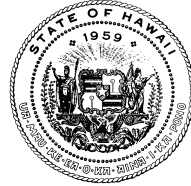


GM549

TESTIMONY



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

Senate Committee on Health

G.M. 549, G.M. 640 – G.M. 642, Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Maui Service Area Board, Gubernatorial Nominees, CHIREE SOUZA, LUCAS BRUNO III, PETER GONZALEZ, and KARIN PHANEUF

**Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Director of Health**

Friday, February 22, 2013, 1:30 p.m.

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health strongly supports confirmation of Chiree Souza
2 (6/30/2016), Lucas Bruno, III (6/30/2014), Peter Gonzalez (6/30/2015), and Karin Phaneuf (6/30/2015)
3 to serve on the Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Maui Service Area Board (MSAB) for terms to
4 expire as parenthetically indicated.

5 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

6 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose is for the consideration and confirmation to the MSAB,
7 Gubernatorial Nominees, Chiree Souza, Lucas Bruno, III, Peter Gonzalez, and Karin Phaneuf. Pursuant
8 to Chapter 334-11 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes on Service Area Boards, the members of the Service
9 Area Board are service area residents who are consumers or non-providers of mental health services and
10 service area providers with a majority being non-state employees and non-providers of mental health or
11 other health services.

12 **Chiree Souza, (G.M. 549)** currently works with special education students for an elementary
13 school on Maui. Ms. Souza has been an active participant during her interim appointment on the
14 MSAB. She recently participated in a "Bus Survey" that required taking the bus. In order to fully

1 understand the challenges of Maui's bus ridership, Ms. Souza rode the majority of the bus routes and
2 spoke with many riders. She eloquently reported her findings to the MSAB, which resulted in a meeting
3 with the Mayor of Maui's representative to recommend improvement to the bus system. Ms. Souza has
4 shown strong commitment to the mission of the MSAB, and her confirmation will enable her to continue
5 advocating for the people in her community.

6 **Lucas Bruno III, (GM640)** is a seasoned clinician who works closely with persons living with
7 mental illness. He is a probation officer and social worker in the justice system. Mr. Bruno brings
8 practical experience to the MSAB, in that, he is aware of the needs of this population and the system that
9 services them. His understanding of the needs of his community and the realistic solutions that he seeks
10 on a daily basis working with consumers, will be an asset to the MSAB's deliberations in making policy
11 recommendations.

12 **Peter Gonzalez (GM641)** can be described as a passionate mental health advocate for the island
13 of Molokai. In the past, he served as the MSAB representative on the State Council on Mental Health
14 for several months. While on the State Council, Mr. Gonzalez expanded his understanding and
15 education about mental illness by attending several conferences on the mainland and sharing his
16 knowledge with other consumers on Molokai. He follows current events related to mental health issues
17 and keeps his finger on the pulse of his community. Equipped with this knowledge, Mr. Gonzalez is
18 able to evaluate an argument and provide a balanced opinion that is respected by others. His own
19 experiences in living with mental illness brings the consumer perspective to the MSAB.

20 **Karin Phaneuf (GM642)** has been on the MSAB for four (4) years and is being recommended
21 for another term. Currently, Ms. Phaneuf is the chair of the MSAB. In bringing issues forward to the
22 board, Ms. Phaneuf's enthusiasm and experience in working with incarcerated, homeless, and disabled
23 persons has provided opportunities for the MSAB to collaborate with other agencies for improved
24 service delivery on Maui. She is highly respected by board members and the Maui community and has

1 been instrumental in recruiting new members for the MSAB in furthering its mission of contributing to
2 the positive experiences of consumers living with mental illness.

3 We respectfully request your favorable consideration in confirming Chiree Souza, Lucas Bruno,
4 III, Peter Gonzalez, and Karin Phaneuf to serve on the Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Maui
5 Service Area Board.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support for these volunteers.

**TESTIMONY
OF
CHIREE L. SOUZA
TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE
ON
MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE, MAUI SERVICE AREA
BOARD
ON
February 20, 2013**

GM549

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Maui Service Area Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, CHIREE L. SOUZA, for a term to expire June 30, 2016.

Members of the confirmation committee, thank you for your support and consideration for membership on this board.

I want to thank Governor Neil Abercrombie for nominating me. I am honored and feel very privileged to be considered as a member of the Maui Service Area Board on Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

I would also like to thank the Maui Board of Health members who submitted testimony and who support my efforts on being considered to be a member on this board. I am a Paraprofessional/Educational Assistant with the Special Education Department of the Department of Education (Iao School). I have been employed for 13 years and I truly love me job. I love getting up in the morning to go to work. It is a pleasure to work with special needs students as well as our general student body.

In the past I have work in the private field as an administrative assistant, I liked what I did, but I felt I needed to be of service to my community to fulfill my dreams. I have always wanted to champion our peers that need a voice. I began to do this by serving our children at my church, teaching Sunday school, and then made the decision to change careers and become a paraprofessional in the Special Education Department. When introduced to the Maui Service Area Board, I felt I could be a vital participant in supporting and giving voice to our peers with special needs. There are challenges with serving on this board and I look forward to helping my peers' face these challenges as we will be able to problem solve together.

In closing, the support of this Committee is very much appreciated, I am happy to take on this challenge in being voice of my peers. Thank you for considering my nomination.

Sincerely,
Chiree L. Souza

