
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO DEMENTIA.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Alzheimer's disease
2 and related dementias are an urgent and growing public health
3 challenge in Hawaii. Between 2020 and 2025, the number of
4 Hawaii residents living with Alzheimer's disease is estimated to
5 have increased by 20.7 per cent. Approximately 31,200 Hawaii
6 residents aged sixty-five years or older currently live with
7 Alzheimer's. Long-term trends indicate that this figure could
8 double to approximately sixty-two thousand individuals by 2050.

9 This significant growth in the number of individuals living
10 with Alzheimer's disease is expected to increase emergency
11 department utilization, hospital readmissions, and overall
12 health care costs. Data show that individuals having dementia
13 experience 1,248 emergency department visits per one thousand
14 persons annually, reflecting a high rate of re-admittance and
15 frequent interaction with emergency medical services personnel.

16 The legislature further finds that six in ten people living
17 with dementia will wander, often repeatedly, and may forget



1 their name or address or become disoriented even in familiar
2 places. When individuals with dementia are lost, they may
3 exhibit anxiety, fear, or hostility, which may escalate into
4 aggressive behaviors. As the disease progresses and societal
5 norms are forgotten, incidents may include filing false police
6 reports, victimization, indecent exposure, and shoplifting.
7 People with Alzheimer's disease may appear uncooperative,
8 disruptive, or combative if they have difficulty communicating
9 and understanding what is happening. First responders often
10 lack the training needed to effectively assist these
11 individuals, which may lead to confusion and unnecessary
12 escalation.

13 The legislature further finds that police, emergency
14 medical services, and fire department personnel are frequently
15 the first responders who encounter wandering individuals or
16 respond to dementia-related incidents. In particular, fire
17 department personnel are often the first on scene for medical
18 emergencies and fires and may need to rescue individuals living
19 with dementia who are uncooperative or disoriented. The
20 importance of managing these situations appropriately will
21 become even more critical as Hawaii experiences an increase in



1 the frequency and intensity of wildfires that require rapid
2 evacuations and specialized communication strategies for
3 vulnerable populations.

4 The legislature finds that dementia-specific training for
5 first responders is cost effective and readily available. For
6 example, the Alzheimer's Association offers free, one-hour
7 online trainings for first responders. The Hawaii chapter of
8 the Alzheimer's Association has partnered with the Honolulu
9 police department to provide in-person dementia training to new
10 recruits at no cost. These resources enable agencies to build
11 dementia capability without additional appropriations.

12 The legislature further finds that evidence-based dementia
13 training improves recognition, communication, and de-escalation
14 skills, reducing preventable hospitalizations, emergency
15 interventions, and crises, while strengthening community safety
16 and resilience.

17 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require annual
18 dementia-specific training for all first responders in Hawaii
19 and to ensure that training content addresses recognition,
20 assessment, and communication; abuse and neglect identification;
21 caregiver engagement; disaster response; and safe return.



1 SECTION 2. Chapter 127A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
3 and to read as follows:

4 "§127A- Dementia-specific training. (a) The director
5 or the director's designee shall review the list of
6 dementia-specific training options recommended by the executive
7 office on aging pursuant to section 349- and provide at
8 least one hour of dementia-specific training from that list to
9 agency personnel. The dementia-specific training offered shall
10 be accessible at no cost to the agency personnel. The director
11 or the director's designee shall begin offering
12 dementia-specific training to agency personnel by January 1,
13 2027.

14 (b) All agency personnel shall complete a minimum of one
15 hour of dementia-specific training annually. The first annual
16 training cycle shall be completed by December 31, 2027.

17 (c) The dementia-specific training provided under this
18 section shall not create or impose any civil or criminal
19 liability upon any agency personnel, agency, or department.

20 (d) For purposes of this section, "dementia-specific
21 training" means training curricula recommended by the executive



1 office on aging for the purpose of first responder training
2 pursuant to section 349-_____."

3 SECTION 3. Chapter 132, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§132-_____ **Dementia-specific training.** (a) Each county
7 fire chief and the fire chief of the Hawaii state aircraft
8 rescue fire fighting unit, or the respective fire chief's
9 designee, shall review the list of dementia-specific training
10 options recommended by the executive office on aging pursuant to
11 section 349-_____ and provide at least one hour of
12 dementia-specific training from that list to fire first
13 responders within the fire chief's department or unit. The
14 dementia-specific training shall be accessible at no cost to the
15 fire first responders. Each respective chief shall begin
16 offering dementia-specific training to fire first responders by
17 January 1, 2027.

18 (b) All fire first responders within the State and
19 counties shall complete a minimum of one hour of
20 dementia-specific training annually. The first annual training
21 cycle shall be completed by December 31, 2027.



1 (c) The dementia-specific training provided under this
2 section shall not create or impose any civil or criminal
3 liability upon any fire first responder personnel, agency, or
4 department.

5 (d) For purposes of this section:

6 "Dementia-specific training" means training curricula
7 recommended by the executive office on aging for the purpose of
8 first responder training pursuant to section 349-_____.

9 "Fire first responders" means first responder personnel
10 employed by state and county fire protection agencies and
11 departments."

12 SECTION 4. Chapter 139, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
14 and to read as follows:

15 "§139-_____ **Dementia training.** (a) The board or the
16 board's designee shall review the list of dementia-specific
17 training options recommended by the executive office on aging
18 pursuant to section 349-_____ and require at least one hour of
19 dementia-specific training from that list to be provided to law
20 enforcement officers. The dementia-specific training shall be
21 accessible at no cost to the law enforcement officers. The



1 board shall require law enforcement agencies to begin offering
2 dementia-specific training to law enforcement officers by
3 January 1, 2027.

4 (b) All law enforcement officers within the State and
5 counties shall complete a minimum of one hour of
6 dementia-specific training annually. The first annual training
7 cycle shall be completed by December 31, 2027.

8 (c) The dementia-specific training provided under this
9 section shall not create or impose any civil or criminal
10 liability upon any law enforcement officer, agency, or
11 department.

12 (d) For purposes of this section, "dementia-specific
13 training" means training curricula recommended by the executive
14 office on aging for the purpose of first responder training
15 pursuant to section 349-_____."

16 SECTION 5. Chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by adding a new section to part XVIII to be
18 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

19 **"§321-_____ Dementia-specific training.** (a) The director
20 of health or the director's designee shall review the list of
21 dementia-specific training options recommended by the executive



1 office on aging pursuant to section 349- and provide at
2 least one hour of dementia-specific training from that list to
3 emergency medical services personnel and first responder
4 personnel. The dementia-specific training shall be accessible
5 at no cost to the emergency medical services personnel and first
6 responder personnel. The director of health or the director's
7 designee shall begin offering dementia-specific training to
8 emergency medical services personnel and first responder
9 personnel by January 1, 2027.

10 (b) All emergency medical services personnel and first
11 responder personnel shall complete a minimum of one hour of
12 dementia-specific training annually. The first annual training
13 cycle shall be completed by December 31, 2027.

14 (c) The dementia-specific training provided under this
15 section shall not create or impose any civil or criminal
16 liability upon any emergency medical services personnel, first
17 responder personnel, employer, agency, or department.

18 (d) For purposes of this section, "dementia-specific
19 training" means training curricula recommended by the executive
20 office on aging for the purpose of first responder training
21 pursuant to section 349- ."



1 SECTION 6. Chapter 349, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately
3 designated and to read as follows:

4 **"§349- Dementia-specific first responder training**
5 **curriculum content review.** (a) The executive office on aging
6 or the office's designee shall review and recommend
7 dementia-specific training curricula for agencies that employ
8 first responders to ensure statewide consistency and alignment
9 with best practices. The dementia-specific training curricula
10 shall address the recognition of and response to persons having
11 Alzheimer's disease and related types of dementia. The
12 executive office on aging shall make available a list of
13 recommended dementia-specific training curricula options that
14 meet the requirements of this section.

15 (b) The executive office on aging shall seek low- to
16 no-cost dementia-specific training curricula from nonprofit
17 organizations in addition to any fee-based dementia-specific
18 training curricula. To the extent possible, at least one of the
19 recommended dementia-specific training curricula shall be
20 available to first responders at no charge. If available, the



1 no-cost dementia-specific training curricula shall be funded by
2 private contributions from relevant non-profit organizations.

3 (c) The dementia-specific training curricula shall
4 include:

5 (1) Strategies for recognizing key signs of Alzheimer's
6 disease and related types of dementia;

7 (2) Strategies for assessing cognition;

8 (3) Best practices for interacting with persons having
9 Alzheimer's disease or related types of dementia,
10 including during disaster response;

11 (4) Strategies to identify and intervene in situations in
12 which persons having Alzheimer's disease or related
13 types of dementia may be at risk of abuse or neglect;
14 and

15 (5) Best practices to ensure the safe return of persons
16 having Alzheimer's disease or related types of
17 dementia.

18 (d) All dementia-specific training curricula recommended
19 by the executive office on aging shall include at least one hour
20 of instruction time.



1 (e) The executive office on aging may coordinate with
 2 other agencies to review and recommend dementia-specific
 3 training curricula developed by a first responder department or
 4 agency.

5 (f) The executive office on aging may use educational and
 6 training resources made available in the public and private
 7 sectors to develop dementia-specific training curricula that
 8 meet the requirements of this section."

9 SECTION 7. Section 321-229.2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
 10 repealed.

11 ~~["~~§321-229.2~~ **First responder personnel; dementia**~~
 12 ~~**training.** (a) The employers of first responder personnel may~~
 13 ~~obtain dementia training for first responder personnel, which~~
 14 ~~may include:~~

- 15 ~~(1) Recognizing the key signs of Alzheimer's disease and~~
 16 ~~related types of dementia;~~
- 17 ~~(2) Strategies for assessing cognition;~~
- 18 ~~(3) Best practices for interacting with persons with~~
 19 ~~Alzheimer's disease and related types of dementia; and~~
- 20 ~~(4) Strategies to best identify and intervene in~~
 21 ~~situations where persons with Alzheimer's disease and~~



1 ~~related types of dementia may be at particular risk of~~
2 ~~abuse or neglect.~~

3 ~~(b) The training shall be offered at no cost to the~~
4 ~~applicable first responder personnel and shall be funded by~~
5 ~~private contributions from relevant non-profit organizations.~~

6 ~~(c) The executive office on aging may coordinate the~~
7 ~~training schedules and standards, as necessary, with all public~~
8 ~~and private entities and agencies responsible for services~~
9 ~~provided by first responder personnel, including entering into~~
10 ~~agreements or memoranda of agreement with nonprofit~~
11 ~~organizations to provide funding pursuant to subsection (b).~~

12 ~~(d) The employers of first responder personnel may utilize~~
13 ~~existing educational and training resources available in the~~
14 ~~public and private sectors when developing the training required~~
15 ~~under this section."]~~

16 SECTION 8. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
17 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.



H.B. NO. 1976

1 SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

2

INTRODUCED BY: _____

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JAN 23 2026



H.B. NO. 1976

Report Title:

Dementia; Alzheimer's Disease; First Responder Training; Executive Office on Aging; HIEMA; Counties; Law Enforcement Standards Board; DOH

Description:

Requires the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, fire chiefs, Law Enforcement Standards Board, and Department of Health to provide or require the provision of at least 1 hour of dementia-specific training for first responders, including law enforcement officers, fire first responders, and emergency medical services personnel. Requires the Executive Office on Aging to review and recommend dementia-specific training curricula that address the recognition and signs of Alzheimer's disease and related types of dementia.

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