

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Testimony of **John Mizuno**
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness
Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 28, 2024
10:01 a.m., Conference Room 211

In consideration of
Senate Bill No. 2885 SD1
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB2885 SD1 which will establish a working group within the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) to develop a triage center program that focuses on serving homeless individuals with substance abuse issues or mental illness.

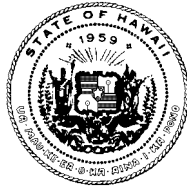
Creating more space for individuals with mental or behavioral health needs is a priority for the SOHHS and the Green administration. Homeless individuals suffering from behavioral health conditions often repeatedly enter hospitals and into the criminal justice system. Expanding both clinical and community-based facilities for behavioral and mental health healing will save the state's dollars and will allow for emergency departments and law enforcement officers to direct resources to other priorities in our communities.

If this bill passes, I will be happy to co-chair this working group to develop the triage center program. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

Mahalo,

John Mizuno
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

February 27, 2024

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2885 SD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: February 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and provides comments. The Department defers to the Department of Health and the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS). DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation does not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a Homeless Triage Center Program Working Group within the Statewide Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions in the Department of Human Services. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. Makes an appropriation. (SD1)

The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services amended the measure by:

- (1) Deleting the contents of the original measure and inserting language to establish a working group within the SOHHS in DHS to develop a triage center program that focuses on serving homeless individuals with substance abuse issues or mental illness.
- (2) Amending section 1 to reflect its amended purpose; and

- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

DHS agrees to participate in the working group to develop and assess additional models of service to address the needs of homeless individuals with co-occurring behavioral health and substance use concerns. According to the 2023 statewide Point in Time Count, of the total individuals surveyed, 26% (=1,640) reported severe mental illness, and 20% (=1279) reported chronic substance use.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



SB2885 SD1 Homeless Triage Center

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Monday, Feb 12, 2024: 1:02: Room 415 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB2885 SD1:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

HSAC recommends amendments to the following:

Section 1 (1) (c) Add 10) A representative of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition as determined by D.H.S.

Most of the people who need temporary care suffer from homelessness that includes **substance abuse, and mental health which is called co-occurring disorder.**

HSAC supports a working group and recommends that DHS work closely with DOH given that this service pertains to homeless people that have substance abuse and mental health co-occurring disorders, which services would include mild detoxification and initiating psychiatric medication.

This is a great opportunity to stabilize them and then refer to co-occurring disorder treatment (treats both mental illness and substance abuse in one setting) because once housed. 50% to 70% of homeless will want some form of recovery through treatment.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.

SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 3:14:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John C Jack Lewin MD	Testifying for Hawaii State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Honorable Chair Donovan Dela Cruz and

Honorable Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki

RE: SB 2885 SD1 Relating to Homelessness

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members:

SHPDA strongly supports this bill to allow DHS to establish a much needed triage center for homeless individuals. We stand on our previous testimony in support.

Mahlo nui Loa,

John C. (Jack) Lewin MD

Administrator, SHPDA

PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Continuum of Care

Our mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2885 SD1: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)
Hearing: **Wednesday, 2/28/24; 10:01 am; CR 211 or via videoconference**

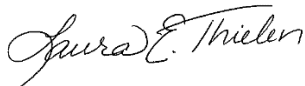
Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB2885 SD1: Relating to Homelessness** which shall establish a triage center program for homeless individuals and appropriates funds for the implementation of the triage center program. Partners In Care (PIC) is a coalition of more than 60 non-profit homelessness providers, individuals with lived experience and concerned community members across O'ahu.

Services including detox and mental health care are severely lacking throughout the state and the establishment of this triage center will fill a gap in available services. While we strongly support this measure, we would encourage more centers and programs like the one being piloted by IHS.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and comments in support of SB 2885 SD1. Please do not hesitate to reach out to PIC for any additional information.

Mahalo,



Laura E. Thielen
Executive Director
Partners In Care – O'ahu Continuum of Care



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BILL SB2885 SD1
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: February 28, 2024

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports SB2885_SD1, which establishes a Homeless Triage Center Program Working Group within the Statewide Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions in the Department of Human Services.

The challenges faced by Hawaii's homeless individuals with behavioral health conditions are immense and often result in high utilization of hospital emergency departments, leading to significant costs for the state's health systems. SB2885 SD1 recognizes the importance of providing appropriate care and support to these individuals by establishing a triage center program focused on assessing their physical and mental impairments and providing timely interventions. By doing so, we can help them overcome barriers to accessing proper medical treatment and essential resources such as food, hygiene, safety, and transportation.

The American Psychological Association has found that rates of mental illness are twice as high among homeless individuals than that found in the general population. Investing in a triage center program is not only a compassionate response to homelessness, but also a fiscally responsible one. This program is grounded in evidence-based practices and has the potential to contribute to ending the cycle of homelessness in Hawaii. The successful pilot program conducted by HIS at 'Imi Ola Piha demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach in transitioning homeless individuals from the streets to permanent housing while addressing their healthcare needs.

We urge you to pass SB2885 SD1, as this will be a crucial and necessary step towards addressing the urgent needs of our homeless population, particularly those suffering from behavioral mental health conditions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kayla Keehu-Alexander".

Kayla Keehu- Alexander
Vice President, Community Impact
Aloha United Way

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne Skjold".

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way

SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 5:01:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB2885 SD1