



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 1472, S. D. 1  
RELATING TO BEHAVIORAL HELTH SERVICES**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date, Time and Room: Friday, February 10, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. in Room 211/VIDEO

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests that this measure be  
2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the  
3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governor’s executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure, offers comments, and  
5 proposed amendments.

6 **Department Testimony:** The Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) provides the following  
7 testimony on behalf of the Department.

8 The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to accommodate the increase in call  
9 volume for the Hawaii CARES 988 call center. This measure also appropriates funds to expand  
10 the coordination of crisis intervention services for adults and youth.

11 The Hawaii CARES 988 call center is currently managed by two separate entities; one  
12 which specializes in mental health crisis response and the other which specializes in substance  
13 use disorder treatment referrals. Specifically for mental health crisis response, the current  
14 contractor employs 20 full-time and 13 part-time staff to continue telephonic call center  
15 operations 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In Calendar Year (CY) 2022, a total of 115,587 calls  
16 for mental health crisis response were received which resulted in 725 youth and 7,074 adults

1 utilizing community crisis intervention services including Crisis Mobile Outreach (CMO).  
2 Additionally, in CY22, adult admissions to Licensed Crisis Residential Service (LCRS) beds totaled  
3 1,169 and there were 948 admissions to adult stabilization beds.

4 We note that this measure proposes to expand the coordination of crisis intervention  
5 services for adults and youth through four funding strategies. Our comments regarding each  
6 are noted below.

#### 7 Expanding Hawaii CARES services

8 Where staffing is available, AMHD and the Child Adolescent Mental Health Division  
9 (CAMHD) support the expansion of Hawaii CARES call center staffing and operational  
10 enhancements including tele-crisis support technology. We propose adding additional  
11 positions for the Hawaii CARES 988 call center in anticipation of the expansion of 9-8-8 text and  
12 chat features from its current 2:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. timeframe to 24 hours a day, 7 days a  
13 week.

#### 14 Expanding and Enhancing CMO in Each County

15 We see a benefit to having a CMO worker accompany a law enforcement officer (LEO)  
16 upon receipt of a mental health related call through 9-1-1; however, we do not believe that  
17 every call would warrant the necessity for a medical assessment. Instead, we wonder if it is a  
18 better use of staffing resources to have CMO workers available to consult with LEOs via Wi-Fi  
19 enabled tablets.

#### 20 Expanding LCRS for Youth

21 Currently there is an 8-bed stabilization unit which is routinely underutilized. It could be  
22 that an additional 16 youth crisis beds are not needed; however, we generally do support the  
23 expansion of youth crisis beds. CAMHD has posted three Request for Proposals (RFP) with no

1 successful bids for this service. We do not see that there is a need for a nurse or emergency  
2 medical technician to accompany CMO workers.

### 3 Expanding Stabilization Beds for Adults Across Counties

4 Currently, there are 25 stabilization beds on Oahu and eight beds on Hawaii Island.  
5 AMHD recently awarded stabilization bed contracts to two new providers, one on Maui for six  
6 to 12 beds, and the other on Hawaii Island for an additional eight beds. Despite multiple RFP  
7 solicitations, AMHD has not been successful in procuring stabilization beds on Kauai. We plan to  
8 continue to work to increase the number of stabilization beds in the state.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

10 **Offered Amendments:** We respectfully offer the following amendment.

11 SECTION 1, Page 5, lines 17-19

12 ~~(A) Adding a registered nurse, emergency medical technician, or paramedic to the crisis~~  
13 ~~mobile outreach teams; and~~ Providing access to on-call registered nurse, emergency  
14 medical technician, or paramedic to the crisis mobile outreach teams for real-time  
15 consultation via WiFi enabled tablets; and

16 SECTION 2, page 6, lines 20-21

17 There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of  
18 \$3,202,000.00 or so much thereof as may be necessary... to cover the costs of Hawaii CARES  
19 crisis line including the expansion of the crisis line.

20 SECTION 3, page 8, lines 1-4

21 (1) \$5,100.00 shall be expended for the purchase of WiFi tablets plus an additional  
22 \$1,256,792.00 for staffing related costs for the addition of access to an on-call

1 registered nurse, emergency medical technician, or paramedic to the crisis mobile  
2 outreach teams for real-time consultation via WiFi enabled tablets; and

3 SECTION 5, page 9, lines 1-3

4 There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of  
5 \$8,205,200.00 or so much thereof as may be necessary...



**LATE**

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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Date: February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

From: Hawaii Medical Association

Elizabeth England MD, Co-chair, HMA Legislative Committee

Re: SB1472 SD1, RELATING TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES.

Position: Support

The Hawaii Medical Association is deeply concerned about the impact of mental illness across the state. According to the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), Hawai'i lost 176 lives to suicide in a single year<sup>1</sup>. Despite the high rate of suffering and death associated with mental health disorders, an astounding 67% of affected adults in Hawai'i do not receive proper treatment<sup>2</sup>. This is the highest rate of any state in the country. The situation is even worse for our keiki. Prior to the outbreak of COVID, over 70% of children in Hawai'i suffering from a major depressive episode did not receive treatment<sup>3</sup>. During the pandemic, widespread isolation and social distancing has strained an already overburdened system. Calls to the Hawai'i Crisis Text Line increased by 54% in April 2020, indicating that an even higher proportion of patients are not receiving the mental health care that they need<sup>4</sup>.

In the absence of a comprehensive crisis stabilization system, patients experiencing a mental health crisis face limited options. Law enforcement and emergency medical services (EMS) offer immediate response 24 hours a day, but often lead to excessive costs, delays in care, and/or inadequate treatment<sup>4</sup>. Emergency departments (ED) are appropriate for severely mentally ill patients (i.e. acutely psychotic or actively threatening themselves or others), but are not designed for prolonged treatment over 8-12 hours.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA) identified "regional crisis call center, crisis mobile team response and crisis receiving and stabilization facilities as the "three core components of an effective crisis system"<sup>5</sup>. Research assessing the impact of these programs to be associated with healthcare cost savings, reductions in emergency department visits and psychiatric admissions, and

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improved connection to mental health resources. However, variation in success of individual programs and complications with their implementation, such as inadequate capacity for the case load and delayed response times<sup>6,7</sup>. To increase potential funding and ensure quality of care, the HMA recommends that the crisis outreach program meet the standards to qualify for the 85-Percent Enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage as outlined in Section 9813 of the American Rescue Plan Act<sup>7</sup>.

Properly funding a comprehensive behavioral health crisis stabilization system for Hawaii will save lives. Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify in support of this measure.

## REFERENCES

1. Resources – National Alliance for Mental Illness Hawaii. (n.d.). Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://namihawaii.org/resources/>
2. Adult Data 2021. (n.d.). Mental Health America. <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/2021/mental-healthamerica-adult-data>
3. Youth data 2022. (n.d.). Mental Health America. <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/2022/mental-healthamerica-youth-data>
4. Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division. (n.d.). State of Hawaii Department of Health. <https://health.hawaii.gov/camhd/>
5. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). Crisis Services: Meeting Needs, Saving Lives | SAMHSA Publications and Digital Products. US Department of Health and Human Services. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/crisis-services-meeting-needs-saving-lives/PEP20-08-01-001>
6. Assessing the Impact of Mobile Crisis Teams: A Review of Research. (n.d.). Retrieved March 1, 2022, from <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/IDD/Review%20of%20Mobile%20Crisis%20Team%20Evaluations.pdf>.
7. Mobile Crisis Teams: A State Planning Guide for Medicaid-Financed .... (n.d.). Retrieved March 1, 2022, from <https://www.tacinc.org/resource/state-planning-guide-for-medicaid-financed-mobile-crisis-response>.

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**SB-1472-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 8:41:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/10/2023 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i CARES, through its crisis helpline, a statewide crisis call-line open 24 hour a day, seven days a week, connects Hawai'i residents who are experiencing a mental health crisis with appropriate service providers to reduce instances of hospitalizations, arrests, suicide or other harm.

Hawai'i CARES provides continual care by staying in touch with the individual and providers throughout the duration of treatment. This service is critical to many of Hawai'i's residents, and as the pressures of rising costs of living only grow, so will its importance. Please fund the expansions proposed in this bill. Mahalo.