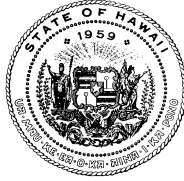


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'



KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A, M.P.H  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B.1831  
RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION**

REPRESENTATIVE DELLA AU BELLATI, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: Friday, February 2, 2024 at 9:45 a.m., Room 329/VIDEO

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests funding for this  
2 measure be considered as a vehicle to expand services, including staff support, provided it does  
3 not supplant the requests outlined in the Governor's executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure and submits comments for the  
5 Committee’s consideration.

6 **Department Testimony:** The Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) provides the following  
7 testimony on behalf of the Department.

8 The Department supports this measure which proposes the creation of a pilot project  
9 which will result in two Behavioral Health Crisis Center (BHCC) in Hawai’i. BHCCs will be  
10 tremendous additions to the crisis continuum. They will have benefits to the community  
11 including, but not limited to more people in crisis getting help by creating additional rapid  
12 access points for care, reduction in law enforcement time dealing with people in crisis,  
13 reduction in use of already over-crowded emergencies, and cost savings for the community in  
14 many areas such as reduced criminalization and reduced use of acute care facilities.

15 **Offered Amendments:** Given the relatively low volume of individuals on most of the neighbor  
16 islands that require police intervention, the Department would like the flexibility to follow the

1 community need and allow for a second site on O’ahu. Therefore, the Department respectfully  
2 requests that paragraph 2(b) should be deleted and be replaced by:

3 “The pilot project shall establish two behavioral health crisis centers from which to treat  
4 and direct patients pursuant to the pilot program, one to be located in Honolulu and a second  
5 one to be on Oahu or on a neighbor island; provided that the department of health shall  
6 determine the most appropriate sites for the behavioral health crisis centers. The department  
7 of health may lease or acquire property for the establishment of these behavioral health crisis  
8 centers.”

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**HB1831**  
RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION  
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

February 2, 2024

9:45 AM

House Conference Room 329

---

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend that the Board of Trustees (BOT) **SUPPORT** House Bill 1831, which would establish a behavioral health crisis center pilot program within the Department of Health to provide crisis intervention services at two locations; one on the island of O‘ahu and one on a neighbor island. **This crucial legislation addresses the pressing issue of individuals experiencing mental health or substance use disorder crises and their involvement with the criminal justice system.**

OHA believes that Native Hawaiians deserve access to mental health and substance use disorder crisis interventions that are culturally sensitive and community-oriented. The pilot program's emphasis on collaboration with law enforcement agencies, courts, mental health providers, and community stakeholders offers a holistic approach needed to address the root causes of these crises.

OHA has long worked to address the social determinants of health outcomes. We have worked diligently alongside our Hawaiian communities to pursue policies and investments that reverse the negative indicators that occur when social determinants of health for Hawaiians are not addressed. Native Hawaiians are the largest population of incarcerated individuals in the state.<sup>1</sup> Native Hawaiians are three times less likely to receive treatment regarding mental health services.<sup>2</sup> Native Hawaiians are more likely to experience substance abuse, being one of the highest users of illicit substances.<sup>3</sup> Native Hawaiians have the highest rate of homeless services.<sup>4</sup> Native Hawaiians are overrepresented among the homeless in Hawai‘i.<sup>5</sup> This pilot program holds promise to begin to address some of these unacceptable realities for Hawaiians.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Mental and behavioral health - Native Hawaiians/pacific islanders*. Office of Minority Health. (2019). <https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/mental-and-behavioral-health-native-hawaiianspacific-islanders>

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Daniels, Sheri-Ann P et al. "Conceptualizing a New System of Care in Hawai‘i for Native Hawaiians and Substance Use." *Hawai‘i journal of health & social welfare* vol. 81,12 Suppl 3 (2022): 43-51.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Partners In Care, *2022 Point In Time Count*, p.7.

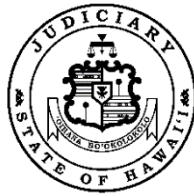


**HB1831**  
RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION  
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

---

The unique challenges faced by the people of Hawai'i, particularly those suffering from mental health issues, substance use disorders, or homelessness, require a compassionate and effective approach. The proposed crisis centers will hopefully show the promise of providing vital resources to redirect individuals to appropriate healthcare services, breaking the cycle of repeated arrests and court appearances. We specifically appreciate the provision ensuring services be provided regardless of the client's ability to pay as it is essential in fostering inclusivity and ensuring that everyone, regardless of financial status, can access the care they need. Additionally, OHA believes the allocation of \$9,500,000 for the fiscal year 2024-2025 is an investment in the well-being of our community. We believe it will lead to positive, long-term outcomes for the people of Hawai'i and especially Native Hawaiians.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB1831 and urges the committee to **PASS** HB1831. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i*

**Testimony to the Thirty-Second State Legislature, 2024 Regular Session**

**House Committee on Health & Homelessness**  
Representative Della Belatti, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice-Chair

Friday, February 2, 2024 at 9:45 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 and Via Videoconference

by

Rodney A. Maile  
Administrative Director of the Courts

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

---

**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 1831, Relating to Crisis Intervention.

**Purpose:** Establishes the behavioral health crisis center pilot program. Appropriates funds for the pilot program.

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary strongly supports the intent of this measure. The establishment and use of behavioral health crises centers will improve the government response to individuals suffering from serious mental illness, particularly for those who may become, or already are, involved in the criminal justice system. Early access to, and the provision of, mental health care and services is integral to diverting those individuals who, but for their mental health crisis, would not be involved with the criminal justice system. As there are several bills presented that authorize and fund the use of behavioral crises centers, the Judiciary defers to the Department of Health as to the measure best suited to effectuate the purpose of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



## THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEM

---

To: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair  
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
Members, House Committee on Health & Homelessness

From: Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health System

Date: February 2, 2024

Re: Support for HB1831: Relating to Crisis Intervention

---

The Queen's Health System (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 10,000 affiliated physicians, caregivers, and dedicated medical staff statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1831, relating to crisis intervention. The bill seeks to establish the behavioral health crisis center pilot program and requires the program to cease on December 31, 2026. We applaud the Committee and the House Majority Caucus for taking the bold step toward addressing this critical part of the mental/behavioral health crisis facing our state. This bill would enable and fund the Department's plan for establishing crisis centers on Oahu and the neighbor islands and thus providing a diversion program to stabilize and evaluate those experiencing a mental health crisis. We see this as a critical and important step in helping to alleviate pressure on our hospital's emergency departments and, importantly, directing those suffering from acute mental illness to the appropriate venue for future care (whether that be further stabilization, assisted community treatment, or in-patient long-term treatment).

We look forward to working with the Department and other stakeholders to support these efforts and urge the Legislature to also invest in the broader continuum of care – including growth in the healthcare workforce, expanded access to assisted community treatment programs and facilities, and refining and improving the coordination of care for patients throughout their stabilization and treatment process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

*The mission of The Queen's Health System is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.*



## **HB1831 Crisis Intervention Centers Pilot with DOH**

### COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Friday, Feb 2, 2024: 9:45 : Room 329 Videoconference

### **Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition supports HB1831:**

*ALOHA CHAIRS, VICE CHAIRS, 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 agrees that many people who suffer from drugs, alcohol or mental illness are cited or arrested when it would be **better to provide crisis services for stabilization and then refer or help them to start treatment so they can recover from their illness.**

Since the efforts of mental health providers working with law enforcement to support a crisis intervention program on Oahu has been successful, a pilot program for a behavioral health **crisis center operated by the Department of Health is a great plan:**

1. To redirect persons with mental health issues or substance abuse issues to a healthcare center system
2. To provide treatment – **hopefully treatment is using evidence-based therapies, which is much more than stabilization, given that stabilization is a good first step to then provide or refer to an evidence-based treatment program.**
3. To acquire or lease one on Oahu and one on a neighbor island.
4. To screen, assess, admit for stabilization and redirect a person to the most appropriate and least restrictive setting available regardless of the person's ability to pay.
5. Meet all the criteria for a crisis drop off center.

Since this idea has strong evidential support across the nation:

- **HSAC recommends this pilot project be extended past December, 2026.**

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.



# United Self-Help

“People helping people to help themselves”

## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair

Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

277 Ohua Avenue  
310 Paoakalani Ave. (mailing)  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
96815-3643  
Ph: (808) 931-6444, 947-5558  
Warm Lines 947-5558  
[www.unitedselfhelp.org](http://www.unitedselfhelp.org)  
[director@unitedselfhelp.org](mailto:director@unitedselfhelp.org)

Testimony in Support of HB 1831 RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION

February 1, 2024

Dear Chairman Au Belatti and Vice Chair Takenouchi:

United Self Help (USH) would like to submit this testimony in support HB 1831.

USH is the only consumer managed and operated” organization in the State, which fosters consumer empowerment, engagement, and peer supported recovery. This measure if passed will enhance the ability of the Department of Health to assist consumers in the community through crisis intervention and diversion.

USH presently works with the Department of Health, Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD). AMHD refers consumers to our programs and support groups, while USH refers consumers to their crisis line when needed. USH is a provider in the ADAD Continuum of Care Service Array.

This Program as described in this measure will become a strong USH partner in meeting the needs of the recovering consumer in the community. USH anticipates and looks forward to a collaborative relationship with the program.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wes Mun (president)  
Phyllis Dendle  
Dan Eineker  
Laretta Dubin, RN  
Phillip Enomoto  
Lydia Hardy Hemmings  
Edna Magpantay-Monroe, RN  
Susan King  
Macey Luo Souza, MSN,  
APRN-RX, PMHCNS-BC, HCPS.  
Tom Strickland

Dennis Mee-Lee (exofficio)  
Anson Rego, JD (ex officio)

Bud Bowles, MSW, CPRP, HCPS  
Executive Director

AN EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITY  
EMPLOYER

Sincerely,  
  
Wes Mun,  
President  
Board of Directors  
United Self Help



**HB-1831**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 4:05:32 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is exactly what we need more of. It is a key component of the mental health delivery system that will help people get the care they need.

**HB-1831**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:43:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/2/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Liam Chinn	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I fully support passage of HB1831. What we are currently witnessing is Hawai'i is not an issue of law and order, but rather a public health crisis that cannot be solved by policing and incarceration. This bill assigns the appropriate professionals to engage with residents suffering from mental health and/or substance abuse disorders. This ensures that such individuals receive the care and services they need, which will also keep them out of the justice system where they do not belong. Hawai'i, like all states in America, is decades behind on building community based infrastructure for mental health and substance abuse, and the proposed drop off centers are a much needed step forward. The bill indicates that DOH will make the decision about which island aside from Oahu the other pilot center will be located. However, I strongly urge Representatives to directly engage with DOH in that decision, and advocate for Hawai'i Island, and Hilo in particular which outside of Oahu has the most significant needs related to homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health. This is supported by the fact that according to Department of Safety data from 2022, 40% of all people in jail on Hawai'i island are homeless. Please pass HB1831.

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / [kat.caphi@gmail.com](mailto:kat.caphi@gmail.com)



COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Friday, February 2nd, 2024

Conference Room 329 & VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

9:45 AM

SUPPORT FOR HB 1831- RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION.

My name is Olivia Chang and I am a Policy Intern for the Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai`i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 3,868 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars<sup>1</sup> and under the “care and custody” of the Department of Public Safety/Corrections and Rehabilitation on any given day. We are always mindful that 874 - 25% of the male imprisoned population - of Hawai`i’s imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad - thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to testify in support of SB 1831 establishing a behavioral health crisis center pilot program under the Department of Health.

A growing body of research shows that using jails and prisons as a mental health care is just not working<sup>23</sup>. Too many of our neighbors end up caught in the carceral system when what they really need is care and treatment to return safely to our community. These community members are often dealing with significant trauma and mental health issues, and we need to have trauma-informed approaches to how we care for them.

---

<sup>1</sup> DPS/DCR Weekly Population Report, Jan. 22, 2024

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2024-01-22.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://healthandjusticejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40352-022-00183-9>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/decriminalizing-mental-illness>

Police are ill-equipped to safely and effectively serve people experiencing behavioral health crises<sup>4</sup>. As Dr. Koyanagi stated in on the 1/29 Committee on Health and Homelessness briefing, this crisis center will greatly decrease the amount of time that police officers have to spend on the streets dealing with those community members experiencing behavioral health crises, while also reducing the load on state hospital's emergency rooms.

By establishing a behavioral health crisis center, we can successfully divert more of our community members away from punitive systems that don't address their real health concerns, and get them mental health and substance abuse treatment they need.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.vera.org/behavioral-health-crisis-alternatives>