
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that, according to a ten-
2 year study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
3 nearly all indicators of children and adolescent mental health
4 have worsened between 2013 and 2023. Disasters like the
5 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the Maui
6 wildfires in August 2023 have increased rates of depression and
7 anxiety in our youth.

8 The legislature further finds that prevention activities
9 related to the promotion of mental health, such as early
10 intervention, mental health education, and coping strategies,
11 are critical to preventing the escalation of mental health
12 disorders in our communities, potentially reducing the need for
13 more intensive services in the future.

14 Digital platforms that can be accessed with mobile devices
15 can provide a powerful public health service, especially for
16 youth, by:

H.B. NO. 1126

- 1 (1) Expanding the reach of mental health education and
2 prevention by making it more convenient and inclusive,
3 especially for children and adolescents in remote or
4 underserved areas where in-person programs may be
5 limited;
- 6 (2) Reducing stigma by making it easier for youth to
7 explore resources without fear of judgment;
- 8 (3) Enhancing engagement and interactivity by allowing
9 youth to guide their own learning;
- 10 (4) Tailoring content to the needs of the user;
- 11 (5) Providing a cost-effective way to reach a large
12 audience;
- 13 (6) Addressing lower-level needs so the behavioral health
14 workforce, which is scarce, can focus on youth with
15 the highest level of need;
- 16 (7) Providing information that is continuously updated to
17 reflect the latest research and resources; and
- 18 (8) Collecting critical data about community mental health
19 needs.

20 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a
21 digital youth mental health platform pilot project under which
22 the child and adolescent mental health division of the

H.B. NO. 1126

1 department of health develops and makes publicly available a
2 digital platform providing tools and resources designed to help
3 young people address and manage mental health challenges.

4 SECTION 2. (a) The child and adolescent mental health
5 division of the department of health shall implement and
6 administer a digital youth mental health platform pilot project.
7 The pilot project shall commence on July 1, 2025, and end on
8 June 30, 2027.

9 (b) Under the pilot project, the child and adolescent
10 mental health division shall contract for the following
11 services:

12 (1) Development, management, and hosting services for the
13 digital youth mental health platform. The child and
14 adolescent mental health division shall oversee the
15 development of the platform that is evidence-based,
16 peer-reviewed, confidential, and responsive. The
17 platform shall provide:

- 18 (A) County specific resources;
19 (B) Mental health education;
20 (C) Self-care strategies;
21 (D) Healthy coping strategies; and
22 (E) Data regarding mental health needs in the State.

H.B. NO. 1126

1 (2) Communication and marketing services. The child and
2 adolescent mental health division shall manage the
3 communications and marketing services, which include:

4 (A) Development of a communications and marketing
5 plan;

6 (B) Creation of ad campaign materials inclusive of
7 print, radio, digital, and television ads and the
8 respective media buys;

9 (C) Planning and management of community and outreach
10 events; and

11 (D) Social media campaign and management.

12 (c) The procurement of the development, management, and
13 hosting services and the communication and marketing services
14 for the purposes of this Act shall be exempt from chapters 103D
15 and 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

16 (d) No later than twenty days prior to the convening of
17 the regular sessions of 2026 and 2027, the child and adolescent
18 mental health division shall submit to the legislature a report
19 of its findings and recommendations regarding the digital youth
20 mental health platform pilot project.

21 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
22 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much

H.B. NO. 1126

1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026, and the
2 sum of \$250,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for
3 fiscal year 2026-2027, for the implementation and administration
4 of the digital youth mental health platform pilot project.

5 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
6 of health for the purposes of this Act.

7 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

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INTRODUCED BY: *Nedra K. Nelson*

10

BY REQUEST

JAN 21 2025

H.B. NO. 1126

Report Title:

DOH; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division; Child and Adolescent Mental Health; Digital Youth Mental Health Platform Pilot Project

Description:

Establishes a two-year digital youth mental health platform pilot project under which the child and adolescent mental health division of the department of health develops and makes publicly available a digital platform providing tools and resources designed to help young people address and manage mental health challenges.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

HB NO. 1126

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Health

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH.

PURPOSE: To establish a digital youth mental health platform for youth pilot project under which the child and adolescent mental health division of the department of health develops and makes publicly available a digital platform providing tools and resources designed to help young people address and manage mental health challenges.

MEANS: Establish a pilot project through session law.

JUSTIFICATION: According to a ten-year study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly all indicators of children and adolescent mental health have worsened between 2013 and 2023. Disasters like the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the Maui wildfires in August 2023 have increased rates of depression and anxiety in our youth.

Additionally, prevention activities related to the promotion of mental health, such as early intervention, mental health education, and coping strategies, are critical to preventing the escalation of mental health disorders in our communities, potentially reducing the need for more intensive services in the future.

Impact on the public: Youth will have access to needed early intervention tools and resources necessary to deal with mental health challenges and reduce the need for more intensive services in the future.

Impact on the department and other agencies:
None.

GENERAL FUND: \$500,000 for fiscal year 2025-2026, and
\$250,000 for fiscal year 2026-2027.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM
DESIGNATION: HTH 460.

OTHER AFFECTED
AGENCIES: None.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025.