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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai*

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TESTIMONY ON HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 194, HOUSE DRAFT 1,  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TO CONDUCT A  
STUDY TO DETERMINE IF XYLAZINE TESTING STRIPS SHOULD BE EXCLUDED  
FROM THE STATE'S DEFINITION OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA

Before the Senate Committees on

Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

and

Judiciary

Wednesday, April 17, 2024; 3:00 p.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 225, Via Videoconference

Testifier: Jared Redulla

Chairs Wakai and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Elefante and Gabbard, and members of the Committee:

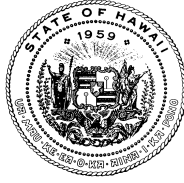
The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) supports House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 194, House Draft (HD) 1 that requests the Department of Law Enforcement to conduct a study to determine if xylazine testing strips should be excluded from the State's definition of drug paraphernalia.

Xylazine is a common sedative pharmaceutical drug used in veterinary medicine in the United States. In recent times, criminal fentanyl manufacturers have combined xylazine with illicit fentanyl creating a potent drug combination that can more easily cause a fatal drug overdose. Moreover, xylazine is already on Hawaii's streets and is believed to be a contributing cause of a fatal teenage overdose in Hawaii in 2022.

Xylazine is impossible to detect simply by looking at fentanyl on the street. A street user will never be able to tell that the drug they intend to use is made up of a sinister combination of xylazine and fentanyl that might cause a fatal overdose.

Consequently, the DLE believes that if xylazine test strips were available and accessible to users, then fatal overdoses caused by fentanyl and xylazine combination drugs can be prevented. Xylazine test strips might ultimately save a life.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this resolution.



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WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HCR0194 HD1**

**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TO  
CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE IF XYLAZINE TESTING STRIPS SHOULD  
BE EXCLUDED FROM THE STATE'S DEFINITION OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA.**

SENATOR GLENN WAKAI, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

SENATOR KARL RHOADS, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

April 17, 2024, 3:00 PM Room Number: 225

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** None
- 2 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure and defers to the Department of
- 3 Law Enforcement (DLE) for implementation.
- 4 **Department Testimony:** The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) provides the
- 5 following testimony on behalf of the Department.
- 6 This measure requests the DLE to study if xylazine testing strips should be excluded from the
- 7 State's definition of drug paraphernalia and report to the Legislature before the 2025 Session.
- 8 Already in Hawaii there were four reported xylazine related deaths in 2023 that was also likely
- 9 mixed with fentanyl. On April 12, 2023, the White House's Office of Drug Control Policy
- 10 designated fentanyl mixed with xylazine an emerging threat to the United States.

- 1 The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration encourages the use of federal
- 2 funds to purchase xylazine test strips (XTS) to prevent further overdose deaths. However current
- 3 state law does not allow XTS purchases because they are regulated as drug paraphernalia.
- 4 **Offered Amendments:** None.
- 5 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair  
Wednesday, April 17, 2024: 3:00 Room 225

**Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HCR194:**

*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.*

**Xylazine (XTS) combined with fentanyl** is on the fast track to becoming a huge problem in Hawaii. The barrier is that current state law does not allow XTS purchases for testing because they are regulated as drug paraphernalia.

The White House Administration designated xylazine as an **emerging threat** for the first time in U.S. history due to its impact in overdose deaths.<sup>1</sup>

The DEA reports that xylazine with fentanyl **increased from 112% to 193%** across the U.S.'s 4 regions. Moreover, xylazine-positive overdose deaths increased by 750% in the West region and over 1,127% in the South region.<sup>2</sup> While commonly combined with fentanyl, it has been **detected in cocaine, heroin, and other drugs**. Xylazine can lead to depression of the central nervous system along with other adverse effects, as reported in scientific and medical journals.

Without testing, xylazine in illicit drug combinations may be more widespread than reported.

Jurisdictions across the country must include xylazine in forensic laboratory or toxicology testing.

**Moreover, the use of federal funds to purchase xylazine test strips may be available from The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.**

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.

<sup>1</sup> Biden-Harris Administration Designates Fentanyl Combined with Xylazine as an Emerging Threat to the United States: Press Release ONDCP (Office of National Drug Control Policy): April 12, 2023. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/briefing-room/2023/04/12/biden-harris-administration-designates-fentanyl-combined-with-xylazine-as-an-emerging-threat-to-the-united-states/>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, DEA: The Growing Threat of Xylazine and its Mixture with Illicit Drugs DEA Joint Intelligence Report OCTOBER 2022: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/The%20Growing%20Threat%20of%20Xylazine%20and%20its%20Mixture%20with%20Illicit%20Drugs.pdf