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**STATE OF HAWAII  
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**Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

**Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Monday, June 29, 2020  
2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329**

**On the following measure:  
S.B. 2877, S.D. 1, H.D. 2, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

My name is Charlene Tamanaha, and I am the Licensing Administrator of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division. The Department supports this administration bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) clarify that the practicum internship experience requirement shall be included with the course work in counseling requirement for mental health counselors; (2) clarify the supervision requirements of licensure for mental health counselors by permitting applicants to fulfill all or part of their face-to-face clinical supervision requirement by videoconference; and (3) clarify that the supervised mental health practicum intern experience requirement is a total of 300 hours of supervised client contact across two academic terms.

The Department's Mental Health Counselor Licensing Program (Program) is the only jurisdiction that includes the practicum internship requirement as a separate,

standalone requirement rather than include it with the course work in counseling requirement. As such, all applicants for a Hawaii mental health counselor license must provide 54 semester hours or 82 quarter hours of course work training, versus the national licensing standard of 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours in course work in counseling.

This bill makes the practicum internship requirement a part of the course work in counseling requirement, thereby aligning the Program's licensing requirements with the national licensing standards of 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours in course work in counseling.

This bill also streamlines post-graduate experience requirements by allowing the supervision requirement to be fulfilled, in part or whole, through videoconference. Currently, Hawaii Revised Statutes section 453D-7(a)(3) requires post-graduate experience of 3,000 hours, including 100 hours of face-to-face supervision. Due to the prevalence of online courses through accredited universities and colleges, allowing the face-to-face supervision requirement to be completed through videoconference allows applicants some flexibility in completing their post-graduate work experience with both the supervisor and clinic or facility of their choice. This also eases the applicants' burden of always needing a face-to-face, in-person meeting with the supervisor, particularly in the case of neighbor island candidates who work in clinics on the neighbor islands and who need to communicate with supervisors on Oahu.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, more individuals need mental health services because they are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, isolation, and loneliness. By aligning Hawaii's license requirements for mental health counselors with national standards, this bill will provide an opportunity for more individuals to become licensed and provide much-needed mental health services to the residents of this state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and we respectfully ask the Committee to pass this administration bill.



Monday, June 29, 2020

Senate Bill 2877 SD1 HD2  
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

The Democratic Part of Hawai'i (The Party) stands in **support of SB2877 SD1 HD2** Relating to Mental Health Counselors, which clarifies that the practicum internship experience requirement is to be included with the course work in counseling requirement for mental health counselors. Permits applicants to fulfill all or part of their face-to-face clinical supervision requirement by a videoconference service.

Given the geography of the state of Hawai'i and the low number of qualified mental health professionals available in some of the more rural areas, this clarification to the licensure requirement, (allowing clinical supervision to take place via HIPAA compliant modes of technology), will in fact increase the amount of professional who can obtain licensure, thereby increasing access to behavioral health services to the residents of the state of Hawai'i. There have been many studies conducted on the effectiveness of Tele-supervision, and it began being implemented in states with rural geography in 2016.

"Clinical supervision is integral to continuing professional development of health professionals. With advances in technology, clinical supervision too can be undertaken using mediums such as videoconference, email and teleconference. This mode of clinical supervision is termed as telesupervision. While telesupervision could be useful in any context, it's value is amplified for health professionals working in rural and remote areas where access to supervisors within the local work environment is often diminished."

Hawai'i already struggles with attracting and keeping mental health professionals for a myriad of reasons. Let's focus on removing the barriers, not creating them.

It is for these reasons that we encourage a favorable vote on this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Josh Frost  
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Zahava Zaidoff  
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214782917300131>

**SB-2877-HD-2**

Submitted on: 6/27/2020 11:29:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 6/29/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bryan Kim, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Sylvia Luke and the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Bryan Kim, PhD, and I'm a Professor of Psychology and the Director of MA Program in Counseling Psychology (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling) at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. I am writing in most strong support of SB2877 SD1 HD2. The proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to the graduates of our MA Program, as these graduates are trained to be eligible for this license. The current version of the law accidentally placed the 6-credit fieldwork requirement ("Practicum Intern Experience" with a total of 300 direct client hours) as a separate requirement from the 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby changing the overall requirement to 54 credits. As the intent of the law was to require a 48-credit training, which is consistent with the licensing laws of other states, SB2877 SD1 HD1 will fix this important flaw.

Also, we strongly recommend that the bill should change the wording on page 4, line 3, which references the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), from "DSM-IV" to "DSM." The IV refers to the edition of the DSM to be used by mental health providers, and is updated once every several years, including the edition designation. By changing the designation from DSM-IV to DSM, the bill keeps the law current without requiring the statute to be changed on a periodic basis.

Furthermore, I request that the law be amended in Section (J), to read "At least two academic terms of supervised mental health practicum intern experience for graduate credit of at least six semester hours or ten quarter hours in a mental health counseling setting, with **a total of** three hundred hours of supervised client contact." The law needs to be clear that the 300 hours are the total accrued hours across two semesters.

All of these changes and the bill's allowance of telehealth will greatly assist in meeting the growing mental health needs of Hawaii, especially given the enormous psychological stress caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic. Please, I most strongly encourage you to pass this important bill.

Sincerely,

Bryan S. K. Kim, PhD



June 27, 2020

Dear Chair Sylvia Luke and the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Leah Ledward. I am writing in most strong support of SB2877 SD1 HD2. The proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to the graduates of our MA Program, as these graduates are trained to be eligible for this license. The current version of the law accidentally placed the 6-credit fieldwork requirement ("Practicum Intern Experience" with a total of 300 direct client hours) as a separate requirement from the 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby changing the overall requirement to 54 credits. As the intent of the law was to require a 48-credit training, which is consistent with the licensing laws of other states, SB2877 SD1 HD2 will fix this important flaw.

Also, we strongly recommend that the bill should change the wording on page 6, line 8, which references the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), from "DSM-IV" to "DSM." The IV refers to the edition of the DSM to be used by mental health providers, and is updated once every several years, including the edition designation. By changing the designation from DSM-IV to DSM, the bill keeps the law current without requiring the statute to be changed on a periodic basis.

Furthermore, I request that the law be amended in Section (J), to read "At least two academic terms of supervised mental health practicum intern experience for graduate credit of at least six semester hours or ten quarter hours in a mental health counseling setting, with **a total of** three hundred hours of supervised client contact." The law needs to be clear that the 300 hours are the total accrued hours across two semesters.

All of these changes and the bill's allowance of telehealth will greatly assist in meeting the growing mental health needs of Hawaii, especially given the enormous psychological stress caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic. Please, I most strongly urge you to pass this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leah Ledward".

Leah Ledward, MA, LMHC



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

**LATE**

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Monday, June 29, 2020 at 2:00 p.m., Rm 329

By  
Bonnie Irwin  
Chancellor  
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

### SB 2877 SD1 HD2 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 2877 SD1 HD2. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) writes in strong support of this bill. The proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to our graduates in the Masters of Arts Program in Counseling Psychology (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling), as they are trained to be eligible for this license. The current version of the law unintentionally placed the 6-credit fieldwork requirement ("Practicum Intern Experience" with a total of 300 direct client hours) as a separate requirement from the 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby changing the overall requirement to 54 credits. As the intent of the law was to require a 48-credit training, which is consistent with the licensing laws of other states, SB 2877 SD1 HD2 will fix this important flaw.

In addition, we strongly support the proposed language change in HRS §453D-7(a)(1)(F), on page 6, line 8, which references the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), from "DSM-IV" to "DSM." The "IV" refers to the edition of the DSM to be used by mental health providers, and is updated once every several years, including the edition designation. By changing the designation from DSM-IV to DSM, the bill keeps the law current without requiring the statute to be changed on a periodic basis.

Furthermore, we request that the law be amended in Section (J), to read "At least two academic terms of supervised mental health practicum intern experience for graduate credit of at least six semester hours or ten quarter hours in a mental health counseling setting, with **a total of** three hundred hours of supervised client contact." The law needs to be clear that the 300 hours are the total accrued hours across two semesters.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony and fully support this bill.

**LATE**

**SB-2877-HD-2**

Submitted on: 6/29/2020 12:09:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 6/29/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrew N. Polloi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Sylvia Luke and the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Andrew Ngiratewid Polloi. I am writing in most strong support of SB2877 SD1 HD2. The proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to the graduates of the MA Program at UH Hilo , as these graduates are trained to be eligible for this license. The current version of the law accidentally placed the 6-credit fieldwork requirement ("Practicum Intern Experience" with a total of 300 direct client hours) as a separate requirement from the 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby changing the overall requirement to 54 credits. As the intent of the law was to require a 48-credit training, which is consistent with the licensing laws of other states, SB2877 SD1 HD2 will fix this important flaw.

Also, we strongly recommend that the bill should change the wording on page 6, line 8, which references the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), from "DSM-IV" to "DSM." The IV refers to the edition of the DSM to be used by mental health providers, and is updated once every several years, including the edition designation. By changing the designation from DSM-IV to DSM, the bill keeps the law current without requiring the statute to be changed on a periodic basis.

Furthermore, I request that the law be amended in Section (J), to read "At least two academic terms of supervised mental health practicum intern experience for graduate credit of at least six semester hours or ten quarter hours in a mental health counseling setting, with **a total of** three hundred hours of supervised client contact." The law needs to be clear that the 300 hours are the total accrued hours across two semesters.

All of these changes and the bill's allowance of telehealth will greatly assist in meeting the growing mental health needs of Hawaii, especially given the enormous psychological stress caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic. Please, I most strongly urge you to pass this important bill.

Sincerely,

Andrew Ngiratewid Polloi