



---

**TESTIMONY OF MARION M. HIGA, STATE AUDITOR,  
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2159, RELATING TO PROFESSIONS**

**House Committee on Health**

**March 14, 2008**

Chair Green and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2159. This bill repeals the sunset provision for the licensing program for mental health counselors created in 2004 by the Legislature under Act 209.

We evaluated the regulation of mental health counselors pursuant to Section 26H-5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) to determine whether the program complies with the policies set forth in Section 26H-2, HRS, and whether the public interest requires that the law establishing the regulatory program should be reenacted, modified, or permitted to expire. We found that even though licensing of mental health counselors is not warranted based on criteria in Section 26H-2, HRS, continued licensing is in the public interest in accordance with Section 26H-5, HRS. From a broader perspective, licensure appears to be achieving several objectives sought by the Legislature when it established the licensing of mental health counselors under Chapter 453D, HRS. Licensure will likely expand the number of qualified professionals who can provide needed mental health services, increase access to services, and reduce the costs of these services.

Based on our findings, we recommend that the repeal date be removed and that the Legislature should consider adding licensed mental counselors to the list of practitioners. Draft legislation is appended in our evaluation report. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

000045

**HAWAII REHABILITATION COUNSELING ASSOCIATION**

P O BOX 4385  
HONOLULU, HI 96812



DATE: March 14, 2008

TO: Representative Josh Green, Chair,  
Representative John Mizuno, Vice- Chair;  
Members of the Committee on Health

Representative Maile Shimibukuro, Chair  
Representative Karl Rhoads, Vice - Chair  
Members of the Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Betty Sestak, HRCA Legislative Chair

RE: **SB2159 : RELATING TO PROFESSIONS**

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159.**

The Hawaii Rehabilitation counseling Association represents 50 practicing vocational rehabilitation counselors in the state of Hawaii. Hawaii Rehabilitation Counseling Association has been an active professional association representing the professional needs of Hawaii rehabilitation counselors for more than 30 years.

Licensure is important to assure the public that mental health providers in Hawaii are competent to provide qualified and ethical services. Licensure provides consistent and accountable standards of practice. It further provides for recourse of the client when they are harmed in some way by a provider who is unethical or incompetent.

Hawaii Rehabilitation Counseling Association is in favor of SB2159 and strongly supports its passage. I encourage you to pass SB2159 out of the Committee on Health

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Betty Sestak, MS, NCC, CRC, LMHC  
Rehabilitation counselor

000046

Testimony of  
Phyllis Dendle  
Director of Government Affairs

Before:  
House Committee on Health  
The Honorable Josh Green M.D., Chair  
The Honorable John Mizuno, Vice Chair

March 14, 2008  
8:30 am  
Conference Room 329

#### **SB2159 RELATING TO PROFESSIONS**

Chair Green and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2159 which makes permanent the protection of the title and practice of professional mental health counselors.

#### **Kaiser Permanente supports this bill.**

Hawaii was one of only three states that did not license professional counselors. While national certification has been available, it did not provide the same benefits or protections to the public as state licensure. These masters level mental health clinicians bring valuable skills to the community. Licensing them assures professionalism and the protection of consumers.

We urge you to make permanent this protection. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

711 Kapiolani Blvd  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Telephone: 808-432-5210  
Facsimile: 808-432-5906  
Mobile: 808-754-7007  
E-mail: phyllis.dendle@kp.org

000047

**ALLIANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR LICENSURE**  
(Hawai`i Rehabilitation Counseling Association & Hawai`i Counselors Association)  
1181 Mapuana Street, Kailua, Hawaii, 96734

DATE: March 14, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: Sandra Joy Eastlack, MSCP, LHMC, NCC

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159**

The Alliance for Professional Counselor Licensure supports the 177 mental health counselors who have obtained licensure since July 1, 2005; an estimated 100 to 150 counselors currently working on obtaining their licensure status and those working towards their master's degree in counseling. Most importantly we support the consumers of mental health services.

Your committee has heard about the need when HB 2566 was heard and I would expect you will have more testimony to support the need for additional mental health practitioner services. With mental health counselors being licensed the need can be reduced to some degree.

The purpose of SB 2159 is to eliminate the sunset repeal for mental health counselors and also eliminates the requirement for a sunset repeal. With all due respect to the Legislative Auditor and understanding that a sunset is important in order to review the law and recommend improvements to the law there is a problem with timely reports.

The sunset report was to be presented to the legislative body prior to the start of the legislative session (HRS §26-H-4) however; we are still anxiously waiting for it to be completed. For whatever reason, this is not the only incident of a late report. In fact, when the sunrise report for counselors was due to the legislature prior to the 1999 session, it was not completed until August 1999.

With all due respect to the Legislative Auditor, in business when something does not work, or is inefficient changes are made. While I have no idea what the problems are with producing the reports in a timely manner it is not working. Therefore changes need to be made and eliminating the requirement of a sunset report prior to its repeal should at the very least be changed.

Chapter 26H-5 (a) states that “ a) The legislative auditor shall evaluate each board, commission, and regulatory program subject to repeal by section 26H-4 and shall submit an evaluation report to the legislature prior to the convening of the regular session of the year of the repeal date. The evaluation shall assess whether the

000048

regulatory program as established complies with the policies established by section 26H-2 and whether the public interest requires that the law establishing the regulatory program be reenacted, modified, or permitted to expire “

In the past for other mental health practioners the Legislative Auditor has seemed to look at this as if there were no complaints of harm about the profession there was no need for licensure. I would like to suggest that this is a very narrow view of the issue. Protection of the public goes much further and affects many Hawai'i residents every day lives. It would appear that HRS §26H-2(1) that states “The regulation and licensing of professions and vocations shall be undertaken only where reasonably necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of consumers of the services; the purpose of regulation shall be the protection of the public welfare and not that of the regulated profession or vocation; does address the protection of all the public.

Mental health involves many issues from serious mental illness at one end of the spectrum to low self-esteem at the other end. It also can be found in all ages from early childhood to the elderly and affects the healthy population in all those ages also. A child attending school that may have problems often acts out and this takes away from the others who may be able to learn more if the teacher was not so occupied, dealing with the problem behavior. As adolescents there may be more “mischief” however as we know for the news it often goes far father than that to burglary, robbery, substance abuse and even homicide. The cycle will continue with child abuse, domestic abuse and substance abuse that sometimes induce serious mental illnesses and it will not stop without intervention.

With all the problems we continue to see more help is needed in this area. If mental health counselor licensure does not continue that will further reduce the pool of practitioners who are able to help others. While no one goes into the counseling field to become rich, as that likely will not happen everyone needs to make a living. From talking to current LMHCs most appear willing to accept Medicaid reimbursement however, without licensure that is not even a possibility. Additionally in 2008 the federal government provides 56.5 cents for every dollar spent with Medicaid funds

Hawai'i is excellent at providing Med QUEST insurance to those who are low income and can not otherwise afford medical insurance. However, the requirements under Hawaii's Med QUEST program require licensed professionals. Chapter 2.2 of the Medicaid Provider Manual states “An individual provider must be licensed to practice within the scope of his/her profession in accordance with State law.” If licensure does not continue for mental health counselors they would not be able to provide services to a substantial portion of the population that includes some of the neediest of these services. The portion of the population that receives Med QUEST is 17% and on the island of Hawaii that statistic is the same.

I encourage you to pass SB 2159 in the form it is in. When the Legislative Auditors report is released I am sure we will be will to discuss any changes that may be recommended and we can come back to the legislature next year if the recommendations call for legislative changes. However to repeat the same issues year after year is spending money that appears to becoming more scarce day by day according to the news media.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide a few, of many reasons, the sunset provision of mental health counselors in HRS 26-H should be repealed.

000049

**To:** Representatives Josh Green, MD and John Mizuno  
Co-chairs, Health Committee  
[HLTtestiony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:HLTtestiony@capitol.hawaii.gov) Hearing 3/14/2008

**Reference:** SB2159 Relating to Professions...mental health counselors  
In favor of passage of SB2159

Chair persons Green and Mizuno.

My name is Karla Filibeck and I am a junior at the University of Hawaii majoring in Family Resources. I have a dream. I want to study to be a mental health counselor helping high school girls who have become parents. Looking back at my high school days, I saw babies having babies. Mature two parent families find it difficult to properly raise and discipline children. Young inexperienced single parents need great amounts of help. The parenting skills I am learning at the University have given me insight and courage to reach my goals as a high school parent educator. Please do not let the mental health counselor licensure law sunset. It would be a disaster to so many. Please vote Yeah on Senate Bill 2159.

Aloha,

Karla Filibeck  
Student, Family Resources  
University of Hawaii at Manoa

000050

**Trina Nahm-Mijo, Ph.D., LMHC  
P.O. Box 304  
Kurtistown, HI 96760**

DATE: March 13, 2008

House Committee on Health  
Friday, 3/14 at 8:30 a.m.

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair  
The Honorable Representative, John Mizuno, Vice – Chair  
Members of the Committee on Health

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB 2159. I have been a Professor of Psychology, Dance and Women's Studies at Hawai'i Community College, but I also went into part-time private practice in 1993, especially to work with children. At that time, the Department of Education was under the Felix Consent Decree as a result of a lawsuit for not adequately meeting the mental health needs of children. I became a provider for some of these children as well as a therapist with the foster program Casey Family Program. Most of my clientele at that time were either young girls who had been sexually abused or youth in foster care because their biological parents' rights had been taken away due to neglect, usually due to drug addiction.

At this time, I became acutely aware of the shortage of mental health practitioners on this island as compared to the vast need for mental health services. Because the Big Island has the ignominious distinction of having the worst social indicators in the state—domestic violence, suicide, mental illness, drug abuse, and early pregnancy—it is of utmost importance that Chapter 453D of HRS which allows for the licensing of mental health counselors does not sunset on December 31, 2008 and that Section 26H-4 of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes is repealed.

I received my Mental Health licensure in 2005 which allows me to provide mental health services so badly needed in our rural communities. Because I had devoted my career to solely teaching for the first fifteen years after receiving my Ph.D. rather than going into clinical practice, it was difficult for me to seek licensing as a psychologist later in my career. Although, my degree is in Counseling Psychology from UC, Berkeley, my program was interdisciplinary and based on a lot of independent study coursework. This made it difficult for me to meet the specific course requirements required to be licensed as a psychologist. I know some very fine clinicians with Ph.D.s in a similar situation. Thus, the certification for LMHC has allowed competent practitioners to help fill the void in our community which is sorely lacking adequate numbers of professionals to cover its mental health needs.

I encourage you to pass SB 2159 out of the Committee on Health.

000051

DATE: March 14, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: Milton Anderson Ph.D., LMHC

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

This is in support of repealing the Sunset Law and the continued Licensing of Mental Health Counselor in Hawaii.

In addition to the many benefits to the people of Hawaii, by providing additional mental health professionals to meet our needs and life challenges, Mental Health Counselors are particularly important to the Native Hawaiian community.

Mental Health Counselors' stress cultural competence in counseling and are more likely to be sought out, by those member of our indigenous community who would otherwise avoid mental health intervention.

With "Ice" use and domestic violence reaching epidemic proportions, we need the knowledge, experience and cultural competence that Licensed Mental Health Counselors provide.

As a member of the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, it is my obligation to advocate those conditions that would preserve, protect and nurture our community. With this sacred obligation in mind, I urge you to support the continued Licensure of Mental Health Counselors.

Me ka pu'uwai ha'aha'a,

000052



DATE: March 13, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: Andrew Breton, LMHC NCC  
419 Atkinson Dr. #1203, Honolulu HI

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions  
Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Affordable Housing  
Hearing March 14, 2008 8:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 329

Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for hearing this bill and for the opportunity to provide testimony for SB 2159. I strongly support the SB 2159, a bill to repeal of the sunset clause of the Mental Health Counselor law. There are several reasons for my support.

On September 27, 2006, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced that the State of Hawaii had been awarded an 11 million dollar grant to create a sustainable, fully integrated, comprehensive, statewide mental health system and to implement a system-wide transformation process. After an extensive needs assessment that included all agencies that fund or provide mental health services/supports, the consumers of those services, and the families of those that receive services, one of the grant's key conclusions is that Hawaii needs to: "**Declare a State-wide emergency in hiring mental health workers in the private and public sector**" and address this need.

Mental Health Counselors could be in a key position to help Hawaii achieve this goal.

- The MHC license is a license to practice. While the preparation for a Mental Health Counselor is tough, it is not intended to produce academic professionals, but rather practicing professionals.
- Master's level degree programs tend to attract more local candidates, while the competition for Ph.D. slots is nationwide and candidates often pull up roots to enroll in a different geographic area for either doctorate or post-doctorate positions.
- As a Master's level degree, Mental Health Counselors have a lower earning potential, and are therefore more likely to remain in Hawaii rather than leave the islands for better pay on the mainland.
- Degrees in counseling are offered on Oahu and Hawaii. This further increases the attraction to people interested in the helping professions who are local to Hawaii and local to at least one rural, traditionally underserved area.

000053

- The counselor training programs in the State of Hawaii emphasize cultural competence throughout their curriculum. National surveys indicate that the counselor training program at the University of Hawaii is rated in the top five programs in the United States in terms of promoting counselors' cultural competence.
- The accreditation process for counselor training programs allows for some flexibility in training, so people who cannot afford to be unemployed for the years necessary for a Ph.D. can work towards a master's degree in counseling while keeping up with other responsibilities for the majority of their schooling. In my office of 20 people, two people are pursuing a degree in counseling. Both are local women: one with teenage sons, and another in her late twenties.

Mental Health Counselors could help Hawaii in another important way. In terms of the percent of federally matching funds (FMAP), in 2007 Hawaii ranked 31st out of 50 States and the District of Columbia. When you omit the 12 States that have only a 50% match, Hawaii ranked 31st out of 39.

(Figures are according to <http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/fmap07.htm>.)

Part of the reason Hawaii is not taking advantage of federally matching funds is the lack of Qualified Mental Health Professionals or QMHPs. QMHP is a designation of certain licensed professionals to supervise unlicensed aides and case managers. Without supervision by a QMHP, a potentially reimbursable Medicaid service cannot be certified; without certification Hawaii cannot seek matching funds.

Needless to say, lack of supervision by a Qualified Mental Health Professional also has consequences for the people receiving mental health services.

Although there has been discussion about sponsoring Mental Health Counselors to receive the QMHP designation, this cannot realistically be pursued with the uncertainty of the license represented by the sunset clause. With the sunset clause in place, it is less likely that people in Hawaii who are interested in the helping professions will invest their time in a degree whose endpoint may not be a license to practice. With fewer counselor candidates, there is one less solution for the crisis in mental health service personnel.

For the above reasons, I urge you to repeal the sunset clause in the Mental Health Counselor statute.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

000054

Ruth C. Viafara  
1024 Green Street # 7  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
Viafara@hawaii.edu

DATE: March 12, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: Ruth C. Viafara  
1024 Green Street #7  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
Phone (808) 722-3198  
[viafara@hawaii.edu](mailto:viafara@hawaii.edu)

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159.**

My name is Ruth C. Viafara a graduate student of Counseling and Rehabilitation at the University of Hawaii at Manoa; I have become aware that up to 20 percent of U.S. troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have suffered concussions. Concussions, which the military calls traumatic brain injuries (TBIs). TBIs are among the most common injuries troops suffer during combat tours. Traumatic brain injuries are caused by powerful blasts, such as ones created by improvised explosive devices, or severe trauma that shakes the brain inside the skull. The result can be bruising of the brain and more often than not it creates greater brain damage.

The damage is so significant, that traumatic brain injuries suffered by soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan place them on a very long, painful road to recovery. Soldiers on this tortuous road need the help of therapists and

000055

counselors to obtain some respite for their physical agony and hope to alleviate their emotional anxiety.

There are pivotal moments in the recovery of every severely TBI wounded service member; moments when the future — for both the wounded and their families — seems to hang in the balance. Counselors like me have a hard time recognizing that about 60 percent of the TBI patients treated in veteran hospitals also are beset by the breakup of their marriages; such high statistics make ease for me to surmise that the cognitive impact of the injuries is so devastating that almost impossible for most couples to come to term with. At times like these injured soldiers need therapists and counselors to help them to put back their life's pieces together.

It is not fair for men and women in uniform having to face such insurmountable odds. Here in Hawaii, like in the rest of the country, the courageous men and women in the military deserve the finest of care when they return home with injuries; injured soldiers need counselors and therapist to help them mend their broken hearts and piece back together their shattered dreams. Please, legislators do not deny them the counseling they deserve at this crucial stage in their lives

Counselors in large numbers are needed to provide the types of services that soldiers with TBI require; they could provide services like: psychological evaluation to assess for TBI and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), cognitive therapy, counseling, activity- and community-based rehabilitation, residential services and respite care for family members, and housing while services are being delivered. Services also could

include assistive technology devices, cognitive prosthetics, and home health care equipment, such as bathroom equipment and even canes.

"The Army is challenged to understand, diagnose and treat military personnel suffering from TBI," said Brig. Gen. Donald Bradshaw, who leads the Army's TBI task force. The military is working with interagency, counselors and civilian groups to better define, understand and treat TBI. The military is also implementing in-theater TBI screening and documentation for all soldiers exposed to brain injury-inducing trauma; the more individuals are diagnosed with TBI the greater the number of counselors needed to treat soldiers with TBI injuries.

I encourage you to pass HB 2566 out of the Committee on Health

Thank you,

Ruth C. Viafara

**mizuno1-Edgar**

---

**From:** Kenneth Fields [openmindcounseling@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2008 7:22 PM  
**To:** HLTtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159

**Kenneth Fields MA, NCC, LMHC**

**DATE:** March 14, 2008

**TO:** The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

**FROM:** **Kenneth Fields**  
  
(808) 250-9925

**RE:** SB 2159, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159.**

There is little question that mental health is important to the well being of our community. It is equally important that the public have access to qualified mental health professionals who are required to meet established standards of performance. By providing state licensure to professional mental health counselors, the state ensures that the public has available such qualified individuals from whom they can seek assistance.

I strongly encourage the repeal of the sunset clause regarding mental health counselor licensure and encourage the state of Hawaii to support mental health through establishing a permanent law which allows for licensure of mental health counselors.

I encourage you to pass SB 2159 out of the Committee on Health

98-1461 #4 Kamahao Street  
Pearl City, HI 96782

March 13, 2008

The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair  
The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Committee on Health

Dear Representatives Green and Mizuno and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of S.B. 2159 Relating to Professions.**

Consumer protection laws give legal teeth to protect citizens. Sadly, in today's world we can never assume that "professional people" will conduct themselves according to their profession's Code of Ethics. Mental health counselors deal with a vulnerable population who are oftentimes incapable of making good decisions on their own behalf. Such vulnerability requires that consumers have regulatory recourse should they be harmed.

I strongly encourage you to pass S.B. 2159 out of the Committee on Health.

Sincerely,

*Diane S. Sakumoto, M.Ed.*

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor  
Past President of Rehabilitation Association of Hawaii  
Past President of Hawaii Rehabilitation Counseling Association

000060



Teresa Guidry-Shigemasa  
Sunset Beach Elementary  
59-360 Kamehameha Hwy.  
Haleiwa, HI 96712

DATE: March 14, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable  
Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the  
Committee on Health

FROM: Teresa Shigemasa, Behavioral Health Specialist, LMHC  
tshigema21@yahoo.com

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159**

As a licensed provider, the families that I service have a recourse in order to seek action if/when they were to feel that I have violated the ethics or legalities of my license.

I encourage you to pass SB 2159 out of the Committee on Health

000061

**Marcia A. Myers, MSCP, MSCJA, LMHC  
Consultations, Inc.  
520 Lunalilo Home Rd.  
Honolulu, HI 96825  
808-286-1246**

DATE: March 14, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: **Marcia Myers, Licensed Mental Health Counselor**

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159**

To underscore the mission of Licensed Mental Health Counselors, I would like to address the overwhelming need in our community for more mental health professionals to serve, not only the rural areas of Hawaii, but also the urban section that is becoming more and more populated year after year. If you pick up the newspaper daily, you find many articles describing incidents of violence right here in our island state. It appears to be increasing. Many of these incidents could be prevented with enough well-qualified professionals to assist people of all ages and abilities to develop life-enhancing skills and better coping methods. Mental Health Counselors are highly qualified and well trained to provide these services.

Repealing the sunset date for licensed mental health counselors will enhance the number of qualified professionals to care for those dealing with depression, PTSD, stress/anxiety, and other mental health issues that are affecting many of the citizens and communities of Hawaii.

I encourage you to **PASS SB 2159** out of the Committee on Health as one method of helping to address the increasing and apparent need for qualified mental health counselors in our state.

000062

DATE: March 14, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: Gwen Oka Dang, M.Ed., CRC., LMHC  
Ph: (day) 586-4827, (home) 955-1216

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159.

The State of Hawaii recently approved the licensure for mental health counselors as a method to protect individuals in the community from untrained practicing counselors.

I encourage you to pass SB 2159 out of the Committee on Health and continue to protect the rights of individuals being served in the community.

000063

**To:** Representatives Josh Green, MD and John Mizuno  
Co-chairs, Health Committee  
[HLTtestiony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:HLTtestiony@capitol.hawaii.gov) Hearing 3/14/2008

**Reference:** SB2159 Relating to Professions...mental health counselors  
In favor of passage of SB2159

Chair persons Green and Mizuno.

I am Dr. James Deutch and I am a Lecturer in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, University of Hawaii at Manoa. By history I have been a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for nearly 50 years. In Hawaii we are terribly short of licensed mental health practitioners. The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences is currently developing a master's program in family counseling which will go far to meet the current mental health deficit. The program we will be submitting will be built on the academic requirements of the current Mental Health Counselor licensure law. If the law is allowed to sunset, our program may never come to fruition. That would be a terrible thing to happen to our Hawaii community. Please pass SB2359 and repeal its sunset provision.

Thank you,

Dr. James A. Deutch, LCSW  
3407 Paty Dr.  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

000064

**mizuno1-Edgar**

---

**From:** Jane Jamison [kinijamison@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 13, 2008 5:20 PM  
**To:** HLTtestimony  
**Subject:** Committee on Health re: SB 2159 Relating to Professions SB 2159 in the Committee on Health on Friday morning 3/14/2008 at 8:30 am in Room 329

**Jane Jamison MS**  
**95-1059 Hoalia Street**  
**Mililani, Hawaii 96789**  
**kinijamison@earthlink.net**

DATE: March 14, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice - Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: **Jane Jamison MS, LMHC, LPC, NCC 808-626-8505**

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB2159. Licensed Mental Health Counselors have been a vital part of the counseling profession for years in most every state in the United States except for a few.

Today's society is in crisis due to economic, social, cultural, and war-related issues. The family system is no longer what it once was, a place for safety, health, and well-being. Families are no longer able to sustain their household on one income, children are left alone to fend for themselves, divorce, drug addiction, and the negative impact of war on our soldiers and their families are creating stress that increases the inability to function which also results in more criminal activity and domestic violence. Mental Health Counselors are well trained in all areas of counseling and are able to reach the various populations in need.

With the introduction of mental health services in Hawaii's educational system by mandate of the Felix decree, many LMHC's, etc, are providing services to children during very critical developmental periods of their life. Their clinical training makes them highly qualified to provide these services through the DOE and provide excellent adjunct services to the School Counselors in our schools. With the many armed service facilities that station our brave soldiers who are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as our many veterans, PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, and drug addiction need to be addressed by those well trained to provide them with the appropriate mental health support and counseling.

Hawaii is a state that is located in the middle of the Pacific, which makes it isolated and remote. Our state is made up of eight islands that require important medical, mental health, and social services to be disbursed across these islands. As we know, Hawaii struggles to keep doctors here due to many reasons. As a state, we also have limited number of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Mental Health Counselors are absolutely necessary to providing the services our state requires to help ensure and facilitate positive well-being for our citizens, and most importantly, our keiki, who are Hawaii's and our country's future. Mental Health Counselors provide cost-effective mental health services. With the limitations that managed care provides its subscribers, Mental Health Counselors can provide services that will be not only beneficial to our clients but also beneficial to health insurance companies. It is a win-win situation.

I encourage you to pass SB 2159 out of the Committee on Health.

Mahalo.

Most Respectfully,

Jane Jamison MS

) LPC - Licensed Professional Counselor ( some states use this title)  
) NCC - National Certified Counselor



**Ka Maui Ola – The Power Of Healing Therapeutic Svcs.  
A Culturally Based Practice Specializing In Women's Issues, Family  
Systems, Adolescent Concerns & Substance/Alcohol Abuse**

DATE: **March 14, 2008**

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: **Joddy Manuwai, LMHC, NCC**  
(808) 222 – 0093  
*KaMauiOla@gmail.com*

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159.**

Aloha `Oukou

The recent events our island has witnessed – the beating death of the woman in Kailua, a mother of five, coupled with the senseless death of baby Cyrus – has given awareness to the people of this state that strengthening the quality of care providers by the mental health care system is a given and an issue that must be addressed. Recent court actions targeting the Hawaii State Department of Mental Health bring an awareness of the need for additional qualified providers to join in effectively meeting the mental health needs in our beautiful state.

The ongoing need for additional mental health providers to address the needs of children and adolescents have been acknowledged by the Department of Health. Currently, the DOH provides intensive in – home services for youth who meet a specific level of criteria. The suggested time period of this path is usually six months and upon discharge, its up to the parent or guardian to continue services through the youth's private insurance. At times this may be difficult; many behavioral health specialists are either over – booked or not accepting new patients. In many cases, the type of private insurance they have makes a difference; many of these youth are Quest plan clients.

In June of 2007, after meeting the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs mandates, I was licensed as a Mental Health Counselor. The following month, when Lingle failed to veto our licensure bill, the door remained open. Although this move by Lingle didn't ensure vendorship, many insurance companies – Aloha Care, TriCare, HMAA, UHA/Summerlin – accepted us as

000067

providers. What this did for me personally was open the door to work with the population I am so invested in – my people, the Hawaiian people.

Knowing the importance of supporting the mental health of persons in rural areas, my work began and has continued to revolve around the Leeward Coast. The ongoing goal continues to be providing high quality mental health services that are affordable and easily accessible. Although the lack of resources in the Mental Health Care system [in Hawai`i] continues to make meeting this goal difficult, supporting the continuation of the *Hawai`i Mental Health Counselors Licensure Law* would at minimum enable a qualified resource pool of mental health providers to continue assisting this population that is plagued with homelessness, domestic violence and most prevalent, the alcohol and substance use/abuse. It goes without saying that the ice epidemic here is rampant!

Continuing the *Hawai`i Mental Health Counselors Licensure Law* by having the existing “sunset provision” deleted will be your way of helping to ensure that additional providers who are as qualified as the licensures the Department of Health currently recognizes – Ph.D., Psy.D. LCSW, and most recently, LMFT – are available to continue supporting the mission of the Hawaii Department of Mental Health.

This being said, I thank you for your time and encourage you, the individuals who have the authority and the ability, to pass **SB 2159** out of the Committee on Health.

Malama pono,

Joddy Manuwai, LMHC, NCC\*

\*National Board of Certified Counselors

000068



**mizuno1-Edgar**

---

**From:** Mimi Matsumori [mimim@mail.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 13, 2008 4:43 PM  
**To:** HLTtestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony to support LMHC

To whom it may concern:

I am sending my view on the benefits of keeping LMHC active. One of the benefits I personally experienced recently is the privilege for LMHC's to supervise university students coming to agencies for internship experience. Their academic program and professional organization didn't allow them to intern under a counselor without a license or at a site where there is no LMHC's. I am currently an on-site supervisor for an intern, thanks to my license. The license broadens opportunities for future counselors to study and get valuable clinical experience, which will contribute to the development of our profession and better service to our clients.

The mental health license also has allowed us authority to approve certain program applications for our clients which greatly benefited them, while saving them the time and inconvenience of having to visit another professional for approval.

I wanted to share some of my views in this email because I am unable to be present at the hearing on 3/14 at 8:30 am.

Thank you & God bless,  
Mimi Matsumori, MEd., CRC, LMHC  
722-1380

3/13/2008

000069

**mizuno1-Edgar**

---

**From:** John Hinkle [flyboy@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 13, 2008 5:57 PM  
**To:** HLTtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159 Testimony

**John R. Hinkle**

400 Hobron Lane #710  
Honolulu, HI 96815

DATE: March 13, 2008

TO: Representative Josh Green, Chair, Committee on Health  
Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair, Committee on Health  
Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: John R. Hinkle, LMHC

RE: SB 2159  
Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159. The passage of this bill will enable professional mental health counselors in the State of Hawaii to continue to be licensed as part of our state's health-care system. This is extremely important for several reasons.

Licensing guarantees the continued quality of mental health care in Hawaii by ensuring that the highest quality of mental health services are provided by professionals in the mental health profession who meet or exceed the stringent criteria for licensure.

Equally important, by having the existing "sunset provision" deleted, we can help ensure that much needed additional mental health professionals will be available to support the mission of the Hawaii Department of Mental Health.

Given the training that mental health counselors receive in addressing and providing effective mental health care to children and adults, the continuation of the Hawaii Mental Health Counselors Licensure law will enable these highly educated and trained professionals to address the mental health needs of the citizens of Hawaii.

Counselor training programs emphasize cultural competence throughout their curriculums. Professional mental health counselors are well prepared as culturally competent mental health professionals.

Mental Health Counselors receive training that focuses on ways in which they can effectively implement violence prevention interventions as well as working with the victims of violence in our community. In light of the rising level of violence occurring in our state, these professionals provide a much needed service.

Many of the veterans returning to Hawaii from the Iraq war are experiencing a broad range of mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Continuing the Hawaii Mental Health Counselors Licensure Law will enable qualified mental health counselors to continue to address the mental health needs of these veterans and their families.

000070

Licensing of mental health counselors has helped stimulate interest and growth in enrollment in graduate counseling programs. This is extremely important for Hawaii, as the demand for highly qualified and trained mental health professionals continues to grow. Our statistics point to an ever increasing number of mental health issues including domestic violence, substance abuse, child abuse, unwed mothers, post traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation, to name but a few. Professional mental health counselors are qualified to address these issues and to affect positive outcomes. By removing the "sunset" and making licensing permanent, Hawaii will be able to expand the types of services available to clients while simultaneously improving their access and reducing their costs. Hawaii has a shortage of licensed mental health professionals. Licensing professional mental health counselors increases the availability of mental health professionals, reduces costs, and benefits the consumer of mental health services. I believe this is the outcome intended by Section 26H-5, HRS.

As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Hawaii, I encourage you to pass SB 2159 out of the Committee on Health. Mahalo!

Sincerely,

John R. Hinkle, M.S., LMHC

DATE: March 14, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Josh Green, Chair, The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Health

FROM: Cheryl Nagano-Ige, LMHC, Mental Health Supervisor, Honolulu, Hawaii

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions

**Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.**

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159**

**Licensed mental health counselor can only strengthen Hawaii's mental health care system by providing the people of Hawaii with greater access to qualified mental health professionals. There are many populations in Hawaii that are underserved and overlooked by our health care system. These populations include children and adolescents, the homeless, veterans, and those suffering from substance abuse and addiction. When people face barriers to accessing health care, such as limited access to qualified mental health care professionals, they tend to not seek help, which in turn only exacerbates the problems of drug use, homelessness, domestic violence, and crime in Hawaii. Furthermore, underserved populations exist on all islands so can you imagine what it must be like on the neighbor islands and in rural areas as it becomes even more difficult to obtain highly qualified mental health care providers in these areas.**

**For these reasons, I encourage you to pass SB 2159 out of the Committee on Health**

000072