
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there is a severe
2 shortage of mental health service providers in the State. This
3 shortage is due to a lack of appropriately educated individuals
4 and high rates of turnover in the field, which is exacerbated by
5 compassion fatigue, burnout, and inadequate preparation for the
6 provision of mental health services. The legislature therefore
7 finds that the mental health provider shortage in the State
8 addressed by this measure is a matter of statewide concern.

9 The legislature further finds that the university of Hawaii
10 Windward community college, in collaboration with the Hawaii
11 state hospital, has developed a mental health technician
12 certificate of competence program. The coursework for the
13 certificate program addresses the immediate and critical
14 workforce needs of preparing potential employees and upskilling
15 existing employees. These certificates are also a foundation to
16 increase qualifications, as the initial certificate of
17 competence opens a pathway to further training and development.



1 A new one-year certificate program currently under development
2 will build on the skills developed by the existing mental health
3 technician certificate of competence program by adding clinical
4 skills and knowledge necessary to perform higher job
5 requirements in more advanced clinical settings. The coursework
6 can also be applied toward baccalaureate degrees. These
7 programs help to grow the State's overall capacity to address
8 the mental health challenges and needs of Hawaii's residents.

9 The existing mental health technician certificate of
10 competence program consists of three approved courses, which
11 provide a basic foundation in mental health knowledge in a
12 short-term, focused program of study available in person and
13 online. The asynchronous online courses can be offered to
14 mental health workers and students across the State, with
15 Windward community college coordinating with other community
16 colleges in the university of Hawaii system. In order for the
17 program to be offered statewide, additional resources are needed
18 to provide for key personnel and establish a scholarship program
19 to increase access to the existing mental health technician
20 certificate of competence program for individuals who are



1 unemployed, underemployed, low-wage earners, or otherwise
2 interested in pursuing a career pathway in mental health.

3 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
4 office of the governor for the establishment of one temporary
5 full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) mental health technician
6 certificate of competence program coordinator position.

7 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
9 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
10 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
11 year 2024-2025 for the establishment of one temporary full-time
12 equivalent (1.0 FTE) mental health technician certificate of
13 competence program coordinator position.

14 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the office of
15 the governor for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Mental Health Technician Certificate of Competence Program;
Governor; Appropriations

Description:

Appropriates moneys to the Office of the Governor to establish 1 temporary full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) mental health technician certificate of competence program coordinator position. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

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