

MAR 11 2022

SENATE CONCURRENT 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



1 psychologists' practice in Hawai'i does not include prescribing
2 medications; and

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4 WHEREAS, Hawai'i has previously authorized prescription
5 privileges for a number of other health care professionals, and
6 federal facilities have long allowed licensed clinical
7 psychologists with specialized education and training to
8 prescribe psychotropic medications in certain circumstances; and

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10 WHEREAS, residents living on the neighbor islands are
11 disproportionately affected by the State's physician shortage,
12 which is attributed to factors such as rural or geographically
13 challenged locations, high costs of living, heavy tax burdens,
14 and low reimbursements; and

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16 WHEREAS, these factors were further exacerbated by the
17 effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic; and

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19 WHEREAS, authorizing qualified clinical psychologists with
20 appropriate advanced training to prescribe from a limited
21 formulary of psychotropic medication will benefit Hawai'i
22 residents; and

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24 WHEREAS, granting prescriptive authority to qualified
25 psychologists will help meet the demands for psychological
26 services in vulnerable populations and provide greater access to
27 permanent mental health services provided by clinical
28 psychologists, especially to those who live in rural or
29 medically underserved communities; and

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31 WHEREAS, establishing a pilot program that grants
32 prescriptive authority to qualified psychologists who practice
33 on the neighbor islands is a valuable first step in improving
34 access to quality healthcare in the State and identifying the
35 efficacy and value of a proposal for a future comprehensive
36 statewide policy; now, therefore,

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38 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
39 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022, the
40 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
41 Commerce and Consumer Affairs is requested to convene a task
42 force to evaluate and provide recommendations to establish a



1 pilot program that grants prescriptive authority to qualified
2 psychologist applicants in the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and
3 Kaua'i; and
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the task force, with the assistance
6 of the Board of Psychology, is requested to submit a report of
7 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed
8 legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior
9 to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be dissolved on
12 June 30, 2023; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
15 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Commerce
16 and Consumer Affairs and Executive Officer of the Board of
17 Psychology.
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OFFERED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the letters 'DK' followed by a stylized flourish, is written over a horizontal line.