



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

February 18, 2024

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: **Measure:** S.B. No. 3279 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH
Hearing Date: Friday, February 23, 2024
Time: 10:30 a.m
Location: Conference Room 211

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) supports S.B. No. 3279, defers to the Office of Wellness and Resiliency (OWR).

A comprehensive mental health support system is crucial to address acute and chronic mental health issues. The prevalence of these issues is on the rise, particularly as we continue to address the impacts of COVID, and more recently, the Maui wildfires.

EOEL would like to especially note that supporting early mental health and development in the youngest years is critical. Mental health issues, even at this stage of the earliest years, can be caused by biological and/or development factors, experiences of trauma such as family violence, child abuse and neglect, parental substance abuse, and experiencing systems of poverty. These issues may result in developmental delays that could have long-lasting and detrimental impacts to children's health and development. As such, it is crucial to ensure implementation factors supports for our youngest keiki as well.

We look forward to continuing to work with other stakeholders and departments to continue strengthening the systems of support for our youngest keiki across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

JON N. IKENAGA
STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

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STATE OF HAWAI'I
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**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender,
State of Hawai'i to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

February 23, 2024

S.B. 3279 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

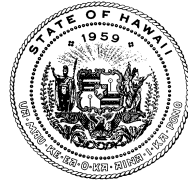
Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender supports the intent of S.B. 3279.

This measure would establish the State of Well-Being Project to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services across the State of Hawaii.

The Office of the Public Defender is in strong support of the establishment of the State of Well-Being Project. We believe this project would be able to review current data, collect statistics, and assess and improve mental health support services for the clients we serve. Many of our clients have experienced trauma and are experiencing a mental health crisis both at the tier 1 and the tier 2 levels of need. We are in agreement that our State is in need of improved mental health training and improved support services for agencies and departments that provide these services. We are in strong support of the development and implementation of best practices for these services through the State of Well-Being Project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE
KE KE'ENA KŪPA'A MAULI OLA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
415 S.BERETANIA ST. #415
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 3279
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

February 23, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. Room Number: 211

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR), housed in the Office of the Governor, **SUPPORTS** S.B. 3279, Relating to Mental Health, and offers comments.

Established through Act 291 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022), the overall aim of the OWR is to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. The Office is focused on breaking down barriers that impact the physical, social, and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people. It explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support.

S.B. 3279 proposes the establishment of the well-being project within the OWR. The measure would allow OWR to accelerate and strengthen the Office's mission of creating a trauma-informed state. Since the inception of the OWR, we have initiated training and technical assistance supports with several state departments, specifically around the implementation of trauma-informed care. While the OWR does not provide direct mental healthcare, we provide technical assistance and training on implementing trauma-informed care in all state agencies, including those who provide direct mental health support services. This bill would allow OWR to expand its work and engage entities beyond state departments to incorporate culturally grounded and community-informed well-being programs.

The OWR appreciates the committee recognizing the effectiveness of a tiered approach to comprehensively address the mental health, well-being, and resilience of the people of Hawai'i. The Office understands the two tiers laid out in the measure as population-based well-being interventions, and offers the following definitions of tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support for the committee's consideration. Tier 1 mental health support shall be defined as "well-being service provision that is aimed at the entire system and population within an organization." An example of a tier 1 mental health support is collectively learning trauma-informed wellness practices to promote a more resilient organization. Tier 2 mental health support shall be defined as "well-being service provision that is aimed at populations within an organization that are at higher risk of mental health challenges." An example of tier 2 mental health support is offering specialized training to recognize and respond to trauma that the higher-risk group might endure.

Finally, the OWR offers comments on the timeline that has been put forward in S.B. 3279. With adequate resources, the OWR is confident that we can conduct a landscape analysis that: 1) identifies existing programs that support wellness and resilience in our communities, and 2) assesses the effectiveness of these programs. Data gathered through this landscape analysis will allow our Office to determine what

fiscal resources are needed to enhance existing programs and support communities in building out programs to support wellness and resilience when such programs cannot be identified.

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is an approach to understanding and responding to the widespread impact of trauma. By passing this bill, the State would be upholding the TIC principles of Safety, Peer Support, Empowerment, and Voice and Choice, which strengthens our pathway toward a trauma-informed state. As such, the OWR **SUPPORTS** S.B. 3279.

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

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tia L.R. Hartsock', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Tia L.R. Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA
Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience
Office of the Governor



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3279:
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

TO: House Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Friday 02/23/2024; 10:30 AM; CR 211 & via videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **SB 3279**, which establishes with 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. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, veterans, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has providing counseling services to individuals and families for years. The needs of the various populations we serve vary and therefore their mental health and well-being needs also vary.

The project addresses a pressing need to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services for key stakeholder communities throughout Hawaii. Mental health is a vital aspect of overall well-being, and ensuring access to high quality, trauma-informed mental health services is a fundamental responsibility of our state.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports the Office of Wellness and Resilience and their efforts to make Hawaii a trauma-informed state and ensuring we have an array of effective mental health services. By supporting this bill, we are taking a significant step towards creating a healthier and more resilient community that thrives on the well-being of its residents.

We urge your support for this bill and ask for your assistance in its passing during this legislative session.

Please contact our Director of Advocacy and Community Relations, Shellie Niles at (808) 527-4813 if you have any questions.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813





MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

LATE

HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 225
Friday, February 23, 2024, 10:30 A.M.

To The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

SUPPORT SB3279 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS SB3279**.

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

Additionally, we have seen the importance of mental health support services given the trauma that many face following the August 8 wildfires. We appreciate this bill as there are gaps in support services that are vital to address. We also encourage the group to consider how to broaden the capacity of the Hawaii State Hospital to not only assist those who have committed a felony, but to the wider community who need critical mental health care.

We support efforts to establish the state of well-being project and a timeline for the project to:

- (A) Assess the tiers of mental health support services that currently exist; and
- (B) Enhance existing well-being programming and, when non-existent, build out culturally grounded and community-informed well-being programming to establish mental health support services for key stakeholder communities across the State.

This is a crucial tool in the toolbox on fighting homelessness and supporting the care for those with mental illnesses. For these reasons, we **SUPPORT SB3279** and respectfully ask that it be passed.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

LATE

FROM: EOPA Code Blue Water Solutions

SUBJECT: Support for S.B. No. 3279 as amended

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Measure: S.B. No. 3279 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Hearing Date: Friday, February 23, 2024

Time: 10:30 am

Location: Conference Room 211

Elected Officials to Protect America (EOPA) Code Blue Water Solutions is a nonpartisan network of current and former elected officials who care deeply about protecting our lands, waters, and democracy while ensuring environmental justice and solving the climate emergency.

We view this legislation as an important step in climate resilience, given the increase in climate-related disasters. The need is especially urgent after the tragic fires on Maui. S.B. 3279 is uniquely impactful as it focuses on Tier 1 and 2 well-being and mental health.

Tier 1 mental health services include about 90% of the population and provides foundational mental health services for everyone. This includes well-being service provisions that are aimed at the entire system and population. Tier 1 services include early intervention, support, and education so that all stakeholders know how to take care of themselves and their communities. This is the critical starting point for building a shared vocabulary and set of practices to promote positive health outcomes and prevent illness in the future. Tier 1 significantly reduces the burden on Tier 2 and Tier 3 systems. Tier 2 services are targeted at higher-risk groups and are generally 7% percent of the population. Tier 3 involves one-on-one clinical counseling for individuals with conditions that require special attention and generally includes 3% of the population.

Research conducted over the past twenty years in the fields of positive psychology, education, neuroscience, and public health demonstrates the critical importance of Tier 1 mental health support for the health, safety, and success of our communities, schools, and civil institutions. Hundreds of studies and dozens of meta-analyses provide clear evidence that basic training and practices in emotion regulation, prosocial behaviors, positive psychology, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness will significantly reduce the prevalence of emotional trauma, depression, anxiety, stress, and burnout. This improves relationships, increases academic achievement and job performance, and reduces the risk of maladaptive emotion regulation behaviors like substance abuse, social isolation, and violence.

The positive impact of Tier 1 mental health support systems is particularly effective in improving the health of higher-risk populations and high-burnout and high-turnover

occupations. Providing adults and children with the preventative skills and training to help care for their own basic mental health is more effective and less costly than attempting to reverse mental health issues later with Tier 3 individual care. Focusing on Tier 1 has the ability to reduce the number of Tier 3 cases, reducing costs and improving the health of the overall community.

We enthusiastically support S.B. No. 3279 with the following suggested amendment to ensure the definitions of Tier 1 and 2 are clear. This is important as it will help inform how to develop and implement an effective program. The following references the established definition of tiers from the American Psychological Association and the organizational psychology literature.

“Tier 1 (Universal) shall be defined as: Well-being service provisions that are aimed at the entire system and population within an organization. Successful Tier 1 programs must include, but not limited to:

- Program implementation is focused on whole-organization Tier 1 mental health support and offers continuous care and year-round learning for all stakeholders.
- The program is culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of the communities it is serving.
- The program is evidence-based in the psychological and/or medical sciences, with published, peer-reviewed scientific evidence of program efficacy.
- The program includes age-differentiated lesson plans designed to support children and adults across all developmental phases of life from two years old into adulthood.
- The program must offer at least all of the following practices and tools across multiple domains of positive psychology and organizational culture: (a) Mindfulness and emotion regulation, (b) Prosocial behavior, (c) Positive character development, (d) Positive community development, (e) Self-awareness (f) Emotional intelligence.
- The program delivery methodology offers multiple channels of learning, including but not limited to: (a) Asynchronous digital learning capabilities. (b) Synchronous digital learning capabilities in cohorts or groups. (c) Live in-person training and onsite implementation.
- The program includes tracking, measuring, and reporting both program impact and implementation fidelity across all sites.
- The implementation of the program is scalable and centers on community cohort learning rather than individual learning.”

“Tier 2 (Groups) shall be defined as: well-being service provisions that are aimed at populations within an organization that are at higher risk of mental health challenges. Successful Tier 2 programs must include, but not limited to:

- Programming shall include the above Tier 1 criteria as a baseline.
- The program provides specialized mental health care support for groups with a higher risk of mental illness.

- Program services must deeply understand a particular population within a community and be designed to support systems to uplift well-being and prevent illness for that group.
- The program provides additional context and support to Tier 1 programs.
- The program connects individuals to Tier 3 providers when acute care is needed.”

S.B. 3279 takes a holistic approach to mental health that can be an example for other states and nations. Hawaii can lead the nation and be the first State of Well-being. Elected Officials to Protect America Code Blue Water Solutions **SUPPORTS** S.B. 3279.



Alex Cornell du Houx
Frm. State Representative, President of Elected Officials to Protect America,
Professor USF Masters in Public Leadership and Director of the Certificate in Public Leadership,
Marine veteran.

SB-3279

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 5:36:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bronson Teixeira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I would like to vote in support of this bill. Thank you.

Dela Cruz, Donovan M.
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

SB3279 Relating to Mental Health

February 23, 2024

Testimony for WAM

IN SUPPORT

Aloha mai kākou, my name is Richard Dominguez, and I am a student at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health at UH Mānoa. As social work students we are taught that we are agents of change and so I am here testifying in favor of Senate Bill 3279.

I support Senate Bill No. 3279, as through various research studies and data, mental illness is a prevailing matter within the United States that intersects with other social problems such as homelessness, addiction, and substance use. The COVID-19 Pandemic has only intensified the matter as since 2021 over 187,000 adults in Hawai‘i had a mental health condition, 37.6% have reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, and 17.9% were unable to get needed counseling or therapy. Furthermore, with the recent Maui Wildfires, their calls for a comprehensive mental health support system to approach and support those affected by the fires. Most importantly, it is integral to educate our youth at an early age about mental health matters as the adolescent years are crucial in shaping the keiki into their later adult years.

Implementing this Tier system program will not only serve and aid the individuals and communities of Hawai‘i in their contemporary mental health matters but will also strengthen and prepare them for future adversities.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to move this bill forward.

Sincerely,

Richard Dominguez

Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health

rpd2@hawaii.edu