



February 12, 2020

To: The House Committee Members on Judiciary  
The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair  
The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

The House Committee Members on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
The Honorable Roy Takumi, Chair  
The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Strong Support of HB2043 HD1, Relating to Adolescent Mental Health Care

Hrg: February 12, 2020 at 2:05 PM at Capitol Room 325

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 600 community members, public health professionals and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. HPHA also serves as a voice for public health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

HPHA strongly **supports** HB2043 HD1, which would allow unlicensed mental health professionals, working under the supervision of a licensed mental health professional, to provide mental health treatment or counseling services to minors without parental or legal guardian consent.

Adolescent mental health is a public health priority and growing issues. Approximately 20% of teens experience a serious mental health disorder during their lifetime.[1] The number of adolescents who experienced major depressive episodes increased by almost a third from 2005 to 2014.[2] Mental health disorders can impact a variety of daily activities and functioning (e.g., relationships, schoolwork, sleeping, and eating).[3] Access to appropriate mental health services can make a difference in the lives of adolescents with mental disorders.[4] This measure will improve such access for adolescents. Early intervention and treatment can improve their health and well-being over the course of their lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on important health issues affecting people in Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Townsend Ing  
Legislative Committee Chair  
Hawai'i Public Health Association



Literature Cited:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Mental Health. (2017). *Mental illness*.
2. Mojtabai, R., Olfson, M., & Han, B. (2016). National trends in the prevalence and treatment of depression in adolescents and young adults. *Pediatrics*, 138(6).
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Mental Health. (2016). *Child and adolescent mental health*.
4. US Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration & Maternal and Child Health Bureau. *Mental health: A report of the Surgeon General*.