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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO DEMENTIA.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Alzheimer's disease  
2 and related dementias are an urgent and growing public health  
3 challenge in Hawaii. Between 2020 and 2025, the number of  
4 Hawaii residents living with Alzheimer's disease is estimated to  
5 have increased by 20.7 per cent. Approximately 31,200 Hawaii  
6 residents aged sixty-five years or older currently live with  
7 Alzheimer's. Long-term trends indicate that this figure could  
8 double to approximately sixty-two thousand individuals by 2050.

9 This significant growth in the number of individuals living  
10 with Alzheimer's disease is expected to increase emergency  
11 department utilization, hospital readmissions, and overall  
12 health care costs. Data show that individuals with dementia  
13 experience 1,248 emergency department visits per one thousand  
14 persons annually, reflecting a high rate of re-admittance and  
15 frequent interaction with emergency medical services personnel.

16 The legislature further finds that six in ten people living  
17 with dementia will wander, often repeatedly, and may forget



1 their name or address or become disoriented even in familiar  
2 places. When individuals with dementia are lost, they may  
3 exhibit anxiety, fear, or hostility, which may escalate into  
4 aggressive behaviors. As the disease progresses and societal  
5 norms are forgotten, incidents may include filing false police  
6 reports, victimization, indecent exposure, and shoplifting.  
7 People with Alzheimer's disease may appear uncooperative,  
8 disruptive, or combative if they have difficulty communicating  
9 and understanding what is happening. First responders often  
10 lack the training needed to effectively assist these  
11 individuals, which may lead to confusion and unnecessary  
12 escalation.

13 The legislature further finds that police, emergency  
14 medical services, and fire department personnel are frequently  
15 the first responders who encounter wandering individuals or  
16 respond to dementia-related incidents. In particular, fire  
17 department personnel are often the first on scene for medical  
18 emergencies and fires and may need to rescue individuals living  
19 with dementia who are uncooperative or disoriented. The  
20 importance of managing these situations appropriately will  
21 become even more critical as Hawaii experiences an increase in



1 the frequency and intensity of wildfires that require rapid  
2 evacuations and specialized communication strategies for  
3 vulnerable populations.

4 The legislature finds that dementia-specific training for  
5 first responders is cost effective and readily available. For  
6 example, the Alzheimer's Association offers free, one-hour  
7 online trainings for first responders. The Hawaii chapter of  
8 the Alzheimer's Association has partnered with the Honolulu  
9 police department to provide in-person dementia training to new  
10 recruits at no cost. These resources enable agencies to build  
11 dementia capability without additional appropriations.

12 The legislature further finds that evidence-based dementia  
13 training improves recognition, communication, and de-escalation  
14 skills, reducing preventable hospitalizations, emergency  
15 interventions, and crises, while strengthening community safety  
16 and resilience.

17 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require annual  
18 dementia-specific training for all first responders in Hawaii  
19 and to ensure that training content addresses recognition,  
20 assessment, and communication; abuse and neglect identification;  
21 caregiver engagement; disaster response; and safe return.



1 SECTION 2. Chapter 127A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
3 and to read as follows:

4 **"S127A- Dementia-specific training.** (a) The director  
5 or the director's designee shall review the list of  
6 dementia-specific training options recommended by the executive  
7 office on aging pursuant to section 349- and provide at least  
8 one hour of dementia-specific training from that list to agency  
9 personnel. The dementia-specific training offered shall be  
10 accessible at no cost to the agency personnel. The director or  
11 the director's designee shall begin offering dementia-specific  
12 training to agency personnel by July 1, 2027.

13 (b) All agency personnel shall complete a minimum of one  
14 hour of dementia-specific training annually. The first annual  
15 training cycle shall be completed by June 30, 2028.

16 (c) The dementia-specific training provided under this  
17 section shall not create or impose any civil or criminal  
18 liability upon any agency personnel, agency, or department.

19 (d) For purposes of this section, "dementia-specific  
20 training" means training curricula recommended by the executive



1 office on aging for the purpose of first responder training  
2 pursuant to section 349- ."

3 SECTION 3. Chapter 132, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
5 and to read as follows:

6 **"S132- Dementia-specific training.** (a) Each county  
7 fire chief and the fire chief of the Hawaii state aircraft  
8 rescue fire fighting unit, or the respective fire chief's  
9 designee, shall review the list of dementia-specific training  
10 options recommended by the executive office on aging pursuant to  
11 section 349- and provide at least one hour of  
12 dementia-specific training from that list to fire first  
13 responders within the fire chief's department or unit. The  
14 dementia-specific training shall be accessible at no cost to  
15 fire first responders. Each respective chief shall begin  
16 offering dementia-specific training to fire first responders by  
17 July 1, 2027.

18 (b) All fire first responders within the State and  
19 counties shall complete a minimum of one hour of  
20 dementia-specific training annually. The first annual training  
21 cycle shall be completed by June 30, 2028.



1                   (c) The dementia-specific training provided under this  
2 section shall not create or impose any civil or criminal  
3 liability upon any fire first responder personnel, agency, or  
4 department.

5                   (d) For purposes of this section:

6                   "Dementia-specific training" means training curricula  
7 recommended by the executive office on aging for the purpose of  
8 first responder training pursuant to section 349- .

9                   "Fire first responders" means first responder personnel  
10 employed by state and county fire protection agencies and  
11 departments."

12                  SECTION 4. Chapter 139, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
13 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
14 and to read as follows:

15                  "§139-           Dementia training. (a) The board or the  
16 board's designee shall review the list of dementia-specific  
17 training options recommended by the executive office on aging  
18 pursuant to section 349- and require at least one hour of  
19 dementia-specific training from that list to be provided to law  
20 enforcement officers. The dementia-specific training shall be  
21 accessible at no cost to law enforcement officers. The board



1 shall require law enforcement agencies to begin offering  
2 dementia-specific training to law enforcement officers by July  
3 1, 2027.

4 (b) All law enforcement officers within the State and  
5 counties shall complete a minimum of one hour of  
6 dementia-specific training annually. The first annual training  
7 cycle shall be completed by June 30, 2028.

8 (c) The dementia-specific training provided under this  
9 section shall not create or impose any civil or criminal  
10 liability upon any law enforcement officer, agency, or  
11 department.

12 (d) For purposes of this section, "dementia-specific  
13 training" means training curricula recommended by the executive  
14 office on aging for the purpose of first responder training  
15 pursuant to section 349- ."

16 SECTION 5. Chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
17 amended by adding a new section to part XVIII to be  
18 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

19 "§321- Dementia-specific training. (a) The director  
20 of health or the director's designee shall review the list of  
21 dementia-specific training options recommended by the executive



1 office on aging pursuant to section 349- and provide at least  
2 one hour of dementia-specific training from that list to  
3 emergency medical services personnel and first responder  
4 personnel. The dementia-specific training shall be accessible  
5 at no cost to emergency medical services personnel and first  
6 responder personnel. The director of health or the director's  
7 designee shall begin offering dementia-specific training to  
8 emergency medical services personnel and first responder  
9 personnel by July 1, 2027.

10 (b) All emergency medical services personnel and first  
11 responder personnel shall complete a minimum of one hour of  
12 dementia-specific training annually. The first annual training  
13 cycle shall be completed by June 30, 2028.

14 (c) The dementia-specific training provided under this  
15 section shall not create or impose any civil or criminal  
16 liability upon any emergency medical services personnel, first  
17 responder personnel, employer, agency, or department.

18 (d) For purposes of this section, "dementia-specific  
19 training" means training curricula recommended by the executive  
20 office on aging for the purpose of first responder training  
21 pursuant to section 349- ."



1 SECTION 6. Chapter 349, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately  
3 designated and to read as follows:

4 **"§349- Dementia-specific first responder training**

5 **curriculum content review.** (a) The executive office on aging  
6 or the office's designee shall review and recommend a list of  
7 dementia-specific training curricula for agencies that employ  
8 first responders to ensure statewide consistency and alignment  
9 with best practices. The dementia-specific training shall  
10 address the recognition of and response to persons having  
11 Alzheimer's disease and related types of dementia. The  
12 executive office on aging shall make available a list of  
13 recommended dementia-specific training curricula options that  
14 meet the requirements of this section.

15 (b) The executive office on aging shall seek low- to  
16 no-cost dementia-specific training curricula. The executive  
17 office on aging shall identify whether each training option has  
18 an associated fee or is available at no cost when developing the  
19 curriculum list.

20 (c) The dementia-specific training curricula may include:



- 1        (1) Strategies for recognizing key signs of Alzheimer's  
2        disease and related types of dementia;
- 3        (2) Strategies for assessing cognition;
- 4        (3) Best practices for interacting with persons having  
5        Alzheimer's disease or related types of dementia,  
6        including during disaster response;
- 7        (4) Strategies to identify and intervene in situations in  
8        which persons having Alzheimer's disease or related  
9        types of dementia may be at risk of abuse or neglect;  
10       and
- 11       (5) Best practices to ensure the safe return of persons  
12       having Alzheimer's disease or related types of  
13       dementia.

14       (d) All dementia-specific training curricula recommended  
15       by the executive office on aging shall include at least one hour  
16       of instruction time.

17       (e) The executive office on aging may coordinate with  
18       other agencies to review and recommend dementia-specific  
19       training curricula developed by a first responder department or  
20       agency.



1           (f) The executive office on aging may use educational and  
2        training resources made available in the public and private  
3        sectors to develop dementia-specific training curricula that  
4        meet the requirements of this section."

5        SECTION 7. Section 321-229.2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
6        repealed.

7        ["~~§321-229.2~~ **First responder personnel; dementia**  
8        **training.** (a) The employers of first responder personnel may  
9        obtain dementia training for first responder personnel, which  
10       may include:

11       (1) ~~Recognizing the key signs of Alzheimer's disease and~~  
12       ~~related types of dementia;~~  
13       (2) ~~Strategies for assessing cognition;~~  
14       (3) ~~Best practices for interacting with persons with~~  
15       ~~Alzheimer's disease and related types of dementia; and~~  
16       (4) ~~Strategies to best identify and intervene in~~  
17       ~~situations where persons with Alzheimer's disease and~~  
18       ~~related types of dementia may be at particular risk of~~  
19       ~~abuse or neglect.~~



1                   (b) The training shall be offered at no cost to the  
2 applicable first responder personnel and shall be funded by  
3 private contributions from relevant non-profit organizations.

4                   (e) The executive office on aging may coordinate the  
5 training schedules and standards, as necessary, with all public  
6 and private entities and agencies responsible for services  
7 provided by first responder personnel, including entering into  
8 agreements or memoranda of agreement with nonprofit  
9 organizations to provide funding pursuant to subsection (b).

10                  (d) The employers of first responder personnel may utilize  
11 existing educational and training resources available in the  
12 public and private sectors when developing the training required  
13 under this section."]

14                  SECTION 8. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
15 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

16                  SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



**Report Title:**

Dementia; Alzheimer's Disease; First Responder Training; Executive Office on Aging; HIEMA; Counties; Law Enforcement Standards Board; DOH

**Description:**

Requires the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, fire chiefs, Law Enforcement Standards Board, and Department of Health to provide or require the provision of at least one hour of dementia-specific training for first responders, including law enforcement officers, fire first responders, and emergency medical services personnel. Requires the Executive Office on Aging to take certain steps when reviewing and recommending dementia-specific training curricula. Effective 7/1/3000.  
(HD1)

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

