

MAR 11 2022

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS TO
CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PILOT
PROGRAM THAT GRANTS PRESCRIPTIVE AUTHORITY TO QUALIFIED
PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE COUNTIES OF KAUA'I, MAUI, AND HAWAI'I.

1 WHEREAS, there is a significant shortage of prescribing
2 mental health care providers available to serve the needs of the
3 State's residents in rural or medically underserved communities,
4 especially in Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i counties; and
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6 WHEREAS, the lack of access to appropriate mental health
7 treatment has serious and irrevocable consequences; and
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9 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health, death by
10 suicide is the number one injury-related cause of death among
11 Hawai'i residents; and
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13 WHEREAS, studies have shown that people who attempt or
14 commit suicide often received inadequate or no mental health
15 treatment due to a shortage of mental health providers; and
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17 WHEREAS, while the causes for suicide can be complex, the
18 most commonly reported contributing factors are mental health
19 conditions that, when identified and treated, respond favorably
20 to therapy and psychotropic medication; and
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22 WHEREAS, clinical psychologists are licensed health
23 professionals with an average of seven years of post-
24 baccalaureate study and three thousand hours of post-graduate
25 supervised practice in diagnosis and treatment of mental
26 illness; and
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28 WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association has
29 developed a model curriculum for a Master's Degree in
30 psychopharmacology for the education and training of prescribing
31 psychologists; however, the existing scope of clinical
32 psychologists' practice in Hawai'i does not include prescribing
33 medications; and



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 2 WHEREAS, Hawai'i has previously authorized prescription
 3 privileges for a number of other health care professionals, and
 4 federal facilities have long allowed licensed clinical
 5 psychologists with specialized education and training to
 6 prescribe psychotropic medications in certain circumstances; and
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8 WHEREAS, residents living on the neighbor islands are
 9 disproportionately affected by the State's physician shortage,
 10 which is attributed to factors such as rural or geographically
 11 challenged locations, high costs of living, heavy tax burdens,
 12 and low reimbursements; and
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14 WHEREAS, these factors were further exacerbated by the
 15 effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic; and
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17 WHEREAS, authorizing qualified clinical psychologists with
 18 appropriate advanced training to prescribe from a limited
 19 formulary of psychotropic medication will benefit Hawai'i
 20 residents; and
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22 WHEREAS, granting prescriptive authority to qualified
 23 psychologists will help meet the demands for psychological
 24 services in vulnerable populations and provide greater access to
 25 permanent mental health services provided by clinical
 26 psychologists, especially to those who live in rural or
 27 medically underserved communities; and
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29 WHEREAS, establishing a pilot program that grants
 30 prescriptive authority to qualified psychologists who practice
 31 on the neighbor islands is a valuable first step in improving
 32 access to quality healthcare in the State and identifying the
 33 efficacy and value of a proposal for a future comprehensive
 34 statewide policy; now, therefore,
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36 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
 37 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022,
 38 that the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs is
 39 requested to convene a task force to evaluate and provide
 40 recommendations to establish a pilot program that grants
 41 prescriptive authority to qualified psychologist applicants in
 42 the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i; and



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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the task force, with the assistance of the Board of Psychology, is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be dissolved on June 30, 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and Executive Officer of the Board of Psychology.

OFFERED BY:

