
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 research on health
2 and safety reveals that mental illness is one of the most
3 pressing challenges humanity is facing today. The prevalence of
4 both acute and chronic mental illnesses has been on the rise in
5 the State and globally over the past two decades. Untreated
6 mental illness is one of the top predictors of suicide,
7 substance abuse, incarceration, and adult disability. This is
8 especially concerning for historically marginalized and
9 under-resourced communities, which are at significantly higher
10 risk of mental illness and also have more limited access to
11 mental health education, resources, and support. Mental illness
12 at the individual level compounds across communities and leads
13 to negative statewide outcomes, including increased joblessness,
14 homelessness, domestic violence, violent crime, and school
15 dropout rates.

16 The legislature further finds that research conducted over
17 the past fifty years in the fields of psychology, public health,



1 neuroscience, and organizational development demonstrate the
2 critical importance of a tiered approach to comprehensively
3 address statewide mental health concerns and provide every
4 individual with the skills and resources they need to take care
5 of themselves, their families, and their broader ecosystems.
6 Tier 1 mental health support systems provide skills training,
7 curricula, and programming to all stakeholders of an
8 organization such as schools, community centers, police and fire
9 departments, medical institutions, and other first responder
10 facilities. Tier 1 systems provide a common vocabulary and set
11 of wellness practices that members of the organization
12 collectively share to promote a safe and healthy organizational
13 culture for everyone. Tier 2 mental health support systems
14 recognize that certain populations within an organization may be
15 at higher risk for certain mental illnesses than others, and so
16 these groups require specialized training, support, and
17 skill-building that is culturally contextualized to best support
18 the specific needs of the high-risk group. Tier 2 systems
19 therefore exist to provide additional specialized group support
20 interventions. Taken together, these tiers of support cover the



1 core mental health needs of individuals, groups, organizations,
2 and communities.

3 The legislature further finds that a comprehensive mental
4 health support system on a statewide level requires the seamless
5 integration of tier 1 and 2 support services. Tier 1 systems
6 benefit public institutions through whole-organization tier 1
7 training for students, school staff, firefighters, police
8 officers, medical staff, and other first responder groups.
9 Higher risk groups within each of these organizations benefit
10 from tier 2 approaches through culturally responsive support
11 systems. Overall, mentally well individuals create safe and
12 healthy communities, which further promote a safe and healthy
13 state for all citizens.

14 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 15 (1) Establish the state of well-being project and a
16 timeline for the project to:
- 17 (A) Assess current tiers of mental health support
18 services; and
- 19 (B) Enhance existing well-being programming and, when
20 non-existent, build out culturally grounded and
21 community-informed well-being programming to



1 establish mental health support services for key
2 stakeholder communities across the State; and

3 (2) Appropriate funds.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 27, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
5 by adding a new section to part IX to be appropriately
6 designated and to read as follows:

7 "§27- State of well-being project; established. (a)

8 There is established within the office the state of well-being
9 project to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health
10 support services for key stakeholder communities across the
11 State. The project shall:

12 (1) Assess and enhance existing tier 1 and tier 2 mental
13 health training and ongoing support services to public
14 schools, public community centers, first responder
15 groups, police departments, fire departments,
16 hospitals, and medical staff and, when non-existent,
17 build out culturally grounded and community-informed
18 well-being programming;

19 (2) Track and measure aggregate mental health trends
20 across all populations served by the project; and



1 (3) Hire and train mental health specialists and work with
2 approved partner organizations identified by the
3 office to lead project execution across tier 1 and
4 tier 2 support services in each stakeholder
5 community.

6 (b) The office shall administer the state of well-being
7 project in accordance with the following timeline:

8 (1) Beginning in 2024, initiate a landscape assessment of
9 existing tier 1 and tier 2 services by December 31,
10 2025; and

11 (2) Beginning in 2025, initiate the enhancement of
12 existing tier 1 and tier 2 services and, when
13 non-existent, build out culturally grounded and
14 community-informed well-being programming, with
15 statewide implementation to be achieved by
16 December 31, 2027.

17 (c) For the purposes of this section:

18 "Tier 1 mental health support" means well-being service
19 provision that is aimed at the entire system and population
20 within an organization.



1 "Tier 2 mental health support" means well-being service
2 provision that is aimed at populations within an organization
3 that are at higher risk of mental health challenges."

4 SECTION 3. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended by adding a new section to part XXI to be appropriately
6 designated and to read as follows:

7 "§346- State of well-being project; established. (a)
8 There is established within the office the state of well-being
9 project to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health
10 support services for key stakeholder communities across the
11 State. The project shall:

12 (1) Assess and enhance existing tier 1 and tier 2 mental
13 health training and ongoing support services to public
14 schools, public community centers, first responder
15 groups, police departments, fire departments,
16 hospitals, and medical staff and, when non-existent,
17 build out culturally grounded and community-informed
18 well-being programming;

19 (2) Track and measure aggregate mental health trends
20 across all populations served by the project; and



1 (3) Hire and train mental health specialists and work with
2 approved partner organizations identified by the
3 office to lead project execution across tier 1 and
4 tier 2 support services in each key stakeholder
5 community.

6 (b) The office shall administer the state of well-being
7 project in accordance with the following timeline:

8 (1) Beginning in 2024, initiate a landscape assessment of
9 existing tier 1 and tier 2 services by December 31,
10 2025; and

11 (2) Beginning in 2025, initiate the enhancement of
12 existing tier 1 and tier 2 services and, when
13 non-existent, build out culturally grounded and
14 community-informed well-being programming, with
15 statewide implementation to be achieved by
16 December 31, 2027.

17 (c) For the purposes of this section:

18 "Tier 1 mental health support" means well-being service
19 provision that is aimed at the entire system and population
20 within an organization.



1 "Tier 2 mental health support" means well-being service
2 provision that is aimed at populations within an organization
3 that are at higher risk of mental health challenges."

4 SECTION 4. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of
5 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,
6 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the
7 appropriations contained in Act 164, Regular Session of 2023,
8 and this Act will cause the state general fund expenditure
9 ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be exceeded by
10 \$ or per cent. This current declaration takes
11 into account general fund appropriations authorized for fiscal
12 year 2024-2025 in Act 164, Regular Session of 2023, and this Act
13 only. The reasons for exceeding the general fund expenditure
14 ceiling are that:

- 15 (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to
16 serve the public interest; and
- 17 (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs
18 addressed by this Act.

19 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
20 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
21 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 to



1 establish the state of well-being project and
2 fund full-time equivalent (.0 FTE) mental health
3 specialist positions within the office of wellness and
4 resilience.

5 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of
6 wellness and resilience for the purposes of this Act.

7 SECTION 6. New statutory material is underscored.

8 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050;
9 provided that:

- 10 (1) Section 2 of this Act shall be repealed on June 30,
11 2025; and
12 (2) Section 3 of this Act shall take effect on July 1,
13 2025.



Report Title:

OWR; State of Well-being Project; Tier 1 and Tier 2 Mental Health Support Services; General Fund Expenditure Ceiling Exceeded; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes within the Office of Wellness and Resilience the State of Well-being Project to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services for all key stakeholder communities across the State. Appropriates moneys to establish an unspecified number of full-time equivalent mental health specialist positions within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 is exceeded. Effective 7/1/2050.
(SD1)

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