
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 providers in the State. This shortage
3 is due to a lack of appropriately educated individuals and high
4 rates of turnover in the field, which is exacerbated by
5 compassion fatigue, burnout, and inadequate preparation for
6 mental health serving positions. 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 increasingly higher qualifications, as the initial certificate
17 of competence opens a pathway to further training and



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

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



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

3 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
4 university of Hawaii to expand and support the mental health
5 technician certificate of competence program.

6 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
8 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 to
9 support and expand the mental health technician certificate of
10 competence program through the hiring of one full-time
11 equivalent (1.0 FTE) mental health technician certificate of
12 competence program coordinator, establishment of a scholarship
13 program, granting of scholarships, and funding of other
14 necessary administrative costs.

15 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the university of
16 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

17 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on June 30, 2023.



Report Title:

Mental Health Technician Certificate of Competence Program;
University of Hawaii; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to support and expand the Mental Health Technician Certificate of Competence Program through the hiring of a Mental Health Technician Certificate of Competence Program Coordinator, establishment of a scholarship program, granting of scholarships, and funding of other necessary administrative costs. Effective 6/30/2023. (SD1)

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