

2-06-08

Senate Bill 2415 Allowing Psychologist the right to prescribe psychotropic medicines.  
Strongly opposed.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to give you another perspective on this extremely important issue.

My name is Pauline Arellano. I was appointed by the Dept. of Justice to the Patient Protection Committee at the Hawaii State Hospital, I serve on a similar committee at Kahi Mohala, I am the past Chair of The Protection and Advocacy for the Mentally Ill, I am a member of NAMI and on the Board of Directors of The Hawaii Disability Rights Center and currently working with the DOH on the Transformation Grant. I speak for none of these very fine organizations I come to you today as a mother of a seriously mentally ill daughter.

Please understand that no one understands more than my family that the right medicine works wonders and the wrong medicine can be a horror no family should endure. We had many challenges with our daughter. We like so many other families didn't understand that her risky behaviors, screaming and yelling, family upheaval was due to a chemical imbalance in the brain. Like everyone else we thought it was teenage hormones but it was much more than that. We watched her like a hawk we knew it wasn't drugs yet how could she stay up for weeks at a time? Our home was like a war zone. After a violent outburst my mom and sister dragged us to the Hospital/ I didn't get it. At the time I believed she belonged in jail not a hospital, she's not sick. But she was sick only we didn't recognize the symptoms. We were so relieved she was diagnosed as being Bi Polar. All of the symptoms were right there, it wasn't because we were bad parents it was an illness.

Sometimes it takes years to get the right medicines to work just right to make your loved one and family whole again. We had good and bad days then her psychiatrist prescribed Prozac and Lithium. Eight days after taking this prescribed medicine my daughter was a vegetable. She couldn't walk, talk, feed, dress herself or even cry. No one could even tell us if she would ever come out of it. We took her to all kinds of specialists, neurologists, many other psychiatrists contacted professionals in San Francisco and New York. You would never understand that I would much rather be beaten and screamed at than to be left with the mere shell of a human being, that once was my beautiful daughter. We were the lucky ones, many like the young man at OCC who after just 10 days of care by psychiatrists, staff and guards in a controlled confined environment died because of psychotropic medicines and none of the professionals there recognized that slurring speech and the inability to walk were glaring signs that the medicine wasn't working.

I've sat in these hearings for the past three years listening to psychologists tell you over and over again how the benefits far outweigh the risks and I'm tired of their unenlightenment. How many of them have had to care for someone for whom the life saving medicine backfired, killed or crippled them for life.

Feb 4, 2008 Star Bulletin headlines Prison care of mentally ill criticized. An inmate who

was fortunate enough to have been diagnosed and prescribed medicine had their medicine arbitrarily changed with disastrous effects. The prison didn't bother to get a history, didn't understand that with these very powerful medications you can't just change them that they must be gradually weaned off of one to effectively start another. Jan 30 2008 Advertiser Drug mis-ups on the increase. People die because of Doctors making errors.

Please consider carefully the people you were elected to protect. Allowing psychologists, who are not doctors, who do not understand the disastrous effects that these medicines to prescribe is not in the best interest of the mentally ill in our State.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pauline Arellano".

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LATE

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2/6/2008

To: Rep. Josh Green, MD, Chair	Sen. David Ige, Chair
Rep. John Mizuno, Vice Chair	Sen. Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair
House Health Committee	Senate Health Committee
Hearing Scheduled for Wed,	Hearing Wed, Feb 6, 2008, 2 pm
Feb.6, 2008 11:45 AM, Rm 329	Room 016

Re: HB2411 Relating to Health & SB2415 Relating to Health

I am a Hawaii MD and I **oppose** SB2415 for the following reasons:

1. No medical training
2. Liability to patients
3. Poor public policy
4. Would you want your own family member prescribed systemic medications from an individual specializing in psychology with minimal training in side-effects and complications of powerful pharmaceuticals? **NO**

Respectfully submitted,



Joyce Cassen MD

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# L A T E



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February 6, 2008

Rep. Josh Green, M.D., Chair

Rep. John Mizuno, Vice Chair

House Health Committee

Hearing Scheduled for: Wednesday, February 6, 2008, 11:45 am, Room 329

Sen. David Ige, Chair

Sen. Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Senate Health Committee

Hearing Scheduled For Wednesday, February 6, 2008, 2:00 pm, Room 016

From:

Michael Ham, LCSW

Re: HB2411 Relating to Health & SB2415 Relating to Health

I am a Hawaii licensed social worker. And I strongly oppose both bills for the following reasons:

- Inadequate training for psychologists. Giving psychologists the same ability to prescribe medication equates them with the same privilege as an MD without having gone through the same education and training. Wouldn't this minimize what physician's had to undertake to take on this responsibility (of being able to prescribe medication)? I was not a math major but 18 months of part-time training does not equal 4 years of medical school and 3 years of residency.

- Unethical. As a social worker, one of my professional principles is to "practice within their areas of competence." I am rather certain their psychologists have similar ethical guidelines which this goes against.
- Jeopardizes safety in that poorly trained psychologists would be given the ability to prescribe without the thorough knowledge of medical conditions and contraindications. We are hearing more and more about the dangers and risks involved with psychiatric medications where we may need to look at tightening the reigns of prescribing, not loosening them.
- Allowing psychologists to prescribe in federally funded clinics means that they will be often working with the more medically challenging populations where perhaps even more training and expertise is necessary rather than less.
- Where do we then draw the line? If psychologists are then allowed to prescribe medications, should the licensed social workers then be given that opportunity?

This bill is poor public policy that will jeopardize the health of Hawaii's residents. Please hold this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.