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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
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April 12, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: SCR 124 SD1 – URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO WORK WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS, INCLUDING THE YMCA OF HONOLULU, TO SUPPORT THE MENTAL WELLNESS OF THE STATE'S YOUTH.

HEARING: Thursday, April 14, 2022, 9:00 pm
Via Videoconference, State Capitol Conference Room 329

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent and offers comments.

PURPOSE: SCR 124 SD1 asks the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services to work with community partners, including the YMCA of Honolulu, to support mental wellness of the state's youth. (SD1) The SD1 amended the measure by:

- (1) Requesting the Department of Health and Department of Human Services to work with community partners, including the YMCA, to support the mental wellness of the State's youth; and
- (2) Amending its title accordingly.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the mental well-being of people of all ages in our state. However, none more than our youth and children. DHS is grateful for the dedicated work and vital role the many community providers play in the lives of all of Hawaii's families. The Department is committed to working with all community partners to support the mental wellness and overall well-being of Hawaii's youth and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SCR-124-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2022 5:14:06 PM

Testimony for HHH on 4/14/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch Jr	Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i (formerly the LGBT Caucus) Hawai‘i’s oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports SCR 124 SD 1.

We hope you all will support this important resolution.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.
Chair and SCC Representative
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

April 12, 2022

TO: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair
Committee On Health, Human Services & Homelessness

Representative Adrian Tam, Vice Chair
Committee On Health, Human Services & Homelessness

FR: Greg Waibel
President and CEO
YMCA of Honolulu

RE: SCR 124, SD1 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO WORK WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS, INCLUDING THE YMCA OF HONOLULU, TO SUPPORT THE MENTAL WELLNESS OF THE STATE'S YOUTH – **SUPPORT**

In a recent survey conducted as part of the Global Burden of Disease, mental health experts from across the country expressed a very high level of concern that we are in a second pandemic of mental health problems with not enough resources and approaches to help people. The voice of people who are seeking help include feelings of being stuck, empty, uncertain, anxious, overwhelmed, burned out, stressed, isolated, done, and depressed. The surveyed mental health professionals think the state and federal government have to provide more resources.

Additionally, according a recent article by Civil Beat, "depression and anxiety have doubled during the pandemic... while negative emotions and behaviors, such as impulsivity and irritability associated with ADHD, have moderately increased. In early 2021, emergency room visits for suicide attempts shot up 51% for adolescent girls and 4% for adolescent boys compared to the same time period in early 2019."

The need is NOW and if it continues unaddressed, will cause permanent damage to our kids' mental health.

Currently, medically diagnosed patients can receive care through Medicare or Medicaid insurance and schools are limited in the supports they can offer, especially while trying to regain academic ground that was lost to the pandemic. The need is so great, and the current resources gap leaves a void for so many youth who need help with their mental wellness. The mental health crisis is not one that can be solved by one organization and one strategy alone. Just as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted many aspects of our community, the solution to this crisis will also need to be multifaceted, collaborative and innovative.

YMCA OF HONOLULU

1441 Pali Highway, Honolulu HI 96813
P 808 531 YMCA F 808 533 1286 www.ymcahonolulu.org

ANDREW ROSEN, Chairman, Board of Directors
GREG WAIBEL, President & Chief Executive Officer



A 2021 Advisory from the United States Surgeon General noted the increased need for mental health services for youth to combat the negative effects of COVID-19. Of particular note was the need to ensure that "every child has access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally competent mental health care." As a community-based organization that provides a variety of services to thousands of kids on the island of Oahu, we are well positioned to meet youth "where they are" in ways that are comfortable and are relevant to the unique cultural identities of those who will be served. We will approach this work with trained professionals and evidence-based practices to support the mental wellness support that our youth need.

The YMCA has a track record of success in working with youth and can offer a community-based approach, providing programs to help youth at various points in their mental wellness pathway. Our program design starts with a comprehensive mental health screening and depending on the results of this screening different program offerings would be offered. These offerings include life skill groups and activities that would focus on self-care, vision mapping, support to help them build protective factors and minimize or eliminate risk factors as well as connecting them to other resources they might need and ultimately referring them to mental health professionals if they need higher levels of service.

For decades we have been providing supportive services to thousands of youth who have been dealing with substance abuse as well as kids in every situation in our community. We understand assessment and treatment models, and we will be partnering with licensed clinicians to guide our approach.

In order to implement a comprehensive mental wellness program to combat the rising tide of the mental health crisis we are asking the State to provide \$2.5M per year. This amount would allow us to deliver programming across Oahu with the YMCAs of Honolulu, Maui and Kauai joining together to deliver these crucial services. The YMCA will plan to reach and screen 1,400 youth per year and ultimately serve 1,000 youth.

Specifically, funding would be used as follows:

For those who are in the prevention or maintenance phase and indicating a level of acceptable mental wellness, we would provide unlimited access to physical wellness memberships, life skills workshops and activities to help build resilience.

For those who have been assessed to have been affected or injured, we would provide a 12-week group/individual level of program to help and practice skill development including weeklong experiences at camp as well as access to physical wellness memberships, life skills workshops and activities to build resilience. The 12-week program has a step down and then a follow up after discharge.

We are grateful for your consideration as we all work together to ensure the mental wellness of Hawaii's youth.



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April 13, 2022

TO: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair
Committee On Health, Human Services & Homelessness

Representative Adrian Tam, Vice Chair
Committee On Health, Human Services & Homelessness

FR: Greg Waibel
President and CEO
YMCA of Honolulu

RE: HCR 67 Urging the Department of Health and Department of Human Services to Work with the YMCA of Honolulu to Support the Mental Wellness of the State's Youth. –

SUPPORT

In a recent study conducted as part of the Global Burden of Disease¹, mental health experts from across the country expressed a very high level of concern that we are in a second pandemic of mental health problems with not enough resources and approaches to help people. The voice of people who are seeking help include feelings of being stuck, empty, uncertain, anxious, overwhelmed, burned out, stressed, isolated, done, and depressed. The surveyed mental health professionals think the state and federal government must provide more resources.

Additionally, according to a recent article by Civil Beat², “depression and anxiety have doubled during the pandemic... while negative emotions and behaviors, such as impulsivity and irritability associated with ADHD, have moderately increased. In early 2021, emergency room visits for suicide attempts shot up 51% for adolescent girls and 4% for adolescent boys compared to the same time period in early 2019.”

The need is NOW and if it continues unaddressed, will cause permanent damage to our kids' mental health.

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)02143-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)02143-7/fulltext)

² <https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/12/anxiety-and-depression-youth-mental-health-got-worse-during-the-pandemic/>

Currently, medically diagnosed patients can receive care through Medicare/Medicaid/insurance and schools are limited in the supports they can offer, especially while trying to regain academic ground that was lost to the pandemic. The need is so great and the current resources gap leaves a void for so many youth who need help with their mental wellness. The mental health crisis is not one that can be solved by one organization and one strategy alone. Just as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted many aspects of our community, the solution to this crisis will also need to be multifaceted, collaborative, and innovative.

A 2021 Advisory from the United States Surgeon General³ noted the increased need for mental health services for youth to combat the negative effects of COVID-19. Of particular note was the need to ensure that “every child has access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally competent mental health care.” As a community-based organization that provides a variety of services to thousands of kids on the island of Oahu, we are well positioned to meet youth “where they are” in ways that are comfortable and are relevant to the unique cultural identities of those who will be served. We will approach this work with trained professionals and evidence-based practices to support the mental wellness support that our youth need.

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For decades we have been providing supportive services to thousands of youths who have been dealing with substance abuse as well as kids in every situation in our community. We understand assessment and treatment models, and we will be partnering with licensed clinicians to guide our approach.

We ask through this resolution to have the Departments of Health and Human Services work with the YMCA of Honolulu to find approaches and recommendations to help our youth with their mental wellness.

We are grateful for your consideration as we all work together to ensure the mental wellness of Hawaii’s youth.

³ <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>

SCR-124-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2022 8:36:26 AM

Testimony for HHH on 4/14/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zhizi Xiong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair & Members of the Committee

I'm testifying in strong support of the measure as a concerned citizen. The measure refers to data about the infection of COVID negatively impacting youths & keikis. Because of the infection, it has prevented youths & keikis from meeting important social & developmental milestones. Opportunities to socialize with friends are not scarce. And therefore, they have not been able to develop healthy coping mechanisms to inevitable life problems. The biggest concern the infection has caused is isolation.

Young people then don't have opportunities to engage, to meet, to socialize, to interact with friends, the children have become isolated. Regardless of whether they are actively participating in their studies, without time to decompress & process with social influences in their lives such as mentors, teachers,

According to the Tulane University's School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine, isolation is linked to depression, anxiety & low self-esteem. Social isolation can involve emotional isolation, which is an unwillingness or inability to share one's feelings with others. When socially isolated individuals lack emotional interaction and support, they can become emotionally numb — detached from their own feelings.

YMCA is a social services organization dedicated to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Some YMCA branches provide prevention & treatment services. During the infection, some YMCAs proceeded to provide behavioral health services via telehealth counseling.

In conclusion, it is imperative the legislature considers working with the YMCA & other community partners in regards to mental health services for youths.

Blessings,

Zhizi Xiong