
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that according to the
2 National Institute of Mental Health, one in five adults in the
3 United States has a mental health condition. In Hawaii, a
4 significant number of persons with mental illness end up in the
5 criminal justice system. Often times, trained mental health
6 care professionals can significantly help individuals with
7 mental health issues avoid the criminal justice system.

8 In addition, for those already in the criminal justice
9 system, there is a long wait for mental health treatment.
10 During 2017 and 2018, the department of public safety held two
11 hundred seventy-five pretrial detainees who were awaiting
12 treatment. This category of detainees spent a cumulative twelve
13 thousand days occupying the department's bed space before they
14 were transferred to the Hawaii state hospital.

15 The legislature recognizes that, as a matter of statewide
16 concern, action must be taken to increase the number of mental
17 health care professionals in Hawaii, not only to address the



1 needs of the criminal justice system, but also the general
2 public at large.

3 The purpose of this Act is to establish a behavioral health
4 social worker scholarship program to be administered by the
5 University of Hawaii.

6 SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended by adding a new section to subpart B of part II to be
8 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

9 "§304A- Behavioral health social worker scholarship
10 program; service commitment. (a) There is established the
11 behavioral health social worker scholarship program to be
12 administered by the University of Hawaii. The behavioral health
13 social worker scholarship program shall assist students with
14 school tuition and fees in return for a service commitment of
15 five years with the department of human services, department of
16 health, department of public safety, judiciary, and service
17 providers contracted by these departments and branch for
18 services in the areas of psychiatric and mental health, or other
19 behavioral health social work.

20 (b) The behavioral health social worker scholarship
21 program shall cover the cost of tuition and fees for a complete



1 course of study that qualifies an individual for licensure under
2 chapter 467E; provided that a recipient who fails to maintain
3 satisfactory academic progress shall be terminated from the
4 behavioral health social worker scholarship program and shall be
5 required to repay the portion of the scholarship already
6 dispensed on the recipient's behalf.

7 (c) Recipients shall be required to complete five years of
8 service with the department of human services, department of
9 health, department of public safety, judiciary, and service
10 providers contracted by these departments and branch for
11 services in the areas of psychiatric and mental health, or other
12 behavioral health social work. If the recipient fails to
13 complete the required five-year service commitment, the
14 recipient shall reimburse the University of Hawaii for the full
15 amount of the award received from the behavioral health social
16 worker scholarship program.

17 (d) The number of scholarships awarded annually shall be
18 determined by the University of Hawaii, in collaboration with
19 the department of human services, and shall be subject to the
20 availability of funds.



1 (e) The University of Hawaii, in collaboration with the
2 department of human services, shall establish necessary policies
3 and procedures to implement and sustain the behavioral health
4 social worker scholarship program, including application
5 procedures, eligibility requirements, and standards to determine
6 which applicants are awarded scholarships.

7 (f) The department of human services shall adopt rules,
8 pursuant to chapter 91, for purposes of the five-year service
9 commitment component of the behavioral health social worker
10 scholarship program, including policies and procedures to
11 implement and sustain the five-year service commitment and terms
12 and conditions of employment."

13 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
15 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for
16 the behavioral health social worker scholarship program
17 established in section 2 of this Act.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of
19 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

20 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on December 31,
2 2059.



Report Title:

Behavioral Health Social Worker Scholarship Program; UH; DHS; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the behavioral health social worker scholarship program at UH, which requires recipients of the scholarship to commit to five years of service with DHS, DOH, PSD, Judiciary, and service providers. Appropriates funds. Takes effect on December 31, 2059. (HD1)

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