



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Intrastate Commerce
Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 9:30 am, Conference Room 430

by
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HB 2321 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Kobayashi and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2321. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) is writing in strong support of HB 2321. The proposed change in the mental health counselor licensure law is directly relevant to our graduates in the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology Program (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling), as they are trained to be eligible for this license. The current version of the law unintentionally placed the 6-credit fieldwork requirement ("Practicum Intern Experience" with a total of 300 direct client hours) as a separate requirement from the 48-credit curriculum requirement, thereby changing the overall requirement to 54 credits. As the intent of the law was to require a 48-credit training, which is consistent with the licensing laws of other states, HB 2321 will fix this important flaw.

In addition, the bill will change the wording of the diagnostic manual from "DSM-IV" to "DSM." DSM-IV is an older version and the new edition is DSM-5. The editions will change in the future and hence the law should refer to the generic DSM and not a specific edition.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.