
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
2 ten-year study by the Centers for Disease Control and
3 Prevention, nearly all indicators of children and adolescent
4 mental health worsened between 2013 and 2023. Disasters like
5 the COVID-19 pandemic and the Maui wildfires in August 2023 have
6 increased rates of depression and anxiety in the State's youth.

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

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

16 (1) Expanding the reach of mental health education and
17 prevention by making it more convenient and inclusive,



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

18 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish and
19 appropriate funds for a one-year digital youth mental health
20 platform pilot project that will enable the child and adolescent
21 mental health division of the department of health to develop



1 and make publicly available a digital platform designed to help
2 young people address and manage mental health challenges.

3 SECTION 2. (a) The child and adolescent mental health
4 division of the department of health shall implement and
5 administer a digital youth mental health platform pilot project.
6 The pilot project shall commence on July 1, 2026, and end on
7 June 30, 2027.

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

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

- 17 (A) County specific resources;
- 18 (B) Mental health education;
- 19 (C) Self-care strategies;
- 20 (D) Healthy coping strategies; and



1 (E) Data regarding mental health needs in the State;
2 and

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

6 (A) Development of a communications and marketing
7 plan;

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

11 (C) Planning and management of community and outreach
12 events; and

13 (D) Social media campaign and management.

14 (c) Procurement for development, management, and hosting
15 services and communication and marketing services for the
16 purposes of this Act shall be exempt from chapters 103D and
17 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, only for the duration of the
18 pilot program, not to exceed June 30, 2027.

19 (d) The child and adolescent mental health division shall
20 submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including
21 any proposed legislation, regarding the digital youth mental



1 health platform pilot project to the legislature no later than
2 twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of
3 2027.

4 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
6 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for
7 the implementation and administration of the digital youth
8 mental health platform pilot project.

9 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
10 health for the purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

Keiki Caucus; DOH; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division;
Digital Youth Mental Health Platform Pilot Project; Report;
Appropriation

Description:

Establishes and appropriates funds for a one-year Digital Youth Mental Health Platform Pilot Project that will enable the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the Department of Health to develop and make publicly available a digital platform designed to help young people address and manage mental health challenges. Requires a report to the Legislature. Effective 7/1/3000. (SD1)

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