



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

SENATOR JOY SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date, Time and Room: Friday, February 3, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 225/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 a  
5 proposed amendment.

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

10 “SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Hawaii coordinated access resource entry  
11 system (CARES) is overseen by the department of health’s behavioral health administration and  
12 is managed by two separately contracted entities; one which specializes in behavioral health  
13 crisis response and the other which specializes in substance use disorder treatment referrals.”

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

**SB-1472**

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 8:47:00 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are in support of funding for all these vital services that are part of the continuum of care for people with a mental illness in our community.

**SB-1472**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 11:51:52 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jud Cunningham	Testifying for Aloha House	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support.

# THE KŪPUNA CAUCUS



**Feb 1 2023**

**TO: The Committee on Health and Human Services  
Chair Senator Joy A San Buenaventura  
Vice Chair Senator Henry J.C. Aquino**

**Concerning: SB314, SB397, SB404, SB102, SB761, SB1477, SB1035, SB1118, SB1128,  
SB1134, SB1239, SB1348**

**POSITION: Enthusiastic Support of all bills**

**ALOHA Chair Buenaventura and Vice Chair Aquino, and all members of the committee**

**On behalf of the Kupuna Caucus' Health and Medical Services sub-committee I am testifying in support of all of the proposed legislation as listed above.**

Each one represents a vital step towards keeping our medical professionals here in Hawaii and keeping practitioner offices open for everybody but especially for seniors who often depend on Medicare and Medicaid for health related care and procedures.

Currently it is almost impossible for individual doctors to maintain their own offices without 2 to 4 additional doctors sharing the financial burdens. The extraordinary amount of insurance related paperwork they must file to get paid is over whelming and complicated and often redundant. They have to hire accounting specialists to deal with it so only Medical Corporations survive under those conditions.

I have done my own research and ever single doctor I spoke with (and every doctor my friends/fellow seniors from precinct 2 District 27spoke with) said that the one thing that is affecting them the most are the State's excise taxes which are being addressed in SB102, 761, 1472, 1035, 1118, 1128,1134,1239, and 1348.

When patients receive a bill, they usually do not pay the tax themselves, even if their insurance Company does not pay the tax. The same applies to medical products, prescriptions, any and all support services provided by health and medical practices. In addition Medicare and Medicaid covered bill also never pay the state tax leaving the practitioners or health related institutions and facilities to cover the taxes out of pocket. A number of doctors do not accept Medicare and/Medicaid covered clients or are forced to refer current clients to other medical groups for that reason. This is as concerning as the shortage of doctors all over the state. These bills are what our state can do to encourage them to stay.

Martha E Randolph  
Precinct 2 Rep, District 27 Council  
DPH Environmental Caucus SCC Representative and  
Member of the DPH Legislative Priorities Committee

**To: Committee on Health and Human Services**

**Hearing Date/Time: Friday, February 3, 2023 1:00 PM**

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 1472**

**From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center**

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) supports SB 1472 which would appropriate funds to expand the 988 crisis line (also known as CARES line) and crisis response services, including stabilization beds. There was a need prior to COVID for these services and the need is greater than ever with 1 in 4 persons experiencing mental health challenges.

HHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

HHRC was part of the first stabilization beds in the state (facility was returned to owner 12.31.22) and understands the importance of having facilities that can take referrals from hospitals, community providers, law enforcement and family members and to ensure a safe place for people to reside while their mental health and/or substance use is addressed. These programs, along with the crisis line, need more funds to ensure that anyone experiencing a crisis has a safe place to sleep and recover.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

**SB-1472**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 4:00:39 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dr. Guy Yatsushiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support



**SB-1472**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 4:07:42 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dara Yatsushiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand in SUPPORT

**SB-1472**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 5:41:49 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crystal Charkowski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: The Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee of the State of Hawai'i Senate

My name is Crystal Charkowski, and I am a resident of Kailua-Kona, on the island of Hawai'i and an MSW student with the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 1472 RELATING TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES.

This bill asks for funding and resources to support the growth and current needs of CARES Hawai'i and the National Suicide Hotline calls. According to the CDC, in 2020, there were 184 successful suicides in the state of Hawai'i. This statistic does not report the number of people who struggled with suicidal ideation, made plans to kill themselves, or how many suicide attempts were made. According to the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention nationwide there were 1.2 million reported suicide attempts recorded in 2020, with an average of 130 daily suicides affecting 4 times as many men as women. Suicide has been directly linked to lack of community and loneliness which exacerbates mental illness or substance abuse, along with thoughts such as "no one understands me" or "I am unlovable, unwanted or alone." SB 1472 plans to address this social problem by providing trained human connection for those in the State of Hawai'i that desperately need to know they are not alone.

As a social work student, I currently remind patients seen at my practicum in Kailua-Kona to use the Hawai'i CARES line or 988 if they are in crisis. It is also painfully known that resources on the island of Hawai'i and the rest of the State are limited. I support this legislation and the growth of Hawai'i CARES resources, as I plan to utilize these resources to support the mental health of my fellow community members.

I was first introduced to suicidal ideation at the young age of 15, with a classmate who was brave enough to ask for help because she was depressed, scared and felt alone. By asking for help, this strong amazing woman now has a loving husband, 2 growing almost adult children and is an active member of her community.

To many the national and state statistics may seem cold and impersonal. However, I have personally lost 5 friends to suicide in the past 10 years. Ranging from a middle-class, white dad of two pre-teens who hung himself in an alcohol induced depression, to my childhood best friend who shot herself, and devastatingly only 18 months later, her 19 year old daughter also committed suicide. My hope is that the expanded services provided by SB1472 will help men, women and children in the state of Hawai'i who are in crisis due to suicidal ideation or other

mental health needs know; You are understood, You are loved, You are wanted and You are NOT alone.

I strongly support the SB1472 and look forward to the lives it will save and the ripple effects it will produce in strengthening our communities!

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important social issue!

Crystal Charkowski

Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i

**SB-1472**

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 1:05:53 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/3/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support SB1472.