

GM581

Iris Okawa: Board of Nursing

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

I believe public input on boards and commissions is important. Public service is also important and citizen participation in government strengthens our democracy. Ordinarily, one may wonder what relevance might I bring as a public member on the Board of Nursing (BON) given my background. My current position in Personal Trust working with many elderly persons has heightened my awareness of the increasing need for medical care and oversight in the industry.

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

Board Members should fulfill the role as prescribed in HRS 457. Most important is to attend meetings, participate actively and to work with fellow members to achieve the mission of the Board.

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

The Board has regulatory oversight over licensees. Members have the duty to carefully review applications and exercise good judgment in approving credentials for licensees. Should disciplinary concerns arise, members need to be thoughtful about ascertaining the facts and consequences of actions that are proposed.

(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 served on regulatory boards and in this instance, am not only a consumer of medical services but deal with the industry on a daily basis. I interact regularly with facilities such as Arcadia, Craigside, Kahala Nui and other care homes.

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

I would like to work with the DCCA and the other Board members to ensure that Hawaii continues to have adequate nursing resources; that the standards that regulate the profession in Hawaii reflect the current standards of the industry; and that the Board is able to provide outreach with meaningful education and awareness programs of the Board

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

Conscientious: I will read the material in preparation for meetings and be ready for decision making.

Integrity: I will make decisions for the right reason.

Experienced in public process: Experience aids efficiency.

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

I have had various experiences on State commissions (Real Estate Commission and Aloha Tower Development Corporation) and a City commission (Liquor Commission) where public safety and public interest is of great concern. Those experiences have helped me to understand the government process, the role of the particular commission to provide for community input, to provide regulatory oversight over the licensing process and practice.

Further, I work with many elderly persons now and see that as the population ages, we need to pay attention to those providing medical care and caregiving. Medical care may not be easily accessible to many. And it is also very unfortunate that abuses (financial and otherwise) are an increasing concern

(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 do not foresee any possible conflicts of interest since I am a public member and do not have a vested interest in any medical group or institution. Should a conflict arise, I would recuse myself from discussion and vote.