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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PSYCHOLOGISTS.

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

1 PART I

2 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there is limited  
3 access to mental health care treatment services for residents  
4 across the State. The delivery of comprehensive, accessible,  
5 and affordable mental health care has been demonstrably enhanced  
6 by collaborative practice among licensed clinical psychologists  
7 with prescriptive authority and medical doctors in federal  
8 facilities and programs and in states that have authorized  
9 prescriptive authority for psychologists. The legislature finds  
10 that providing limited prescriptive authority to qualified,  
11 licensed clinical psychologists, subject to supervision by a  
12 licensed medical doctor, could help make comprehensive mental  
13 health care more accessible to medically underserved residents  
14 of the State. The legislature acknowledges that the Health  
15 Resources and Services Administration of the United States  
16 Department of Health and Human Services has officially  
17 designated much of the State, including isolated rural locations



1 and urban areas with high population densities, as a mental  
2 health professional shortage area. This designation highlights  
3 the critical need for expansion of available mental health  
4 services and development of a corps of mental health  
5 professionals to serve the currently unmet needs of Hawaii's  
6 population.

7 The legislature has previously authorized prescription  
8 privileges for advanced practice registered nurses,  
9 optometrists, dentists, podiatrists, and physician assistants.  
10 These practitioners have been granted prescriptive authority  
11 based on demonstration of specific training, education, and  
12 practical competency. Education and training criteria, such as  
13 passage of national board examinations and degree and minimum  
14 experience requirements, have worked well to assure quality of  
15 services. Limitations on authority including the use of  
16 approved formularies, limited practice areas, and prohibitions  
17 on accepting or distributing drug samples have served to deter  
18 abuses in the system and to prevent the inappropriate practice  
19 of general medicine. Prescriptive authority for non-physician  
20 practitioners with varying types of limitations and supervision



1 requirements has proven manageable and has expanded access to  
2 important health care services for patients across the State.

3 Clinical psychologists with appropriate training have been  
4 allowed to prescribe medications to active duty military  
5 personnel and their families in federal facilities and the  
6 federal Indian health service program for years. In recent  
7 years, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, New Mexico,  
8 and Utah have adopted legislation authorizing prescriptive  
9 authority for appropriately trained psychologists without regard  
10 to the service setting.

11 Since 2000, psychologists in Hawaii have received  
12 psychopharmacological training through the Tripler Army Medical  
13 Center psychology training program. These psychologists have  
14 actively collaborated with primary care physicians to provide  
15 combined therapy and psychopharmacological care to medically  
16 underserved patient populations at eleven federally qualified  
17 health centers: Bay Clinic, Hana, Molokai, Kauai, Waianae,  
18 Kalihi-Palama, Waimanalo, Koolauloa, West Hawaii, Kokua Kalihi  
19 Valley, and Waikiki, as well as a Native Hawaiian health care  
20 system clinic located in a federally designated medically  
21 underserved area on Molokai.



1           The American Psychological Association has developed a  
2 model curriculum for a master's degree in psychopharmacology for  
3 the education and training of prescribing psychologists.  
4 Independent evaluations of the United States Department of  
5 Defense psychopharmacological demonstration project by the  
6 United States General Accounting Office, now known as the  
7 Government Accountability Office, and the American College of  
8 Neuropsychopharmacology, as well as the experiences of Idaho,  
9 Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, and New Mexico, have demonstrated  
10 that appropriately trained clinical psychologists can prescribe  
11 psychotropic medications safely and effectively.

12           Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

13           (1) Establish a three-year pilot program to allow  
14           qualified psychologists under the supervision of a  
15           supervising physician or psychiatrist to prescribe  
16           certain psychotropic medications for the treatment of  
17           mental illness to patients between the ages of  
18           eighteen and sixty-five who are under the  
19           psychologist's care at a federally qualified health  
20           center located in the county of Kauai or county of  
21           Hawaii; and





1 (b) A licensed clinical psychologist shall be eligible to  
2 apply to participate in the pilot program established pursuant  
3 to this Act if the psychologist:

4 (1) Meets the requirements for licensure set forth in  
5 section 465-7, Hawaii Revised Statutes;

6 (2) Completed specialized education and training in  
7 preparation for prescriptive practice approved by the  
8 American Psychological Association and the board of  
9 psychology;

10 (3) Has passed the Psychopharmacology Examination for  
11 Psychologists or an equivalent national examination  
12 approved by the board of psychology that is relevant  
13 to establishing competence for prescriptive practice;

14 (4) Is employed by, including as a contract provider, a  
15 federally qualified health center as defined in title  
16 42 United States Code section 1396d located in the  
17 county of Kauai or county of Hawaii; and

18 (5) Meets any other requirements established by the board  
19 of psychology.

20 (c) The pilot program established pursuant to this Act  
21 shall be a three-year program that shall allow participating



1 psychologists to prescribe psychotropic medications under a  
2 supervising physician or psychiatrist.

3 (d) The board of psychology shall adopt rules pursuant to  
4 chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to implement the purpose of  
5 this Act.

6 (e) The state health planning and development agency shall  
7 submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including  
8 any proposed legislation, on the pilot program to the  
9 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
10 the regular session of 2029. The report shall include a  
11 recommendation on whether to:

12 (1) Expand the pilot program to other underserved areas in  
13 the State;

14 (2) Make prescriptive authority for qualified  
15 psychologists permanent statewide; or

16 (3) Permanently end the pilot program.

17 (f) For the purposes of this Act:

18 "Prescriptive authority" means the authority to prescribe,  
19 administer, discontinue, or distribute without charge, drugs or  
20 controlled substances recognized in or customarily used in the  
21 diagnosis, treatment, and management of individuals with



1 psychiatric, mental, cognitive, nervous, emotional, or  
2 behavioral disorders, or other procedures directly related  
3 thereto within the scope of practice of psychology in accordance  
4 with rules adopted by the board of psychology.

5 "Psychopharmacology" means the use of psychoactive drugs in  
6 the treatment and control of mental disorders or psychiatric  
7 disease.

8 "Psychotropic medication" means only those agents related  
9 to the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders  
10 including controlled substances but not including narcotics.

11 "Supervising physician or psychiatrist" means a medically  
12 trained and licensed physician or psychiatrist who accepts  
13 professional responsibility for the provision of  
14 psychopharmacology by a psychologist certified to prescribe.

15 PART III

16 SECTION 3. Section 329-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
17 amended as follows:

18 1. By adding a new definition to be appropriately inserted  
19 and to read:

20 "Psychologist certified to prescribe" means a person  
21 approved by the board of psychology to participate in the pilot



1 program established pursuant to Act \_\_\_\_\_, Session Laws of Hawaii  
2 2026, but who is not authorized to request, receive, or sign for  
3 professional controlled substance samples."

4 2. By amending the definition of "practitioner" to read:  
5 ""Practitioner" means:

- 6 (1) A physician, dentist, veterinarian, scientific  
7 investigator, or other person licensed and registered  
8 under section 329-32 to distribute, dispense, or  
9 conduct research with respect to a controlled  
10 substance in the course of professional practice or  
11 research in this State;
- 12 (2) An advanced practice registered nurse with  
13 prescriptive authority licensed and registered under  
14 section 329-32 to prescribe and administer controlled  
15 substances in the course of professional practice in  
16 this State;
- 17 (3) A licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife  
18 registered under section 329-32 to prescribe and  
19 administer controlled substances in the course of  
20 professional practice in this State; [~~and~~]



1        (4) A licensed psychologist certified to prescribe and  
 2        registered under section 329-32 to prescribe and  
 3        dispense controlled substances in accordance with the  
 4        requirements and limitations of the pilot program  
 5        established pursuant to Act        , Session Laws of  
 6        Hawaii 2026; and

7        [~~4~~] (5) A pharmacy, hospital, or other institution  
 8        licensed, registered, or otherwise permitted to  
 9        distribute, dispense, conduct research with respect to  
 10       or to administer a controlled substance in the course  
 11       of professional practice or research in this State."

PART IV

13       SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
 14 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

15       SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

SHPDA; Board of Psychology; Prescriptive Authority; Clinical Psychologists; Pilot Program; Supervising Physician or Psychiatrist; Federally Qualified Health Centers; County of Kauai; County of Hawaii; Rules; Report

**Description:**

Establishes a three-year pilot program in the County of Kauai and County of Hawaii to allow qualified psychologists under the supervision of a supervising physician or psychiatrist limited authority to prescribe certain psychotropic medications to patients between the ages of 18 and 65 years under the care of the psychologist. Requires the Board of Psychology to adopt rules. Requires the State Health Planning and Development Agency to report to the Legislature. (CD1)

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

