
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 many homeless people
2 struggle with mental illnesses or substance abuse issues and
3 would benefit from mental health assistance. According to the
4 United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
5 Administration, approximately twenty-five per cent of homeless
6 persons in the United States suffer from a severe mental
7 illness. Often, law enforcement officers are dispatched to
8 respond to a homeless person experiencing a mental health crisis
9 but lack the expertise and resources to adequately help. The
10 legislature finds that more effective care could be offered if a
11 mental health professional was available to assist police
12 officers, or other first responders, in responding to mental
13 health crises.

14 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to create a five-
15 year pilot program to expand existing county programs that make
16 one or more mental health professionals available to assist



1 county first responders in responding to mental health crises in
2 areas in the urban core with high rates of homelessness.

3 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the adult
4 mental health division of the department of health a pilot
5 program to expand existing county programs that make one or more
6 mental health professionals available to assist county first
7 responders in responding to mental health crises in areas in the
8 urban core with high rates of homelessness.

9 (b) The adult mental health division of the department of
10 health shall administer the pilot program in each county having
11 a population of more than six hundred thousand.

12 (c) The pilot program shall terminate on December 31,
13 2028.

14 (d) The department of health shall submit a report of its
15 findings and recommendations, including a recommendation on
16 whether the pilot program should be extended or made permanent
17 and any proposed enabling legislation, to the legislature no
18 later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular
19 session of 2028.

20 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much



1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the
2 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
3 2024-2025 for the pilot program established by section 2 of this
4 Act.

5 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
6 of health for the purposes of this Act.

7 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

8

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 19 2023



H.B. NO. 282

Report Title:

DOH; Mental Health; Homelessness; County First Responders; Pilot Program; Report; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a five-year pilot program in the department of health to expand existing county programs that make one or more mental health professionals available to assist county first responders in responding to mental health crises in areas in the urban core with high rates of homelessness. Requires a report to the legislature. Appropriates funds.

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