

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 17 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1537
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committees on Health and Human Services & Homelessness,
to which was referred H.B. No. 1537 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for the Department of Health to contract with community-based organizations to provide preventive and early intervention mental health services to adolescents within the community.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Health; Office of the Public Defender; Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Commission; Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition; Hina Mauka; Catholic Charities Hawai'i; Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center; and three individuals.

Your Committees find that mental health needs among Hawaii's adolescents are on the rise, with many facing a combination of mental health challenges, substance use disorders, and the effects of traumatic events like the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 Maui wildfires, and rising family instability resulting from housing insecurity and loss of essential social services. Your Committees further find that community-based organizations play an important role in providing preventive and early intervention mental health



services for adolescents that help them develop healthy coping skills and behaviors and address emerging mental health concerns. Your Committees believe that developing a strong framework for mental health services that is similar to the one developed to treat and prevent youth substance abuse will enable the State to equip Hawaii's youth with the tools they need to take care of their mental health and well-being.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring the Department of Health to submit a report to the Legislature prior to the Regular Session of 2028, rather than the Regular Session of 2027;
- (2) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount; and
- (3) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion.

Your Committees respectfully request your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider an appropriation amount of \$3,000,000.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Health and Human Services & Homelessness that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1537, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1537, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Health and Human
Services & Homelessness,



LISA MARTEN, Chair



GREGG YAMAYAMA, Chair



