
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Native Hawaiians
2 experience distinct mental health disparities that pervade their
3 day-to-day well-being and hinder their overall health.

4 For example, youth suicide attempts and death rates in
5 Hawaii are highest among Native Hawaiians, profoundly impacting
6 their families and communities. Alarming, Native Hawaiian
7 youth and emerging adults in Hawaii are 2.3 times more likely to
8 die of suicide than their Caucasian peers. Native Hawaiian
9 youth are also twice as likely as Caucasian youth to have
10 attempted suicide in a given year.

11 The legislature recognizes that the mental health
12 disparities experienced by Native Hawaiians start, tragically,
13 in the early years of life. Native Hawaiian keiki are
14 over-represented as victims of abuse and neglect. In high
15 school, female Native Hawaiian students experience feelings of
16 sadness or hopelessness to a greater degree than other students.
17 Native Hawaiian youth also have some of the highest rates of



1 drug use in the State. Not surprisingly, these mental health
2 disparities often persist for Native Hawaiians throughout
3 adulthood and as senior citizens. Studies on Native Hawaiian
4 mental health illustrate the pressing need for state
5 interventions and confirm that culturally-based programs are
6 four times more successful at addressing Native Hawaiians'
7 specific mental health needs.

8 The legislature notes that Native Hawaiians tend to
9 underutilize existing mental health services, seeking therapy
10 only after their mental illness becomes severe. They are also
11 more likely to leave treatment programs prematurely. Cultural
12 incongruence with western mental health approaches may be a
13 driving factor in Native Hawaiians' underutilization of mental
14 health services. Experts have found that clients are more
15 likely to seek out and use mental health services when their
16 values and beliefs are congruent with the interventions
17 provided.

18 The legislature recognizes its obligation to address health
19 disparities throughout the State. Specifically, section
20 226-20(b)(7), Hawaii Revised Statutes, directs decision makers
21 to "[p]rioritize programs, services, interventions, and



1 activities that address identified social determinants of health
2 to improve native Hawaiian health and well-being[.]" The
3 legislature also recognizes that eliminating health disparities
4 and achieving health equity across demographics is a national
5 priority.

6 The legislature further finds that the state council on
7 mental health is responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and
8 advising on the allocation and adequacy of the State's mental
9 health resources. The legislature similarly finds that it is
10 important for council members to receive annual training on
11 topics related to Native Hawaiian healing and health. This
12 requirement will help the State advance culturally responsive
13 policies and programs that may be critical to addressing the
14 dire mental health needs of Hawaii's Native Hawaiian and Pacific
15 islander communities.

16 Accordingly, consistent with the commitment embodied in Act
17 155, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014, the purpose of this Act is to
18 require members of the council to receive annual training on
19 topics related to Native Hawaiian healing and health.

20 SECTION 2. Section 334-10, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
21 amended to read as follows:



1 "§334-10 State council on mental health. (a) There is
2 established, within the department of health for administrative
3 purposes, a state council on mental health. The council shall
4 consist of twenty-one members appointed by the governor as
5 provided in section 26-34. In making appointments to the
6 council, the governor shall ensure that all service area boards
7 of the State are represented, and that a majority of the members
8 are nonproviders of mental health or other health services, and
9 that a majority of the members are not state employees. The
10 number of parents of children with serious emotional
11 disturbances shall be sufficient to provide adequate
12 representation of such children in the deliberations of the
13 council. The council shall be composed of residents of the
14 State, including individuals representing:

- 15 (1) The principal state agencies with respect to mental
16 health, education, vocational rehabilitation, criminal
17 justice, housing, medicaid, and social services;
18 (2) Public and private entities concerned with the need,
19 planning, operation, funding, and use of mental health
20 services and related support services;



1 (3) Adults with serious mental illnesses who are
2 receiving, or have received, mental health services;

3 (4) The families of such adults or families of children
4 with serious emotional disturbances; and

5 (5) The Hawaii advisory commission on drug abuse and
6 controlled substances who shall be a person
7 knowledgeable about the community and the
8 relationships between mental health, mental illness,
9 and substance abuse.

10 (b) The council shall elect a chairperson from among its
11 members. All members shall serve without compensation but shall
12 be paid their necessary expenses in attending meetings of the
13 council.

14 (c) Members of the council shall receive annual training
15 on topics related to Native Hawaiian healing and health,
16 including training on cultural awareness and loss of ethnic
17 identity.

18 [~~e~~] (d) The council shall advise the department on
19 allocation of resources, statewide needs, and programs affecting
20 two or more service areas. The council shall review and comment
21 on the statewide comprehensive integrated service plan and shall



1 serve as an advocate for adults with serious mental illness,
2 children with serious emotional disturbances, other individuals
3 with mental illnesses or emotional problems, and individuals
4 with combined mental illness substance abuse disorders.

5 [~~(d)~~] (e) If the department's action is not in conformance
6 with the council's advice, the department shall provide a
7 written explanation of its position to the council.

8 [~~(e)~~] (f) The council shall prepare and submit an annual
9 report to the governor and the legislature on implementation of
10 the statewide comprehensive integrated service plan. The report
11 presented to the legislature shall be submitted at least twenty
12 days prior to the convening of each regular session.

13 [~~(f)~~] (g) A quorum for purposes of doing business shall
14 consist of a majority of the members serving on the council
15 immediately before a meeting begins.

16 [~~(g)~~] (h) If a quorum is present when a vote is taken, the
17 affirmative vote of a majority of members present shall
18 constitute a valid act of the council unless this chapter,
19 part I of chapter 92, the articles of incorporation, or the
20 bylaws require a greater number of affirmative votes."



1 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



Report Title:

State Council on Mental Health; Native Hawaiian Health Practices

Description:

Requires council members to receive annual training on topics related to Native Hawaiian healing and health. (SD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

