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# 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 many homeless  
2 persons struggle with mental illnesses or substance abuse issues  
3 and would benefit from mental health assistance. According to  
4 the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
5 Administration, approximately twenty-five per cent of homeless  
6 persons in the United States suffer from a severe mental  
7 illness. Often, law enforcement officers are dispatched to  
8 respond to a homeless person experiencing a mental health crisis  
9 but lack the expertise and resources to adequately help. The  
10 legislature finds that more effective care could be offered if a  
11 licensed mental health counselor were available to assist police  
12 officers, or other first responders, in responding to mental  
13 health crises.

14           Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to create a pilot  
15 program to make one or more licensed mental health counselors  
16 available to assist county first responders in responding to  
17 mental health crises in areas with high rates of homelessness.



1 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the department  
2 of human services a pilot program to make one or more licensed  
3 mental health counselors available to assist county first  
4 responders in responding to mental health crises in areas with  
5 high rates of homelessness.

6 (b) The department of human services shall administer the  
7 pilot program in each county having a population of more than  
8 six hundred thousand.

9 (c) The pilot program shall terminate on December 31,  
10 2024.

11 (d) The department shall submit a report of its findings  
12 and recommendations, including a recommendation on whether the  
13 pilot program should be extended or made permanent and any  
14 proposed enabling legislation, to the legislature no later than  
15 twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of  
16 2024.

17 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
19 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the  
20 pilot program established by section 2 of this Act.



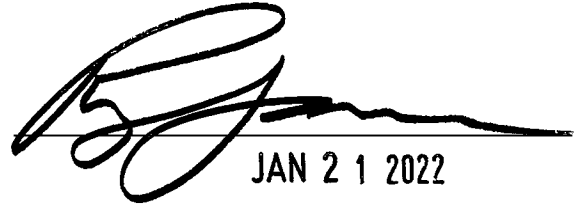
# H.B. NO. 1666

1           The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
2 human services for the purposes of this Act.

3           SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

4

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 21 2022



# H.B. NO. 1666

**Report Title:**

DHS; Mental Health; Homelessness; County First Responders; Pilot Program; Report; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes a pilot program within the Department of Human Services to make 1 or more licensed mental health counselors available to assist county first responders in responding to mental health crises in areas with high rates of homelessness. Appropriates moneys. Requires a report to the Legislature.

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

