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# 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 qualified 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 of competence  
11 program addresses the immediate and critical workforce needs of  
12 preparing potential employees and upskilling existing employees.  
13 These 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 of competence program by adding clinical skills and  
2 knowledge necessary to perform higher job requirements in more  
3 advanced clinical settings. The coursework can also be applied  
4 toward baccalaureate degrees. These programs help to grow the  
5 State's overall capacity to address the mental health challenges  
6 and 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 individuals who are unemployed,  
19 underemployed, or low-wage earners and others interested in  
20 pursuing a career pathway in mental health.



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 \$                    or so  
6 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 to  
7 support 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 of  
10 competence program coordinator, establishment of a scholarship  
11 program and granting of scholarships, and defrayal of any other  
12 necessary administrative 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.



**Report Title:**

Mental Health Technician Certificate of Competence 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 of competence program coordinator, establishment of a scholarship program, and defrayal of any other necessary administrative costs. (SD1)

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