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**PRESENTATION OF THE
PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL LICENSING DIVISION**

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2011

Tuesday, March 29, 2011
9:00 a.m.

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6, REQUESTING THE HAWAII MEDICAL BOARD, BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST PROGRAM, AND MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR PROGRAM TO DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL TO PRINT, DISPLAY, AND MAKE AVAILABLE TO PATIENTS INFORMING THEM OF THE APPLICABLE ETHICAL STANDARDS RELATING TO SEXUAL BOUNDARIES IN THE PROVIDER-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP.

TO THE HONORABLE RYAN I. YAMANE, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Celia Suzuki, Acting Licensing Administrator for the Professional and Vocational Licensing Division, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs ("Department"). Thank you for the opportunity to present comments on House Concurrent Resolution No. 6, which requests that the Hawaii Medical Board, Board of Psychology, Marriage and Family Therapist Program, and Mental Health Counselor

Program develop and provide information to patients on the applicable ethical standards relating to sexual boundaries in the provider-patient relationship.

The Department acknowledges the positive intent of the resolution and feels that rather than focusing solely on ethical standards relating to sexual boundaries, it may be more beneficial to provide information to patients on a broader range of issues, including general professional standards, the purpose and role of the Board or Program, various bases for filing a complaint, and details on the complaint and disciplinary process.

To this end, the Boards and Programs are working with the Regulated Industries Complaints Office on creating a brochure which would include this information, as well as information on how to verify whether a practitioner is licensed, information on a practitioner's complaint history, and contact information for other resources and for professional associations such as the Hawaii Medical Association, Hawaii Psychological Association, and the Hawaii Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

The Department feels that such a brochure will provide practical information enabling patients to make informed decisions regarding the health care services they receive, and will be a more effective tool in preventing the exploitation of vulnerable patients. The Department also plans on providing easier access to this information on its website, with more prominent links to the complaint process and additional resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.