by leveraging and coordinating public,
6 private and community resources. Through the BHA, the Department is committed to carrying
7 out this mandate by reducing silos, ensuring behavioral health care is readily accessible, and
8 person centered. The BHA's Adult Mental Health Division ("AMHD") provides the following
9 testimony on behalf of the Department.

10 The Department strongly supports the use of expenditures from the Mental Health and
11 Substance Abuse Special Fund in order to support capital improvement projects which include:
12 1) sub-acute stabilization beds, also known as crisis stabilization beds, and 2) sustaining existing
13 program operations. Sub-acute stabilization facilities have been a critical missing component of
14 the state's continuum of care. These services are designed to assist individuals experiencing
15 behavioral health crisis and first responders, such as law enforcement, in effectively managing
16 and mitigating their impact. Individuals who live with behavioral health issues have better
17 outcomes when they receive the appropriate level of care depending on their clinical needs and
18 assist them in achieving community reintegration and long-term community tenure.

1 The Department, in collaboration with state agency partners through the task force and
2 working group of Act 90 and Act 263 Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, recognizes that the lack of
3 short-term stabilization services throughout the state creates unnecessary burdens on
4 emergency departments, law enforcement, and individuals living with behavioral health issues.
5 Long-term mental health recovery and community reintegration can be achieved through
6 appropriate clinical intervention and consistent flow through a care continuum based on clinical
7 need and level of care.

8 Short-term residential stabilization beds provide a sub-acute level of care for individuals
9 whose behavioral health issues do not meet medically necessary criteria for acute
10 hospitalization but whose presentation and current medical status are not conducive or
11 appropriate for community-based services such as low intensity residential, or outpatient
12 services.

13 Utilizing the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Special Fund to support new capital
14 improvement projects, including sub-acute stabilization services, and to sustain existing
15 program operations will enhance the state's current care continuum by, for example, helping to
16 reduce unnecessary emergency department admissions, promoting jail diversion opportunities,
17 and better assisting individuals with behavioral health issues to be appropriately triaged
18 through a coordinated care continuum.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

20 **Offered Amendments:** None.

21 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined.

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 12:21:50 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Patrick F. Hurney	Habitat for Humanity Hawaii Island, Inc.	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha from Big Island,

I strongly support HB35! HB 35 relating to mental health will expand the maximum time a client can stay in the hospital to stabilize before going back to the streets.

Mahalo

Patrick Hurney

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 12:52:15 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Deges	Hawaii Island HIV/AIDS Foundation	Support	Yes

Comments:

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 9:15:52 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Julie Yurie Takishima- Lacasa	Hawai'i Psychological Association	Support	No

Comments:

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 10:14:20 AM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laura Wallen	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 10:10:42 AM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Toni Symons	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill! We have a crisis and it needs to be addressed now. Thank you for your work.

Toni Symons

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 1:20:11 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Greg Knudsen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB35 HD1-Proposed is needed to provide crisis stabilization beds for individuals suffering from severe mental illnesses. I'm a volunteer with the National Alliance on Mental Illness-Hawaii (NAMI-Hawaii). As a board member, Family-to-Family Education Course teacher, and a Family Support Group facilitator, I often hear from family caregivers that their loved ones are released from medical facilities too early and without followup services due to high costs and lack of hospital beds.

While this HB35 HD1-Proposed is needed, the original HB35 introduced in 2019 is also very much needed to make it easier to provide medical attention to individuals who are incapable of making decisions on their own or who are unaware of their illness. I encourage further amendments to include HB35's original intent to restore the "gravely disabled" and "obviously ill" categories to criteria for involuntary hospitalization (which were deleted by Act 221, 2013) and increase maximum emergency hospitalization from 48 to 72 hours.

Mahalo,

Greg Knudsen

395-3725, knudsen123@gmail.com

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 8:08:22 AM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
k epstein	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This measure will give an important tool for family members desperate to get help before difficulties in the home escalate to dire and possibly dangerous situations. Thank you.

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 9:03:01 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Steven P. Katz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this measure because currently it is far too difficult for people with severe mental illness such as schizoaffective disorder, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder to get help. Part of this disease is not knowing you have. I am a psychotherapist and my adult son has been trying to cope with this disease for ten years. He has been homeless, and he often refuses treatment. I just came from the Windward NAMI support group which I facilitate every month at Castle Medical Center. All of us have experienced the impossible and tortuous task of trying to get help for our loved ones who do not want treatment. They often end up in jail because of this, where they also don't get treatment. This bill is a step in the right direction. Aloha, Steven P. Katz, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, currently an Advisor to NAMI Hawaii

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 2:55:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Vernessa Perry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Vernessa Perry, I am a mother of three, my eldest is 23 years old and I have been his caretaker since he was diagnosed with Schizophrenia at 19. Truthfully, there is nothing I could write in this testimony to demonstrate the full capacity of having a child (minor/adult) with a persistent mental illness. It is agonizingly difficult to observe someone you love greatly, struggling to cope with daily life, relationships, paranoia, isolation, as well as all the little things we take for granted that we are capable. However, working over the years struggling to find truly effective mental health care and housing (be it decent facilities/ hospitals/ group homes) has proven to be dissapointingly problematic. Hawaii does not allot financially for the people of our state who suffer from mental illness. I've developed relationships with a number of individuals employed by Family Court including a judge who've expressed their own frustration in Hawaii's regard and level of care for our mentally ill in comparison to states such as Maine, Massachusettes, etc. Slowly with each year we are paying for it. What is happening to our families here, our homelessness, the financial burden of emergency care is proof of that. We are not a mentally healthy state and foregoing care facilities those years ago was a huge mistake. Through the years of doing the best that I can in continuing to support my son, NAMI, other parents/families coping with this, we are all desperately having faith that the people that can truly make changes happen, make them happen. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

LATE

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 3:10:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
LaVerne Tolmie	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/c98f289b7769701a162ab786a/files/5f7f25d7-2ac5-47be-b2fc-825efab0d61e/HB1949_Testimony_012820.pdf

LATE

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 5:49:33 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Eric Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This is an innovative proactive bill! Whoever drafted this should be commended. However, a pertinent issue that needs to be addressed is why our Crisis Intervention Team was not activated with the Hibicus Drive incident? According to the Star Advertiser, Hanel was threatening people 5 years ago! We can have wonderful programs like this proposed one in place but if it cannot be accessed on the front line then all the work establishing a facility like this is for naught. Janice Morrow spent two days pleading for help from the State and County police. We can get caught up the the intricate details of legal debate and miss the forrest from the trees. The balance of personal rights has swung too far on one end of the spectrum and as a result, people have died. Let's work together with Aloha to fix our broken system first. Then develop this programs so that those wonderful people will not have died in vain. Can legislation be put in place to make sure this program effectively utilized?

Eric Lee M.A.

LATE

HB-35

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 8:19:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Aaron Wallen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This bill is extremely important for those persons that suffer from mental illness that lack the capacity to understand their need for medical treatment, which if the person does not receive such treatment may be a danger to others and themselves. Please pass this important bill.