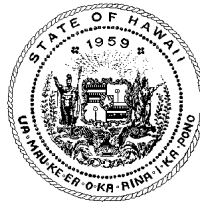


JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
KA 'OIHANA HO'OPALEKANA LEHULEHU
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Michael J. Hoffman
Acting Deputy Director
Corrections

William Oku
Acting Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1300
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

By
Tommy Johnson, Director

House Committee on Health and Homelessness
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Friday, February 03, 2023; 8:30 a.m.
CR 329 and Via Videoconference

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) has reviewed House Bill (HB) 1300, which seeks to establish provisional or associate level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances, allow the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists, and allow psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing other requirements.

The Department **supports** the allowance of the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers for psychologists in certain situations and the allowance of psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing other requirements. PSD defers to the expertise of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) on the feasibility of the proposed regulatory matters involving provisional or associate level licensure.

Testimony on HB 1300
House Committee on Health and Homelessness
February 03, 2023
Page 2

Like other entities throughout the State, PSD is also experiencing a high demand for mental health services. In order to meet the mental health needs of individuals in our care and custody, the proposed measure seeks to address the limitations in HRS 465-7.6 Licensure of state employed clinical psychologists.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1300.

Testimony of the Board of Psychology

**Before the
House Committee on Health & Homelessness
Friday, February 3, 2023
8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 1300, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Fernandez, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Psychology (Board). The Board's Legislative Committee limits its comments to Part IV of the bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish a provisional or associate level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) allow psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing other requirements; (3) allows the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists; and (4) authorizes insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances.

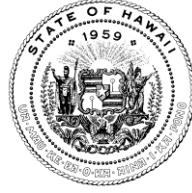
The Board will review this bill at its meeting scheduled for February 3, 2023, and provide any additional comments should this measure continue. In the meantime, the Legislative Committee offers the following comments on Part IV of the bill:

- 1) Section 20 of the bill creates a new license type with the inclusion of a provisional associate license for purposes of reimbursement. Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) section 26H-2 provides that "the regulation and licensing of professions and vocations shall be undertaken only where reasonably necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of consumers of the services; the purpose of regulation shall be the protection of the public welfare and not that of the regulated profession or vocation." Creating a license for the purpose of reimbursement is not consistent with HRS section 26H-2. Further, decisions related to insurance reimbursement are not under the purview of the Board and should not be a basis for creating a license

under the Board. In addition, The implementation of any new license would require additional staffing and funding for the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (DCCA) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division. This bill does not include a funding mechanism to implement proposed licensure.

- 2) Page 30, lines 1 to 7, authorizes a supervised licensed associate to be eligible for insurance reimbursement. The Legislative Committee is unsure whether authorizing reimbursement via chapter 465 rather than the appropriate insurance law would result in reimbursement from insurance providers.
- 3) Page 37, lines 16 to 18, allow a holder of a doctoral degree in clinical, counseling, and school psychology to sit for the examination required for licensure prior to meeting pre-doctoral internship and postdoctoral experience requirements. The Legislative Committee has strong concerns with this proposed practice, and notes it is in direct conflict with the Board's administrative rules.
- 4) Page 38, lines 8 to 11, the Legislative Committee seeks clarification regarding the length of time the waiver may be valid. As drafted, the waiver could be extended indefinitely, allowing a state employed clinical psychologist to be unlicensed indefinitely. In addition, the Legislative Committee questions if this section is necessary with the addition of a provisional license.
- 5) Page 40, lines 4 to 7, authorizes the Board to grant waivers or extensions to licensees who are unable to comply with its continuing education requirements. The Legislative Committee notes that this language is unnecessary since HRS section 465-11(f) provides a remedy for such circumstances, and suggests it be removed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA
SYLVIA LUKE
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Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
House Committee on Health & Homelessness
Friday, February 3, 2023
8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329 and Via Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 1300, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rochelle Araki, and I am the Executive Officer of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division (Division), Marriage and Family Therapy Program, Mental Health Counselors Licensing Program, and Social Worker Licensing Program. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish a provisional or associate level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; (2) allow psychologist license applicants to sit for the licensing examination before completing other requirements; (3) allows the Board of Psychology to grant licensure waivers in certain circumstances for psychologists; and (4) authorizes insurance reimbursements for services provided by a supervised social work intern in certain circumstances.

The Department limits its comments to Part II, Part III and Part V of this bill as follows:

H.B. 1300, requires the Department to grant, upon application and payment of proper fees, provisional licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist and mental health counselor to those who meet certain requirements to obtain reimbursement for services rendered. While the Department appreciates the intent of this measure, the creation of this new license type appears contrary to the provisions of Hawaii Revised Statutes section 26H-2, which provides, in part, that “the regulation and licensing of professions and vocations shall be undertaken only where reasonably necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of consumers of the services; the purpose of regulation shall be the protection of the public welfare and not that of the regulated profession or vocation.” A new licensure scheme should not be implemented solely for the purpose of reimbursement.

Further, there may be unintended consequences of regulating or requiring licensure of a currently exempted population of professionals who provide mental health services. For example, the cost of services provided by these individuals may increase and could possibly be passed to consumers.

Regarding part V of this bill, the Department expresses similar concerns that authorizing reimbursements to a currently exempted population of profession: social work interns, could have unintended consequences such as higher costs for services rendered. These costs could be passed on to consumers.

Should the Committee consider passing this bill, the Department respectfully requests the following to ensure proper implementation:

1. General fund appropriation to allow the Division:
 - a. To establish, recruit, and hire an office assistant V (OA-V) to process Compact-related license applications expeditiously. The sum of \$67,876 or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this position.
 - b. To make the appropriate updates to its internal database. The required updates may take upwards of 500 support hours to create these new license

types and the associated requirements. These hours would be added onto the already extensive daily work of the Division's developer, program analyst, and others outside of the division. Note that these updates would require additional support and maintenance outside of the budget request being made through Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' request. The sum of \$75,000 or so much thereof may be necessary to fund this request.

2. Minimally, a delayed implementation date of July 1, 2025 to ensure that:
 - a. In line with the request above, the Division would need the appropriate time to establish, recruit, and hire and OA-V.
 - b. The appropriate updates are made to the database and applications are created.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521-8995

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

February 23, 2023 8:30 A.M. - VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE – Rm 329

The Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) strongly supports HB1300 as a critical tool in meeting the burgeoning demand for quality mental health services – and is especially timely as the emotional and mental toll of the pandemic and its associated hardships is felt by all our residents, prolonged now for three years. The aftermath effects on our public behavioral health systems are immeasurable.

This bill expands access to much-needed high quality mental health services provided by local practitioners, and will significantly increase the speed with which trained, qualified, credentialed, and culturally cognizant practitioners can enter the workforce and meet Hawaii's demands. There is a critical shortage of mental health professionals in Hawaii, particularly in rural areas; and this bill helps to reduce some arbitrary and/or administrative obstacles to practicing here.

To become licensed as a psychologist, Hawaii Revised Statutes requires candidates to have completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) in psychology, including practicum experience comprised of a full time one-year psychology internship; followed by at least one year of supervised practice experience after completing the degree; and then a passing score on a rigorous national examination.

This proposal helps to alleviate several financial hardships psychology trainees in Hawaii typically face while on this path. New professionals seeking to complete their hours of supervised practice are having tremendous difficulty managing financially - due to Hawaii's very high cost of living.

The associate licensing framework in this bill will authorize insurance reimbursement for work done by pre-licensed, "post-doc" psychology trainees. Post-docs often work in an agency or other settings where they are supervised closely by a licensed psychologist, but insurance plans vary greatly on whether they will reimburse the agency or supervisor for services provided in this way. Some post-docs end up working for free, while maintaining other jobs to survive. Many leave the state – where associate-level licensure is already in place.

Another issue that causes financial hardship and delay during this post-doctoral period is the timing of the license application process. Currently, according to the Board of Psychology's administrative rules, applicants must complete their one year post-doctoral experience; apply for licensure; then be "seated" for the required examination (the EPPP); then pass it before they can be licensed. This process can lead to many months of delay before they are allowed to practice as a psychologist. Many licensure candidates apply to take the exam in another state (incurring further personal expense) so that they can expedite the Board of Psychology review process by

having their passing grade in hand when their application is reviewed by the Hawaii Board. Accordingly, this proposal requires the board to allow licensure candidates to take the exam as soon as they complete their doctorate.

HB1300 also addresses unnecessary administrative barriers experienced by state-employed psychology post-docs. Current law allows non-licensed individuals who have earned their doctoral degree to be hired into state psychologist positions before licensure; however, these employees must obtain licensure within two years of hire, and then cease practicing if the license is not obtained in that time period. The state has interpreted this to mean they must be terminated from their state position if this occurs.

During the pandemic, the Board of Psychology did not meet for a prolonged period to approve several candidates' licenses, and several state-employed psychologists lost their jobs due to no fault of their own. Of those terminated included practitioners at the State Hospital and in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division. This is a wholly avoidable hardship for these individuals, and the clients they were serving. The language proposed in this bill would allow the board to give a state-employed psychologist more time to obtain their license under such extenuating circumstances; and would also help others who may need more time due to, for example, the need for maternity or other medical leave.

The only amendments to this bill we recommend is to incorporate the **purpose language of HB1242**, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawaii, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already allowed to do; as well as **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing**.

The pandemic has had devastating effects not only to our public health system and economies, but to our collective mental health. The disruptions, anxieties, depression, substance abuse, and chronic stress that COVID has created in our lives have brought many in our community to the brink of emotional collapse. The need for mental health services could not be more apparent or pressing; and we must all do what is necessary to improve access to professional treatment. We all deserve access to quality mental health treatment – and this bill is a highly effective, low-cost way of addressing this need which is in keeping with modern regulatory approaches in other jurisdictions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill, and for your commitment to Hawaii's mental health.

Sincerely,



Alex Lichton, Ph.D.

Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Friday, February 3, 2023 - 8:30AM - Via Videoconference – Rm 329

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1300

The National Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) strongly supports HB1300 SD1 Relating to Mental Health, which establishes associate level licenses for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists; and clarifies the ability of a Licensed Social Worker to bill under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

This bill does several important things:

It creates an Associate level of Licensure for Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists, based on the current LSW level of licensure for social workers, which will allow for a mechanism by which clinicians who have completed their graduate school courses can be compensated while they are receiving their required period of supervised practice.

It also clarifies that a LSW social worker can bill insurance under the clinical license and supervision of an LCSW.

These steps will create the opportunity to open up more clinicians in supervision to see clients in the very near future, which is vital given the ongoing pandemic and the current shortage of clinical level mental health providers, and long wait times to get in to therapy as a client.

It also opens the door to more diverse candidates in the field of mental health. Few people can afford to work for two years either unpaid or underpaid, as they complete their clinical supervision, which leads to an overrepresentation in our profession of people from affluent backgrounds and an underrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the fields of social work, Psychology, Mental Health Counseling, and Marriage and Family Therapy.

This bill can help encourage people who have completed their graduate education in Hawai'i to stay and work here, if they can receive a living wage. We strive to educate students in cultural competency and the importance of understanding the community in which they practice, to create clinicians who will thrive here, then do very little to help keep them in state, after graduation.

It also provides the opportunity for those in supervision to get experience working in private practices and doing more direct therapy, under supervision, which serves to strengthen them as clinicians when they reach the level of independent practice.

Suggested Amendments to Strengthen Purpose/Legislative Intent

The only black-letter amendments we suggest is to clarify the language relating to the supervision of social workers seeking licensure as a “Licensed Clinical Social Worker.” We prefer the language of a substantially and substantively similar bill - **HB1242**, also referred to this Committee, **on page 47, line 12 – page 48, line 4** – which makes clear that billing must be done through the supervising Licensed Clinical Social Worker. This is important as there is currently confusion in insurance billing practices.

We also appreciate the comprehensive purpose language in HB1242, explaining the gravity of demand and the costs and hardships for new professionals and their Hawaii-based patients. We therefore **respectfully request that HB1242’s purpose language be included in an HD1**, in addition to two additional enumerated purposes:

(3) Clarifying in law that Associate Level practitioners would not be allowed to do anything they aren’t already permitted to do now, except have their services billed through the insurance covering their supervisor’s treatment and supervision; and

(4) Enabling and encouraging post-degree, pre-licensed mental health practitioners to stay in Hawaii to complete the required hours of supervised work for full licensure – thereby promoting a diverse pool of homegrown providers that can best meet the needs of Hawaii’s people.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support.

Sincerely,

 *Sonja Bigalke-Bannan*, MSW, LCSW

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LCSW
Executive Director,
National Association of Social Workers- Hawaii’i Chapter



The Hawaiian Islands Association
for Marriage and Family Therapy
(HIAMFT)

We know systems.

We know relationships.

We know FAMILY MATTERS.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Friday, February 3, 2023 - 8:30AM - Via Videoconference – Rm 329

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1300 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports HB1300 as a critical tool in improving access and meeting the overwhelming demand for quality mental health services, particularly during and following the prolonged pandemic. Here's a snapshot of recently recorded ratios of clients/patients to mental health providers in Hawai'i:

Hawai'i 320:1

Honolulu 370:1

Kauai 480:1

Maui 550:1

Moloka'i has no registered providers.

Obviously, this demand far exceeds the viable supply of mental health providers. Among other provisions to remove administrative barriers and increase the speed with which trained and qualified practitioners can enter the workforce, HB1300 would establish provisional/associate-level licensure requirements for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs), Mental Health Counselors, and Psychologists. This would ensure a regulatory framework that would encourage relevant and quality training to associate-level providers by authorizing insurance reimbursement for supervised care provided by these post-degree/pre-licensed mental health professionals during the 12 to 24-month period in which they are completing required supervised practice hours under the mentorship and guidance of an independently licensed mental health professional.

In 23 other states, associate-level licensure is already established as common practice. This regulatory approach not only expands clients' access to providers, it also creates a viable career path for would-be providers: Hawai'i residents interested in pursuing careers as mental health professionals (of which there is a 10,000-15,000 shortage), but who might otherwise not be able to actualize such a career due to outdated statutes that often force post-graduate/pre-licensed providers to work for sub-par wages or even pro bono (while also paying a supervisor to oversee their work, costing MFT supervisees anywhere from \$10,000-\$30,000 for 1,000 hours of supervised direct care during their 2-year post-degree period) and/or in contexts that do not provide sufficiently relevant clinical experience (e.g., prisons, substance abuse centers, case management, etc.) to ensure providers are ready for independent licensure.

This bill would update Hawai'i's licensing statutes in ways that would not only modernize our processes, but ultimately improve the quality and utilization of mental health care provided in our state by creating a more robust system of clinical accountability/training and a financially viable career path for local would-be providers who have a deep understanding of local cultures/customs and who in turn, may be better able to connect with clients, who in turn will be more likely to actually utilize available mental health services.

Moreover, this bill will reduce the loss of potential future mental health professionals to other careers or one of the other 23 states that have already modernized their licensing laws. In turn, this will contribute to the state economy through associate licensing fees, taxes from wages earned by associate-level licensees, and local purchases made by these licensees.

Overall, many aspects of our mental health system are deeply flawed, understaffed, and are in no way prepared to manage the onslaught of mental health issues that the general population are experiencing during and after this pandemic. The consequences of this pandemic, both short- and long-term, in terms of mental health, could be significant and could weaken the Hawai'i health care system.

If we don't develop the means to stave off and/or treat these mental health issues, individuals and families will suffer even more than they already have/do. In all areas of life, untreated mental health issues can become chronic and with crippling, long-term effects – for individuals, families, and communities.

These circumstances call for a change in the paradigm and practices of mental health care in Hawai'i. Our current model of mental health care does not adequately address the complex challenges of modern living. Let's re-vision current models of mental health care delivery by learning from other states and being creative and flexible in how we provide mental health services. To protect our community now and in the future, let's take appropriate action now. Mental health care cannot be an afterthought.

The only amendments to this bill we would recommend is to incorporate the **purpose language of HB1242**, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawaii, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already allowed to do; as well as **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Souza, Jr., LMFT, DMFT". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. John Souza, Jr., LMFT, DMFT, President
The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Aloha--

My name is Britt Young, and I'm the founder and Executive Director for Xplor Counseling, LLC. I am in support of this measure for several reasons and feel it is of extreme importance to pass this measure for the sake of our community.

Since I graduated from my Masters Program in 2008, about half of my graduating class has gone on to become Mental Health professionals, and the overwhelming reason for this is the financial and logistical difficulty to get to the next level, which is full licensure.

For the current graduate, finding placement for post-graduate work is quite limited, and one has only a handful of choices in any given community. Often, the work will be important, yes, but also low-paid and not likely in the preferred field of study. For example, "interns" as they are called would be limited to working in a privately or publicly funded agency or practice, or in a practice that has enough self-pay clients to be sustainable. In this case, the intern is paid minimal fees for service and, because options are limited, will likely work with a population of someone else's choosing.

For example, although I had no intention of working with children, my first intern positions were working exclusively with children. As much as I enjoyed the work, it did not prepare me for my eventual family systems practice.

When I lived in Deerfield, Illinois, I was thrilled to learn there was an Associate Licensure track for which I qualified. Because insurance companies reimbursed for my services, I was able to serve a population of my choosing and hone my skills working with Family Systems. What's more is that I was able to earn a wage that allowed me to pursue my career vs the low wages offered at private or state agencies.

Because I was heavily supervised, the quality of my work was never in question, and I was able to grow as a clinician. Please note, sampling different populations as a clinician is important, and I enjoyed my time working with children, but had I lived in a state where I was contained only to one population, I would have missed-out on developing important skills.

Hawaii is only one of a few states that does not have this Associate Licensure, and this means we are at risk of losing countless therapists because they cannot earn a living wage post-graduation and have limited options for internships.

Please consider passing this measure.

Fondly,

Britt Young, M.A., LMFT



February 3, 2023

The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Re: HB 1300 – Relating to mental health

Dear Chair Au Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1300, which will establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances.

HMSA supports the legislature's intent to expand access to behavioral health care services in Hawaii. While we believe that access to behavioral health care, especially in rural areas, poses a challenge for our community, without established criteria and scope of service, we believe that more clarity is needed to define the circumstances that would be eligible for reimbursement to those with provisional or associate licensures.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB1300.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Kurisu", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations

HB-1300

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 8:49:27 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is an important way to increase the availability of mental health providers. Please pass it!

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 1:49:31 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lucas Morgan, PHD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I am writing in support of Bill HB 1300. I am a licensed clinical psychologist originally from Hawai'i and practicing in Hawai'i. There is a serious mental health shortage in Hawai'i, and our communities face immense mental health stressors that could benefit from insurance-covered professional help. This bill would allow licensed providers to bill insurance for services provided by post-doctoral fellows, which would make it much more feasible for someone like me to supervise such doctoral trainees. If I could do that, I could not only help train the next generations of providers to our communities, but also help increase access to much needed insurance-covered therapy. I have to regularly turn away potential patients due to having a full schedule. I feel terrible doing so, but simply cannot accommodate more patients. If I was able to hire one or two post-doctoral fellows, I could accommodate and provide services for many more community members who would otherwise be stuck continuing to seek providers.

I appreciate your consideration of this important bill. Mahalo nunui,

Lucas Paul Kawika Morgan, PhD,

Licensed Psychologist Hawaii PSY#1630

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 4:15:13 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand in support.

CHARMAINE HIGA-MCMILLAN, PHD
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST, #1010
HILO, HI 96720

In Consideration of HB1300

February 1, 2023

I am a licensed psychologist and I am a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. I am also currently serving as the Director of the [MA Program in Counseling Psychology \(Clinical Mental Health Specialization\)](#) at the UH Hilo. Our program began in 2005 and coincided with the creation of the Mental Health Counselor license in the State (both were created to try to address the lack of qualified mental health providers). We have a rigorous 60 credit program that is designed to prepare students to help meet the mental health service needs of the diverse and multicultural populations in Hawai'i, and we were recently nationally reaccredited through the [Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council](#) (through June 2029).

HB1300 aims to establish provisional or associate level licensure requirements. A primary purpose of the Bill is to authorize insurance reimbursements to associate license holders in certain circumstances. **This Bill will create more job opportunities for pre-licensed mental health professionals, and it will also improve access to mental health care for the citizens of Hawaii. I am writing in strong support of HB1300.**

I am writing as a citizen of the state and as a licensed psychologist.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 9:43:28 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Schmidt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am also a master’s student at the University of Hawai’i, Hilo. The Counseling Psychology program prepares us to work as Mental Health Counselors in the state of Hawai’i.

One of the challenges post-graduation from mental health training programs is that you must earn 3,000 supervised hours to become licensed eligible. In many other states (such as Washington, California, and D.C.) a provisional license is granted once passing a state exam, then hours are accrued for up to two years and you apply for your state license. In the state of Hawaii, we don’t have a provisional license yet. The consequences to our community due to this gap in licensure are endless. Many private and group practice providers are unable to hire unlicensed providers because they cannot bill insurance companies for their services. This means graduates are typically forced to take low/underpaid positions in larger agencies (some of these are wonderful positions, but the options are limited). 30% of these graduates wind up leaving the field due to not making enough money to support themselves.

This bill would allow MFT's and Psychologists to earn an associate/provisional license so that they can bill insurance companies for their work (provided they are supervised, payment may be less than fully licensed providers). This is an important piece of legislation as it will open the doors to more opportunities for trained mental health professionals and it increases access to mental health care to the citizens of the State.

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, and Licensed Psychologists all use the “Psychotherapy” CPT code for insurance billing purposes.

However, Mental Health Counselors are not currently included in the current bill. I am in support of bill SB2829 with the amendment to include Mental Health Counselors (future Licensed Mental Health Counselors- LMHCs) to this bill. An amendment has been submitted as testimony by Justin Miller, LMHC in the state of Hawaii.

If this bill is to increase access to mental health services, then it is imperative that Mental Health Counselors are not left out in this bill.

Thank you for your time,

Monica Schmidt

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 9:47:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The intent of HB1300 is to expand the quality of mental health services by allowing provisional/ associate-level licensure for mental health practitioners. I support HB 1300 as it will help to address the shortage of mental health providers in Hawaii. Allowing graduate-level professionals working toward full licensure to obtain a provisional/associate license will increase the number of qualified professionals in the mental health field. Hawaii currently has a shortage of licensed professionals and many providers have waitlists. Allowing provisional/associate licensure for professionals who have completed the required training would increase the number of practitioners who are eligible to provide a much-needed service.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 10:12:52 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey Fujinaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representative Della Au Bellatti, Chair

Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Committee on Health & Homelessness

Kelsey Fujinaka, PsyD

(808) 497-1404

Friday, February 3, 2023

Support for HB1300, Relating to Mental Health

I am a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in the State of Hawai‘I and I am writing in support of HB1300, particularly as it relates to supervised post-doctoral psychology trainees.

I completed my doctoral training at a local university and continue to work in our community training and supervising graduate level and post-graduate level psychology trainees. Currently, post-doctoral trainees are given the same amount of clinical autonomy as practicum students who have just 1 year of coursework and 0 hours of training. At the post-doctoral level, trainees have already completed at least 4 years of graduate coursework, 3 years of part-time practicum training, 1 year of a full-time pre-doctoral internship, and the completion of a dissertation. Trainees at the post-doctoral level are highly knowledgeable, have years of supervised experience, and very capable of providing quality psychology services to our communities.

Designating a provisional license for associate psychologists who are able to bill for their services under the supervision of a licensed clinical psychologist will allow for agencies who provide training to these individuals to provide higher (livable) wages and attract quality applicants who will continue to serve in our community in the future. I have many graduate classmates who left the islands during their training years for more attractive salaries on the continent who have not yet returned home. With the recent addition of a new doctoral training program, there are now many potential future psychologists in training in our own state. It is so important for us to allow them a way to stay home and better our communities while also acknowledging and compensating them for their competencies and skills. In turn, this will have a positive impact on addressing mental health needs in our underserved populations and health disparities in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB1300.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 6:55:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lori stitt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe Hawaii needs More mental health professionals and the current system of 6 years higher education just to have No associate or provisional license after obtaining a graduate degree is behind in the times, keeps people from obtaining higher education when they stil have to work 2 more years before taking the exam for licensure. A provisional license helps to get more qualified graduate students working in the field sooner.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 8:29:34 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannah LeMans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am currently working as an intensive in-home therapist in Hawai'i. I feel that this bill is integral to supporting our community as it opens the opportunity and creates further incentive for highly skilled professionals to stay working in our community which so desperately needs services. I support this bill.

Mahalo,

Hannah LeMans

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 8:35:33 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judi Steinman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Iw tite to support HB1300 to allow associate licensing. This is an important way to improve mental health care access for underserved patients in rural settings, on neighbor islands and those with limited resources. Other states have used this successfully to address post covid me tal health care needs.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 8:43:51 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Ampolos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a licensed clinician who provides training and supports clinicians seeking licensure, and as someone who also navigated this difficult training system, I am in full support of this bill. I am able to see first-hand how difficult it is for clinicians to become licensed in our state. It takes great sacrifice to work unpaid or for very low wages for years in order to fulfill requirements for full licensure. In addition to supporting the training clinician, this bill will also allow for increased availability in services to those seeking and in great need of mental health services. Thank you.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 9:18:33 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
nancy sidun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support HB1300. As a clinical psychologist, I see only positive outcomes should this bill pass. Not only will it benefit early career psychologists, but it will offer more access to care. Respectfully submitted, Dr. Nancy Sidun

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 12:28:38 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamar Kreps	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The demand for mental health services in Hawai'i is extremely high right now. Even as an intern, I find my services are in high demand and I can see how large the need is. People are suffering with treatable mental health issues because they cannot get in to see a provider in a timely manner. This bill will help make mental health care more accessible to the people of Hawai'i.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 12:56:24 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danni Sutana Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1300 as a critical tool in improving access and meeting the overwhelming demand for quality mental health services, particularly during and following the prolonged pandemic. Here’s a snapshot of recently recorded ratios of clients/patients to mental health providers in Hawai’i:

Hawai’i 320:1

Honolulu 370:1

Kauai 480:1

Maui 550:1

Moloka’i has no registered providers.

Obviously, this demand far exceeds the viable supply of mental health providers. Among other provisions to remove administrative barriers and increase the speed with which trained and qualified practitioners can enter the workforce, HB1300 would establish provisional/associate-level licensure requirements for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs), Mental Health Counselors, and Psychologists. This would ensure a regulatory framework that would encourage relevant and quality training to associate-level providers by authorizing insurance reimbursement for supervised care provided by these post-degree/pre-licensed mental health professionals during the 12 to 24-month period in which they are completing required supervised practice hours under the mentorship and guidance of an independently licensed mental health professional.

In 23 other states, associate-level licensure is already established as common practice. This regulatory approach not only expands clients’ access to providers, it also creates a viable career path for would-be providers: Hawai’i residents interested in pursuing careers as mental health professionals (of which there is a 10,000-15,000 shortage), but who might otherwise not be able to actualize such a career due to outdated statutes that often force post-graduate/pre-licensed providers to work for sub-par wages or even pro bono (while also paying a supervisor to oversee their work, costing MFT supervisees anywhere from \$10,000-\$30,000 for 1,000 hours of supervised direct care during their 2-year post-degree period) and/or in contexts that do not provide sufficiently relevant clinical experience (e.g., prisons, substance abuse centers, case management, etc.) to ensure providers are ready for independent licensure.

This bill would update Hawai'i's licensing statutes in ways that would not only modernize our processes, but ultimately improve the quality and utilization of mental health care provided in our state by creating a more robust system of clinical accountability/training and a financially viable career path for local would-be providers who have a deep understanding of local cultures/customs and who in turn, may be better able to connect with clients, who in turn will be more likely to actually utilize available mental health services.

Moreover, this bill will reduce the loss of potential future mental health professionals to other careers or one of the other 23 states that have already modernized their licensing laws. In turn, this will contribute to the state economy through associate licensing fees, taxes from wages earned by associate-level licensees, and local purchases made by these licensees.

Overall, many aspects of our mental health system are deeply flawed, understaffed, and are in no way prepared to manage the onslaught of mental health issues that the general population are experiencing during and after this pandemic. The consequences of this pandemic, both short- and long-term, in terms of mental health, could be significant and could weaken the Hawai'i health care system.

If we don't develop the means to stave off and/or treat these mental health issues, individuals and families will suffer even more than they already have/do. In all areas of life, untreated mental health issues can become chronic and with crippling, long-term effects – for individuals, families, and communities.

These circumstances call for a change in the paradigm and practices of mental health care in Hawai'i. Our current model of mental health care does not adequately address the complex challenges of modern living. Let's re-vision current models of mental health care delivery by learning from other states and being creative and flexible in how we provide mental health services. To protect our community now and in the future, let's take appropriate action now. Mental health care cannot be an afterthought.

The only amendments to this bill we would recommend is to incorporate the **purpose language of HB1242**, a near-identical bill introduced by Representative Nakashima, but makes clear that this proposal's legislative intent is to meet burgeoning demand for mental health services and keep homegrown talent in Hawaii, without authorizing licensees to do anything they aren't already allowed to do; as well as **clarifying language provided in the National Association of Social Workers – Hawaii Chapter's testimony regarding insurance billing.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Danni Sutana Gardner, MBA

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 1:10:33 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amber Vantze	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is a dire need for mental health services in Hawaii; which is exacerbated by the professional landscape and cost of living here. Associate Licensure will go far to address Hawaii's mental health crisis and keep homegrown therapists here in Hawaii - to serve the people of Hawaii.

As a newly licensed psychotherapist, I have experienced undue challenges in serving the community over the last 3 years. An associate license would have allowed me to assist community members in need.

An associate license is currently available for social workers, I believe the same should be available MHCs, MFTs, and clinical psychologists.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 7:54:07 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Mitsioura	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1300. Allowing for provisional licensure will give us the opportunity to better meet the mental health needs of our community.

Thank you,

Maria

February 2, 2023

RE: HB1300

Aloha Senate Committee on Health & Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1300 and the establishment of provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances. My name is Taliesin Sumner-Longboy, I have been a direct service provider for over 5 years on Hawai'i island and will be graduating from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Thompson School of Social Work in May 2023. In my work as a professional and as a graduate student, I have seen the need for mental health providers as well as the barriers to utilizing qualified graduates to address that need while working under licensed professionals.

This bill will not only provide more on the ground resources for vulnerable populations, but also incentivize graduates to complete clinical hours locally as they will have access to compensation that is otherwise, without the passing of this bill, only available in other states.

I implore you to support this bill and its passage in this legislative session.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Taliesin Longboy', written in a cursive style.

Taliesin Sumner-Longboy

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 8:56:21 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammy Wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha no,

My name is Tammylynn Wallace and I am humbly asking you to support HB1300. I am a student of the University of Hawaii, Social Work program. I graduate with my MSW this May. By passing this bill it would allow students such as myself to provide therapy services to much needed people within our community. The COVID pandemic has place a high demand in services in our nation. On my Island Maui, my job as a community base case manager is to assist my clients to help them find a therapist or psychiatrist for services. This has been a struggle due to providers being full and not able to accommodate. My Island and our state need therapist we are understaffed of mental health workers and are in dire straight. Myself and my cohort are excited and ready to do what we have been going to school for the last 3 years- we are ready to serve our mental health community. By passing this bill it will also relieve providers in experiencing clinical burnouts. This bill is so important and should be greatly considered and move forward.

Thank you for your time- Mahalo!

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 9:34:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Olesya Merkulova	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1300, which establishes provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for early-career mental health professionals and authorizes insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances, among other provisions that remove administrative barriers and increase the speed with trained, qualified, and credentialed practitioners can enter the workforce.

As a practitioner in the Mental Health field, I see the need to help improve access to quality mental health services by supporting legislation for Associate-level Licensure. This bill would allow students who graduate in Hawaii to stay and serve the Hawaiian population; while financially supporting themselves in getting licensure hours.

Unfortunately, while Hawaii has been recognized for its pioneering health insurance laws and high-quality health system, it has yet to catch up with other states in the quality of its mental health system. It ranks lowest of all American states for access to mental health care among adults; by passing this bill, we as a community will be able to raise our state standards and cater to mental health professionals and our community needs.

Mahalo, Olesya Merkulova

Chelsea Farr

Regarding Hawai'i Psychological Association

February 2, 2023

My name is Chelsea Farr, I was born and raised on Maui. I am currently pursuing my masters degree in social work and plan on graduating in May of 2023. I am testifying today on bill HB1300. The purpose of this bill is to help improve access to quality mental health services by supporting legislation for Associate-level Licensure, and insurance reimbursement for supervised services provided by trainees in Psychology, Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling.

Since I was a child, I have always had my mind set on psychology and therapy. I envisioned myself becoming a therapist, specializing in anxiety, depression and PTSD. I have always dealt with my own mental health struggles throughout my childhood and adulthood. So as I got older, this journey became more and more sentimental to me as I was able to understand and process my own trauma more with my knowledge that I am currently learning. As I move into my last year of my social work program, I look forward to providing help into my community as we are so short staffed and lack so much on mental health funding and resources. It was already hard for me 6 years ago trying to find providers for myself to seek therapy and medication management. As the world's crises are constantly on the rise, mental health will also continue to decline, and now more than ever is not the time to have a lack of resources, support and mental health providers.

I am testifying to this bill to advocate for mental health works and patients seeking dire need for mental health. I see it only reasonable to voice my concerns and thoughts on this bill and share my story to reflect on the impact and importance the mental health providers have had in my life. As I stated, the crisis for mental health providers, and funds are alarming. As a year almost passes of the kaiser strike, and there is still no change or action that has been taken to help those employees plagues access to mental health providers. Many people pursuing this field whether it be an LCSW, LMFT, Psychologist or any other counseling professional, we are all unable to fully pursue these roles without the required amount of hours. Though this is understandable, the difference here is that during this time of accumulating these hours, many organizations and providers don't allow you to get paid for completing these hours. The stretch between maintaining a livable wage and trying to complete these task is thin.

This bill proposes that an “Associate License” structure will infuse Hawaii's workforce of mental health providers with recent graduates who are working through their required hours of supervised clinical work, but who otherwise could not be compensated through insurance reimbursement. By allowing an associate license system, this will significantly slow down the exodus of native professionals who prefer to complete their clinical hours on the mainland, where they can be paid, rather than staying in Hawaii, where they would be required to work for free, pay off student loans, and struggle with our disproportionately high cost of living.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. Your consideration of these matters and solutions is very much appreciated.

HB-1300

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 10:06:58 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/3/2023 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea Ludwig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of proposed bill HB1300. Mahalo for you time.