

# GM826

**Measure Title:** Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Mental Health And Substance Abuse, Maui Service Area Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, ALFRED ARENSDORF, for a term to expire 06-30-2020.

**Report Title:** Mental Health And Substance Abuse, Maui Service Area Board

**Description:**

**Companion:**

**Package:**

**Current Referral:** CPH

**Introducer(s):**



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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**Testimony SUPPORTING GM826**  
**Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Mental Health and Substance Abuse,**  
**Maui Service Area Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, ALFRED ARENSDORF,**  
**for a term to expire 6-30-2020.**

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH  
Hearing Date: April 15, 2016, 9:30 a.m. Room Number: 229

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the nomination and  
3 confirmation of Alfred Arensdorf to the Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Maui Service Area  
4 Board (MSAB) for his second term. Dr. Arensdorf fills the community member segment of the  
5 board, pursuant to Chapter 334-11 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes.

6 Alfred Arensdorf, M.D. is a retired child psychiatrist who continues to be a strong mental  
7 health advocate in his community and across the state. Dr. Arensdorf's dedication to the  
8 wellness of Hawaii's children is exemplary, and even in retirement, he continues to be a  
9 champion for children and adult mental health, consumers and providers. On Maui, he  
10 discouraged the closure of the adolescent psychiatric unit at the local hospital, which has been  
11 repurposed after its closure. Dr. Arensdorf continues to monitor the status of youth needing  
12 acute hospitalization. He is aware of the hardships placed on families and children when off-  
13 island services are arranged which are often cumbersome, expensive, and stressful to the parties  
14 involved. He continues to advocate for the re-opening of the Adolescent Psychiatric hospital.  
15 He works part-time, maintains a private practice and is a staff psychiatrist for a private non-

1 profit. In doing so, he keeps abreast of the latest mental health interventions and best practices,  
2 and shares his insight with the MSAB. Since 2014, he has been actively serving as the MSAB  
3 representative on the State Council on Mental Health.

4 We respectfully request your favorable consideration in confirming the appointment of  
5 Dr. Alfred Arensdorf for his second term on the MSAB. Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
6 on Dr. Arensdorf's behalf.

7 **Offered Amendments:** None.

**From:** [Robert A. Collesano](#)  
**To:** [baker4 - Haley](#)  
**Subject:** Al Arensdorf's Appointment to Maui Service Area Board  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 13, 2016 6:58:33 AM

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Dear Senator Baker:

This note is to confirm that Dr. Al Arensdorf is currently an invaluable member of the Maui Service Area Board of Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

He regularly attends meetings of the Board and contributes freely from his vast store of historical knowledge concerning mental health and substance abuse here on Maui.

I rely on him continually for his guidance and support.

Please support his his re-appointment to the Board.

Aloha,

Robert A. Collesano, CSAC  
Chairperson Maui Service Area Board  
(808) 242-6461 Office / 250-5554 Cell

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**Robert Collesano, CSAC, Exec. Director**  
**Mental Health America of Hawaii on Maui**  
**(808) 242-6461 / (844) MHA-Maui Toll Free**

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**From:** [Jud Cunningham](#)  
**To:** [baker4 - Haley](#)  
**Subject:** Dr. Al Arensdorf  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 12, 2016 4:02:36 PM

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Aloha Senator Baker,

This communication is for the purpose of recommending that Al Arensdorf, M.D., be reappointed to the Maui Service Area Board on Mental Health and Substance Abuse. Throughout his career as a psychiatrist and administrator of health and behavioral health programs, Dr. Arensdorf has been a tireless advocate for addressing the mental health needs of children and adults. I can think of no one better qualified to act in this capacity.

Sincerely,

Jud R. Cunningham

Jud R. Cunningham

Chief Executive Officer

Aloha House/Maui Youth and Family Services/Malama Na Makua A Keiki

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**ALFRED M. ARENSDORF, M.D,**  
Questions from Sen Baker's office  
for Maui Service Area Board for Mental Health and Substance Abuse

**(1) Why do you want to be a member of the Board?**

*The Maui Service Area Board (SAB) is the primary public source of input for the Department of Health's mental health and substance abuse programs. I am currently on the SAB and remain willing to serve by my re-appointment to a new term.*

*I believe my experience in mental health can be most helpful in the board's processes; I understand the role of the State Mental Health Council (I am the Maui member) and Services Area Board as defined by SAMSHA.*

**(2) What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the Board?**

*The board holds monthly meetings to learn about relevant items on the agenda, to accept public input, and to report and make recommendations to the SMHC. The composition includes consumers and family members and gets regular reports from the DOH services on Maui. Members are expected to be active in their attendance and contributory in the discussions and questions that inevitably arise. As representative member on the SMHC, I am the conduit for reporting to the Council.*

**(3) In what ways do you feel that you can help protect the consumer?**

*I communicate well with the mental health consumer population served and those at risk; mental health professionals have urged me to stay active on the SAB. I can be an active and contributing member in identifying problematic policies, decisions, and practices that affect consumers and their access to and the availability of effective services*

**(4) Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Board member, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise and knowledge that would aid you as a member of the Board.**

*I have been active in the provision of mental health services and education in mental health for most of my 50 year career in medicine – 45 years have been in service to Hawaii residents. I continue to be appointed to the Department of Psychiatry of JABSOM as a Clinical Professor; I continue to mentor and teach medical students half of my clinical hours; I am licensed in Hawaii, ABMS board certified by ABPN in psychiatry and child & adolescent psychiatry. I have had public health experience in the military and in the Department of Health as Maui District Health Officer in 1998-1999 as well as in disaster response teams in*

*national and state disaster situations. I have been active in the Maui community, helping build services by membership on many boards and the hospital medical staff. I was a founding board member and chair at the time Aloha House, Inc., got its 501c3 federal determination. I played similar roles with Maui Youth and Family Services, The Friends of the Children's Justice Center, and played a key role with Dr. Marion Hanlon and Sen. Mamoru Yamasaki in getting the Molokini II unit opened and staffed at MMMC.*

**(5) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?**

*I feel my first appointment has been productive. The MSAB and the Suicide Prevention Maui Task Force identified challenges with the DOH help-line. Major progress has occurred. As mental health needs will continue to require funding, restructuring, and probably expansion, I am willing and able to continue in the ongoing process.*

**(6) Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will benefit the Board.**

- My professionalism and commitment to advocacy and community improvement.*
- I listen well and can identify core issues.*
- I collaborate well.*

**(7) Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a Board member.**

My seven years in the Department of Health, first as Maui District Health Officer, and then as Medical Director of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division during a decade of federal court oversight of MH services in DOE and DOE gave me an in-depth understanding of the challenges the state faced. I was on the leadership team that identified federal and state funding, discerned and used the provision of evidence-based best practice, and recruited qualified professional staff in state service and in contracting agencies.

**(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Board? How would you overcome conflicts of interest?**

*I face this problem on the various boards on which I have served. I foresee no conflicts as I am semi-retired and not in an administrative or board role at Aloha House, Inc., or at JABSOM. I am trained to identify and mitigate potential conflicts of interest. The MSAB has very few areas that might raise concern.*