

# GM829

**Measure Title:** Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Council On Mental Health, Gubernatorial Nominee, SHANNESSY MITCHELL, for a term to expire 06-30-2019.

**Report Title:** State Council On Mental Health

**Description:**

**Companion:**

**Package:**

**Current Referral:** CPH

**Introducer(s):**



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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**Testimony SUPPORTING GM829**  
**Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the State Council on Mental Health,**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, SHANNESSY MITCHELL,**  
**for a term to expire 6-30-2019.**

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.

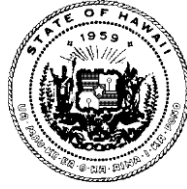
2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health supports the nomination and confirmation  
3 of Shannessy Mitchell to the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH) for her first term.  
4 Ms. Mitchell fills the mandated SCMH membership position of the principal state agency with  
5 respect to vocational rehabilitation, pursuant to Chapter 334-10 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes  
6 and Federal Law, P.L. 102-321, Section 1914(c).

7 Ms. Mitchell is a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the State of Hawaii. She has  
8 worked with various agencies in supporting individuals with special needs and has a special  
9 interest in working with people living with mental health challenges. Ms. Mitchell is a strong  
10 believer that individuals with mental illness can and do recover. Her peers and mentors describe  
11 her as being very organized, detail-oriented, and goes the extra mile in getting things done. In  
12 preparation for seeking membership on the SCMH, Ms. Mitchell has attended a few SCMH  
13 meetings and has gotten excited about collaborating on several of the council's objectives in its  
14 Strategic Plan.

1           We respectfully request your favorable consideration in confirming the appointment of  
2 Ms. Shannessy Mitchell, who will bring renewed energy to the work of the SCM.H.

3           Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Ms. Mitchell's behalf.

4   **Offered Amendments:** None.



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 14, 2016

TO: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health

FROM: Rachael Wong, DrPH, Director

SUBJECT: **GM 829** - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Council On Mental Health, Gubernatorial Nominee, SHANNESSY MITCHELL, for a term to expire 06-30-2019

Hearing: Friday, April 15, 2016; 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 229, State Capitol

**Department's Position:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the nomination of Ms. Shannessy Mitchell to the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH). The SCMH was established by section 334-10, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). The SCMH serves as an advisory body to the Department of Health (DOH), and partners with the DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) on services that address employment needs of individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Shannessy Mitchell is seeking an appointment for her first term to the SCMH as the representative of the Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DHS-DVR) as provided by section 334-10(a)(1), HRS.

Ms. Mitchell has a Master's degree in Counseling and Guidance in Rehabilitation & Kinesiology and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. She has 15 years of both direct service and supervisory positions assisting individuals with disabilities in the Behavioral Health and Vocational Rehabilitation fields. Currently, Ms. Mitchell is a Vocational Rehabilitation Program Analyst for the DHS-DVR. She conducts statewide program analysis, evaluation, and planning of the DVR's service delivery to clients.

Ms. Mitchell's desire to serve on the SCMH is a reflection of her belief that given the opportunities for treatment, education and employment, people with mental illness can achieve a life of quality and community integration equal to their non-disabled peers. Her education, work experience, advocacy for individuals with mental illness, and strong work ethic are assets she will bring to the council.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to this Committee.

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

Aside from the fact that Vocational Rehabilitation as a state agency is a mandated member to the council; I do think that I will serve the Board well as an advocate for persons with significant mental health disorders. Throughout my career I have supported and represented many persons with disabilities, striving to eliminate the negative stigma and social isolation these populations encounter. If I have the opportunity to serve on this board I will help raise awareness of mental health and the detrimental effects caused by these negative stigmas. Additionally, I enjoy being a team player with like-minded individuals who strive to make our communities better.

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

To serve as an advocate for those with serious mental health issues and to review, provide guidance and comment to the DOH on their statewide comprehensive and integrated service plan.

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

As a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, I am obligated to the canons of my profession, of which nonmaleficence and do no harm are part of the 6 principles of our code. Throughout my career I have made all efforts to maintain my professional standards and will continue to do so as a Board member.

**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.**

A review of my resume will reveal my commitment to serving persons with disabilities. My formal education and my work experience has provided me with skills, knowledge and abilities that will serve me well as a member of the Board if I am so honored. In my current position with VR I have worked with the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council, thus I am aware of not just the important role played by members, but the work and responsibilities involved.

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

I am hoping that I can open up opportunities for individuals with significant mental health barriers and integrate them into Hawaii's workforce. VR and AMHD once had a working relationship and I am looking to reignite that relationship once again.

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

The three qualities I possess which will benefit the board are my abilities to be impartial and objective, organized and strategic. Being impartial and objective allows me to openly listen to others situations, and ideas without bias or preconceived opinions. I believe open-mindedness is of importance because it welcomes education and the ability to see other perceptions and points of view. I am naturally an organized person which allows me to make the best use of my time. This is necessary because things need to get done between meetings. As a strategist I will help the team accomplish their goals by researching, networking, and providing resources.

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

It is difficult to single out just one experience. Generally speaking, all of my encounters, and life experiences have collectively prepared me to be a leader, a voice, and one that rises to the occasion.

**8) 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 would like to see a contract for services between VR and AMHD/Clubhouse. The development of this agreement may enter into the area of a conflict. I would not involve myself in the direct development and decision making of any contract or MOA.