



March 10, 2020

TO: The Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

RE: In Support of HB 2043, HD 2

Hrg: March 10, 2020 at 9:30 AM State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Hawaii Public Health Association **supports** HB 2043, HD 2, which allows unlicensed mental health professionals who are 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, knowledge, or participation. It also requires mental health professionals and covered entities to maintain the confidentiality of mental health treatment or counseling services.

This bill expands the standard practice that a behavioral health professional who is in their practicum phase see patients under the supervision of a licensed professional to minors. Given the unmet demand for adolescent mental health and substance use treatment in public and private mental health systems, it is critical that professionals be authorized to provide needed services to those adolescents who request it. Nationally, 75 to 80 percent of youth who need mental health services do not receive them.

This bill is the product of a task force that was formed when the Legislature banned the practice of so-called “conversion therapy” for adolescents, responding to concerns that it would deter youth from seeking mental health services. Youth who face issues surrounding their sexual orientation or gender identity are particularly vulnerable to mental health risks, including suicide ideation, that are often best dealt with apart from parental input or notice. Many come from living situations where there may be sexual abuse, substance misuse, or physical or psychological violence, where parents or guardians are absent, or where their sexual orientation or gender identity is incompatible with parental or guardian opinions and views.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Claire Townsend Ing", is written over a horizontal line.

Claire Townsend Ing, DrPH
Legislative Committee Chair
Hawaii Public Health Association