

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 14 2025

RE: S.B. No. 450
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 450 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AUTISM,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Appropriate funds to increase the funding for applied behavioral analysis services for persons with autism; and
- (2) Require the Department of Human Services to obtain maximum federal matching funds and pursue all other funding sources.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, Hoomau Therapy, BAYADA, Hawai'i Association for Behavior Analysis, ABA Positive Support Services, Maui Behavioral Therapy, Vitality ABA LLC, 'Imi Ola Support Services, The Council of Autism Service Providers, Ho'omau Autism Services LLC, Behavioral and Therapeutic Services of Hawaii, Golden Rule ABA, Balanced ABA Inc., and numerous individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services.



Your Committee finds that applied behavioral analysis (ABA) is a medically necessary service for young people with autism that can decrease the cost of care over their lifetimes. Presently, the Med-QUEST Division of the Department of Human Services covers ABA services for persons with autism up to twenty-one years of age. However, Med-QUEST patients are sometimes unable to access recommended ABA services due to the unavailability of providers. Furthermore, Med-QUEST reimbursement rates for ABA services have not increased since 2015, resulting in many health care providers refusing to accept Med-QUEST patients to preserve their practice. Therefore, this measure provides funding to increase Med-QUEST reimbursement rates for ABA services to help more young Med-QUEST beneficiaries access necessary care.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting language that would have required the Department of Human Services to:
 - (A) Obtain the maximum federal matching funds available for this measure's proposed expenditure; and
 - (B) Pursue all funding sources known to the State, including private grants, prior to expending any general revenues appropriated pursuant to this measure;
- (2) Deleting its legislative findings; and
- (3) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 450, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 450, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



