

LATE



HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

SB2319 Relating to Homeless Funds homeless programs and rental housing for substance abuse treatment, mental health support and sober housing.

- SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH: Senator Green, M.D. Chair; Senator Nishihara, Vice Chair
- Friday, Feb. 10, 2012; 1:15 p.m.
- Conference Room 229

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB2319

Aloha Senator Green, Chair; and Senator Nishihara, Vice Chair; and Distinguished Committee Members. My name is Alan Johnson, Chair of HSAC, a statewide hui of about 20 treatment and prevention agencies.

SUMMARY

Substance abuse treatment is particularly critical for individuals with co- occurring mental illnesses. A recent study revealed that among homeless clients with co-occurring disorders, those who reported extensive participation in substance abuse treatment showed clinical improvement better than individuals without co-occurring disorders (Gonzalez and Rosenheck, 2002).

People with both a mental illness and a co-occurring substance use disorder face the daunting task of recovering from both disorders.

In particular, research and experience have demonstrated that services for people with serious mental illnesses or co-occurring disorders who are homeless should be recovery-focused, culturally competent, flexible and individualized, and client-centered. Further, the full array of services that individuals need must be in place or must be created. This makes it essential that individuals with mental illnesses and substance use disorders who are homeless have access to all treatment services for which they are eligible.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Recovery is Possible

In recent years, “recovery” for people with mental illnesses is now realized as possible and no longer under the mistaken belief that it is a lifelong condition. Many achieve full recovery in both psychiatric status and social functioning while a substantial number of others improve significantly (Harding et al., 1987), (Ralph, 2000). Illness self-management skills, including education, coping skills, and relapse prevention strategies, play a critical role in people’s recovery from mental illnesses (Mueser et al., 2002).