

JAN 20 2023

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.

7 The legislature further finds that Windward community
8 college, in collaboration with the Hawaii state hospital, has
9 developed a mental health technician certificate of competence
10 program. The coursework for the certificate program addresses
11 the immediate and critical workforce needs of preparing
12 potential employees and upskilling existing employees. These
13 certificates are also a foundation to increasingly higher
14 qualifications, as the initial certificate of competence opens a
15 pathway to further training and development. A one-year
16 certificate program currently under development will build on
17 the skills developed by the existing mental health technician



1 certificate program by adding clinical skills and knowledge
2 necessary to perform higher job requirements in more advanced
3 clinical settings. The coursework can also be applied toward
4 baccalaureate degrees. These programs help to grow the State's
5 overall capacity to address the mental health challenges and
6 needs of Hawaii's residents.

7 The mental health technician certificate of competence
8 program consists of three approved courses, which provide a
9 basic foundation in mental health knowledge in a short term,
10 focused program of study available in person and online. The
11 asynchronous online courses can be offered to mental health
12 workers and students across the State, with Windward community
13 college coordinating with other community colleges in the
14 University of Hawaii system. However, in order for the program
15 to be offered statewide, additional resources are needed to
16 provide for key personnel and to establish a scholarship program
17 to increase access to the mental health technician certificate
18 of competence program for unemployed, underemployed, low-wage
19 earners, and others interested in pursuing a career pathway in
20 mental health.



S.B. NO. 436

1 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
2 University of Hawaii to expand and support the mental health
3 technician certificate of competence program.

4 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$137,250 or so much
6 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 to support
7 and expand the mental health technician certificate of
8 competence program through the hiring of one full-time
9 equivalent (1.0 FTE) mental health technician certificate
10 program coordinator, establishment of a scholarship program and
11 granting of scholarships, and any other necessary administrative
12 costs.

13 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of
14 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

15 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

16

INTRODUCED BY: _____

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S.B. NO. 436

Report Title:

Mental Health Technician Certificate 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 program coordinator, establishment of a scholarship program, and any other necessary administrative costs.

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