



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

WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 1148 HD1
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE KYLE T. YAMASHITA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: February 22, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.in Room 308/VIDEO

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests that this measure be
2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the
3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governors executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department strongly supports this measure and offers comments.

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

7 The Department strongly supports this measure which appropriates funds to support
8 and expand the Windward Community College (WCC) mental health technician (MHT)
9 certificate program through the hiring of a mental health technician certificate program
10 coordinator, establishment of a scholarship program, and any other necessary administrative
11 costs.

12 The Department recognizes that education and training and important parts of building
13 the mental health care workforce. We understand that education and training should not stop
14 when someone is hired for employment. Ongoing opportunities to provide training and
15 professional development can help to address staff retention concerns while also supporting

1 employees who want to learn additional skills through convenient learning modes that provide
2 work-life balance (e.g., online distance learning).

3 The WCC MHT certificate program began in Spring 2022. This program provides
4 introductory training to those entering the mental health service field. Courses in psychology,
5 communication, and conflict resolution and mediation offer a range of academic study and skill-
6 based activities to strengthen knowledge about working through difficult situations in the
7 workplace. Of these 25 graduates thus far, 11 are employed at the Hawaii State Hospital.

8 We are pleased with the interest that this program has received thus far and look
9 forward to partnering with WCC to welcome prospective students as well as to congratulate
10 future MHT certificate program graduates, including those who are currently employed or
11 aspiring to be employed by the Hawaii State Hospital.

12 We believe appropriating funds to establish a program coordinator position will allow
13 this program to expand and be offered at other community colleges, and thereby helping to
14 address the need for health care workforce training throughout our state. We respectfully ask
15 for the Legislature's support of this measure.

16 **Offered Amendments:** None.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2023 Regular Session

House Committee on Finance

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

by:

Brandon M. Kimura
Deputy Administrative Director of the Courts

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 1148, H.D. 1, Relating to Mental Health

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, granting of scholarships, and funding of other necessary administrative costs. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the intent of this measure—to enhance the workforce across the state in the field of behavioral health care. This is a type of work critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system and to the larger community.

The Judiciary supports appropriate efforts to assist those suffering from mental health challenges before interaction with and/or outside the justice system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.

By

Della Teraoka, Interim Associate Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 1148 HD1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1148 HD1, which supports and expands the Mental Health Technician (MHT) certificate of competence at Windward Community College (WCC) through the hiring of a mental health technician certificate coordinator, establishment of a scholarship program, and any other necessary administrative costs.

WCC developed the MHT certificate in collaboration with the Hawai'i State Hospital (HSH) in order to provide a foundation of knowledge and increase skills for those serving the mentally ill on our islands. The program consists of three focused courses, available in person and online. Students learn fundamentals of psychology and psychological functioning, as well as conflict resolution and communications. This allows them to understand situations that arise at work, to more effectively deal with patients, and to prevent escalation of conflict in tense situations. This leads to a safer workplace and a more supportive therapeutic environment.

This addresses the severe shortage of mental health workers during a time when our state has dire needs for mental health support due to the impacts of the pandemic, socio-economic stressors, high job turnover, and a lack of workforce skilled in this area. It serves not only HSH, the second largest employer in Windward O'ahu, but also other mental health related employers such as Windward District Health, Hina Mauka, and others. Our online asynchronous offerings allow current workers to grow their skills through course offerings maximally adaptable to their schedules and further allow for this program to be expanded statewide.

The program was first implemented in Spring 2022, which resulted in 2 graduates in the first semester; both continued their employment at the HSH with their improved skills and knowledge. In Fall of 2022, 23 more students graduated with the MHT certificate. Nine of these graduates were employed at HSH. Already in its first year, this program has had a large impact on the capacity of Windward O'ahu to care for those suffering

from mental health issues and to increase workplace satisfaction and safety in the workplace.

The MHT certificate creates a pathway to further training and higher education. A one year certificate currently under development will build on the certificate by adding clinical skills and knowledge necessary to perform higher job requirements in more advanced clinical settings. These certificates are specifically designed to advance students to increasingly higher qualifications, such as degrees in psychology, social work and mental health counseling. This grows the overall capacity of our state to address mental health challenges and needs.

The proposed inclusion of the (1.00 FTE) MHT certificate Program Coordinator position allows this program to be made available statewide through our sister community college and partnerships with mental health related agencies and workplaces. The Program Coordinator position can further oversee the implementation of a scholarship program, ensuring access for unemployed, underemployed and low wage earners, creating a pathway out of poverty.

This bill supports the MHT certificate program at WCC to address an immediate, critical workforce need for preparing potential employees and upskilling existing employees. It builds the capacity of our state to implement effective, supportive care for those suffering from mental illness.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1148 HD1, on the condition its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1148 HD1.



The House Committee on Finance
2:30PM, February 22, 2023
Room 308

RE: **HB 1148, HD1, Relating to Mental Health**

Attention: Chair Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa and members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) appreciates the opportunity to testify **supporting the intent of HB1148, HD1**, Relating to Mental Health.

HB 1148, HD1 expands the mental health technician certificate program by providing funding not only for the hiring of one full-time mental health technician certificate program coordinator, but also establishing a scholarship program and granting scholarship, as well as other administrative costs. Expansion of this certificate program statewide will afford greater opportunities to enter into the field.

The mental health technician certificate program provides practicable training that can be built upon to advance in the workplace and further educational opportunities. To ensure the recruitment and retention of the program coordinator position, it is essential for the FTE appropriation to have a recurring, general funded designation.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly

1017 Palm Drive ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-1928
Telephone: (808) 593-2157 ♦ Facsimile: (808) 593-2160
Website: www.uhpa.org

HB-1148-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 12:56:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1148. As someone that wants to pursue social work, we are currently in a mental health epidemic and there is a need for more mental health services and professionals. With this bill, more people will be willing to take up becoming mental health professionals, which will help alleviate costs for them.