
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that in Hawaii, on
2 average, one person dies by suicide every two days. Suicide is
3 the fourth leading cause of death for children between the ages
4 of ten and fourteen and is the leading cause of death for young
5 people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. In Hawaii,
6 suicide accounts for twenty-five per cent of all fatal injuries.

7 Suicide rates vary by area, with neighbor island and rural
8 communities seeing higher rates than urban areas. In 2019, the
9 statewide suicide rate was 14.8 deaths for every one hundred
10 thousand individuals. From 2017 to 2019, for every one hundred
11 thousand people, the counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui had
12 21.4, 22.0, and 18.4 suicide deaths, respectively. The city and
13 county of Honolulu's suicide rate, at 10.7 deaths for every one
14 hundred thousand people, was slightly lower than the state
15 average.

16 According to the department of health, the percentage of
17 teenagers in Hawaii who consider death by suicide and the



1 percentage of teenagers who attempt suicide are among the
2 highest in the nation. For the period from 2005 to 2013, the
3 percentage of high school-aged children with suicide ideation in
4 Hawaii ranged from sixteen to twenty per cent. For the same
5 time period, the percentage of high school-aged children treated
6 for a suicide attempt never dipped below three per cent.

7 The legislature further finds that suicide attempts, like
8 suicide deaths, have harmful, lasting, and profound impacts on
9 families and communities. For every person that dies by
10 suicide, more than thirty others attempt suicide. The
11 legislature is concerned with the health, safety, and welfare of
12 all the people of Hawaii, including military personnel,
13 veterans, and visitors.

14 The purpose of this Act is to establish the prevent suicide
15 Hawaii task force under the department of health.

16 SECTION 2. (a) There is established the prevent suicide
17 Hawaii task force, to be placed within the department of health
18 for administrative purposes. The task force shall:

- 19 (1) Undertake a study to develop general and specific
20 policies and procedures necessary to improve the
21 manner in which suicide prevention is conducted in the



1 State. Specifically, the task force shall consider
2 the goals, themes, and formal objectives of the
3 strategic plan to reduce suicides in Hawaii by at
4 least twenty-five percent by 2025 for the purpose of
5 identifying action items to develop proposed
6 legislation to be submitted to the legislature prior
7 to each regular session;

8 (2) Monitor implementation of the strategic plan, as well
9 as submit annual reports to the legislature on the
10 progress, challenges, and recommendations for
11 adjustments; and

12 (3) Examine, evaluate, and determine methods to improve
13 education, awareness, support services, and outreach
14 to best prevent suicides in Hawaii.

15 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

16 (1) One representative of the Joint Military Suicide
17 Prevention Taskforce, to be invited by the governor;

18 (2) One representative of the Substance Abuse and Mental
19 Health Services Administration of the United States
20 Department of Health and Human Services, to be invited
21 by the governor;



- 1 (3) One representative of the department of education, to
2 be selected by the superintendent of education;
- 3 (4) One representative of the department of public safety,
4 to be selected by the director of public safety;
- 5 (5) One representative of the department of human
6 services, to be selected by the director of human
7 services;
- 8 (6) One representative of the judiciary, to be selected by
9 the chief justice of the Hawaii supreme court;
- 10 (7) The suicide prevention coordinator for the department
11 of health;
- 12 (8) One representative of the department of health's
13 injury prevention and control section, to be selected
14 by the director of health;
- 15 (9) One representative of the department of psychiatry of
16 the John A. Burns school of medicine, to be selected
17 by the dean of the John A. Burns school of medicine;
- 18 (10) One representative of each county, to be appointed by
19 the governor;



- 1 (11) One representative of the Youth Suicide Prevention
2 Leadership Council, to be selected by the president of
3 the senate;
- 4 (12) One representative of the Youth Suicide Prevention
5 Leadership Council, to be selected by the speaker of
6 the house of representatives;
- 7 (13) One representative of the American Foundation for
8 Suicide Prevention Hawaii Chapter, to be invited by
9 the governor;
- 10 (14) One representative to be selected by the executive
11 director of Mental Health America of Hawaii, to be
12 invited by the governor;
- 13 (15) Two members who are survivors of suicide, to be
14 appointed by the governor;
- 15 (16) One member who is a frontline Hawaii Psychiatric
16 Medical Association psychiatrist serving rural and
17 underserved communities, to be selected by the Hawaii
18 Psychiatric Medical Association;
- 19 (17) One representative of the Hawaii Primary Care
20 Association, to be selected by the Hawaii Primary Care
21 Association;



1 (18) One member to be selected by the president of the
2 senate; and

3 (19) One member to be selected by the speaker of the house
4 of representatives.

5 To the extent possible, all appointees shall have expertise
6 in fields or disciplines related to suicide prevention and
7 education or awareness of suicide prevention.

8 Any vacancies in the task force shall be filled in the
9 manner provided for by the original appointments.

10 (c) Upon the initial meeting of the task force, to occur
11 no later than thirty days after the effective date of this Act,
12 its members shall elect a chair and vice chair and any other
13 necessary officers from among the appointed members. A majority
14 of the task force shall constitute a quorum to do business.

15 (d) The chair shall seek to maintain a balanced
16 representation of interests and the inclusion of all interested
17 community members and may select additional task force members
18 at the chair's discretion.

19 (e) All meetings of the task force shall be public. The
20 task force shall meet no less than quarterly. At the discretion
21 of the chair or by the request of a majority of its members, the



1 task force may hold additional public meetings as it deems
2 necessary.

3 (f) Members of the task force shall serve on a voluntary
4 basis and shall not be compensated for their services.

5 (g) The task force shall submit an annual report of its
6 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
7 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
8 each regular session of the legislature until it ceases to exist
9 pursuant to subsection (h).

10 (h) The task force shall cease to exist on January 1,
11 2026.

12 SECTION 3. It is not the intent of the legislature for
13 this Act to jeopardize the receipt of any federal aid. If this
14 Act is found to be in conflict with federal requirements that
15 are a prescribed condition for the allocation of federal funds
16 to the State, this Act shall be deemed void.

17 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



Report Title:

Prevent Suicide Hawaii Taskforce

Description:

Codifies the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force and requires it to develop annual recommendations to the Legislature to reduce suicide by twenty-five per cent by 2025. Dissolves the task force on 1/1/2026. (SD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

