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## SENATE RESOLUTION

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REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS TO  
CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP LEGISLATION GRANTING  
PRESCRIPTIVE AUTHORITY TO QUALIFIED PSYCHOLOGISTS  
PRACTICING IN THE STATE OF HAWAII.

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 die  
14 by 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

3  
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 especially disproportionately affected by the State's physician  
12 shortage, which is attributed to factors such as residing in  
13 rural or geographically challenged locations, high costs of  
14 living, heavy tax burdens, 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

30  
31 WHEREAS, a number of other states have adopted legislation  
32 authorizing prescriptive authority for advanced trained  
33 psychologists as a means of addressing the shortage of adequate  
34 evaluation and treatment for their mental health patients and  
35 have had success with this practice; now, therefore,

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37 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
38 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022,  
39 that the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' Division  
40 of Professional and Vocational Licensing, with the assistance of  
41 the Board of Psychology, is requested to convene a task force to



1 develop legislation granting prescriptive authority to qualified  
2 psychologists practicing in the State of Hawai'i; and  
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include members  
5 representing other prescribing professions who are amenable to  
6 the possibility of prescriptive authority for appropriately  
7 trained psychologists and psychologists licensed in the State;  
8 and  
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to:  
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- 12 (1) Review and evaluate laws from other states where  
13 psychologists have been granted prescriptive  
14 authority, including their subsequent experiences and  
15 patient outcomes;  
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- 17 (2) Consider any additional conditions or necessary  
18 training that would be required to grant prescriptive  
19 authority to psychologists practicing in Hawai'i;  
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- 21 (3) Determine whether the University of Hawai'i currently  
22 has the personnel to provide the advanced training  
23 necessary for psychologists to be granted prescriptive  
24 authority; and  
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- 26 (4) Develop appropriate legislation that would grant  
27 prescriptive authority to appropriately trained  
28 psychologists in Hawai'i; and  
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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force, with the  
31 assistance of the Board of Psychology, is requested to submit a  
32 report of its findings and recommendations, including any  
33 proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty  
34 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and  
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be dissolved on  
37 June 30, 2023; and  
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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
40 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Commerce and  
41 Consumer Affairs and Executive Officer of the Board of  
42 Psychology.

