



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education and  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health  
Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 2:15 p.m.

By  
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### SB 1164 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chairs Kahele and Baker, Vice Chairs Kidani and Nishihara, and members of the committees, thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is in complete support of this measure that establishes three (3) full-time psychologists and one (1) full-time case manager at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

As you are well aware, college students are facing greater and more complex challenges in their personal and academic lives. Presenting issues amongst our students include anxiety, stress management, and suicidal ideations. We work hard to attend to all of our students. Our current team of psychologists, psychiatrists, and interns do an amazing job with limited resources.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa currently has 6.5 faculty positions, 1 temporary faculty position, 3 post-doc therapists, 3 doctoral interns, and 2 doctoral practicum trainees. The total number of students serviced each year continues to increase. In the 2015-16 school year, the University had serviced approximately 1,300 students for close to 8,000 attended appointments. From August 01, 2016-February 02, 2017, we have, so far, serviced 906 students with a total of 3,927 attended appointments. Additionally, the number of times students have sought services range from one intake appointment to over 30 individual therapy appointments.

On average, there are 36 hours each week dedicated to intakes, 40 hours of emergency Blue Line, and over 170 psychotherapy appointments available to undergraduate and graduate students. In the Fall 2015 semester, 559 intake appointments were scheduled, 296 emergency Blue Line appointments were scheduled, and 2,591 therapy appointments were scheduled. Notably, during the Fall 2016 semester, there was one day 10 urgent students did walk-in crisis counseling – 6 of which were in the afternoon alone.

The waitlist, which is for non-urgent clients, had 67 students on the list as of November 12, 2015, with an average number of days on the list being 7.17 days. As of February

01, 2016, 33 students were on the waitlist with an average numbers of days on the list of 16.06 days. As of February 02, 2017, 43 students are on the waitlist with 9.76 average number of days on the list. Currently, the upper limit of time spent on the waitlist includes 1 client on for 91 days, 1 client on for 76 days, 1 client on for 74 days, and 1 client on for 72 days. The current wait time for an initial intake appointment is 5 calendar days and majority of our clients are assigned a therapist within 21 calendar days.

The demand for mental health services have increased across the country. According to data from the American College Health Association National College Health Assessment Fall 2014 Reference Group within the last 12 months, 54% felt overwhelming anxiety, 32.6% felt so depressed that it was difficult to function, and 8.1% seriously considered suicide. In the Spring 2015 Reference Group, 56.9% felt overwhelming anxiety, 34.5% felt so depressed it was difficult to function, and 8.9% seriously considered suicide. In the Fall 2015 Reference Group, 57.7% felt overwhelming anxiety, 35.3% felt so depressed it was difficult to function, and 9.6% seriously considered suicide. This data continues to increase being that in the Spring 2016 Reference Group, 58.4% felt overwhelming anxiety, 36.7% felt so depressed it was difficult to function, and 9.8% seriously considered suicide.

Any efforts to increase services to our students would be very much appreciated. These new positions will help to alleviate the current heavy workload on our therapists and increase our abilities to reach out to the campus through proactive educational efforts. Your investment in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa will have a long lasting impact and will create a legacy of those who supported the students of higher education in our state.

We support the intent of this legislation provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Budget.

Thank you for your consideration.