



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM0634
Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the
State Council on Mental Health,
Gubernatorial Nominee, RICHARD RIES,
for a term to expire 6-30-24.**

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

Hearing Date and Time: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. Room: 229

1 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health supports the nomination and confirmation
2 of Richard Ries to the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH). Dr. Ries fills the mandated SCMH
3 membership position of the public and private entities, pursuant to Chapter 334-10 of the Hawaii
4 Revised Statutes and Federal Law, Public Law 102-321, Section 1914(c).

5 Dr. Ries is currently a provider in private practice in the field of psychotherapy. His primary
6 area of focus in his clinical work is bereavement, trauma, resiliency, hospice, and palliative
7 psychotherapy. Dr. Ries is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, and he is the author of
8 an extensive list of publications and professional presentations.

9 Dr. Ries is the Chair of the SCMH for Fiscal Year 2020. He is being recommended for
10 reappointment to a second term on the Council. He has used his knowledge, expertise,
11 leadership abilities, and expansive business background to assist the Council in discussing
12 agenda topics.

13 We respectfully request your favorable consideration in confirming the appointment of
14 Dr. Ries to the State Council on Mental Health.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on his behalf.

I wish to support the re-appointment of Dr. Richard Ries to the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health. I work in the field of higher learning. I served with Dr. Ries on the board of a nonprofit organization for six years, and I know him to be very knowledgeable about mental health. He is ethical and extremely caring about people in general. He is a consummate professional and would be a considerably responsible person to continue serving well. I have observed Dr. Ries in some rather heated situations wherein he was able to calm people in a gentle way. He exhibits a great deal of understanding while soothing confrontational people and those with various mental challenges.

Sincerely,

Renée Arnold

Testimony on behalf of Dr. Richard Ries, PsyD

Submitted by Janet Nordyke Ohuchi, graduate of Punahou school-1967; university lecturer at Aoyama university and Tsuru Bunka Dai in Japan for 30 years; co-founder of The Virtues Project in Japan.

To: Hawaii State Council on Mental Health

I would like to highly recommend that Dr. Richard Ries continue serving on the State Council on Mental Health.

Dr. Ries has extensive knowledge of mental health due to his work as an EMT in New York City, an assessment clinician and therapist for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, a Resiliency Subject Matter Expert for the Pacific Regional Medical Command, a psychologist and Deputy Chief of Psychology Research at Tripler Army Hospital, Clinic Manager at the University of Hawai'i, psychologist at The Queen's Medical Center and in private practice in psychotherapy.

In addition to being insightful and thoughtful with his patients, Dr. Ries has a sense of gravitas about him which reflects how deeply he cares and takes responsibility.

He has a prodigious memory and intellect, combined with high ethical standards.

I believe he has been and will continue to be a significant contributor to the council.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on his behalf.

Aloha,

In getting to know Richard Ries, I'm fascinated with his mindful persona inspiring many individuals towards a more defined sense of purpose; purpose for self appreciation, and purpose for a service in society. His sense of awareness of his surrounding communities extends far beyond his expertise. His committed involvement with the community via his volunteer services, entails an innate sense of compassion for others, which in turn brings him his most precious reward, reflected in his charisma and joy when connecting with others while helping others connect with their families and their community.

Dr. Ries is the ideal person to continue serving the HI State Council on Mental Health.

Mahalo,

Ivan

Ivan Vicente

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands

External Affairs

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From: [Meredith Narissi](#)
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Subject: GM 634 Richard Ries
Date: Saturday, March 14, 2020 10:21:33 AM

To Whom it May Concern,

Subject: GM 634 Nomination

I hereby support the nomination of Dr. Richard Ries to the State Council on Mental Health. He is highly qualified, extremely dedicated and very wise. I think his ability to solve problems compassionately as well as offer practical guidelines will be a great asset. His leadership qualities and ability to work well with others will also help him serve. Thank you for the opportunity to offer my highest recommendation.

Sincerely,
Meredith Zelman Narissi

[Meredith's Healing Arts...Enlightened Wellness](#)
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GM634
Richard Ries
State Council on Mental Health

(1) Why do you wish to be a member of the State Council on Mental Health?

I have served for one term on the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health and have learned a great deal about how the council can be supportive of the mental health needs of our state over that time. I believe that in a second term I can apply my efforts with even greater impact. I believe in the mission of the council and in its potential to make our community healthier, happier and better served.

(2) What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the State Council on Mental Health?

Councilmembers attend a monthly meeting, collaborate in permitted interaction groups, and stay abreast of information toward fulfillment of important mental health developments in our state. We educate ourselves and provide perspective to lawmakers, the department of health and the community at large.

(3) Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a State Council on Mental Health 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 am a licensed clinical psychologist in independent practice serving a diverse client base from whom I hear directly about the mental health needs of our community. Furthermore, I have served on the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health for 4 years. I also serve as a Clinical Representative for the Hawaii Psychological Association. I have worked in various hospital settings, university settings and government agencies.

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

I hope to serve the board by helping guide discussions toward consensus and/or appreciation of a multitude of perspectives. I was quite active in taking on tasks for the board across this past term and intend to continue to do so.

(5) Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will benefit the State Council on Mental Health.

Folks that know me well describe me as resourceful, kind and clear with communication. I intend to apply these characteristics in the ethical operation of our duties and the dedicated effort toward bettering circumstances for stakeholders of mental health service in our state.

(6) Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a State Council on Mental Health member.

I worked in the past for the Pacific Regional Medical Command as both a Resiliency Subject Matter Expert and as Deputy Chief of Psychology Research. These roles gave me transferable skills in understanding both broad and specific implications of the state of our sciences in mental health and their implications to the well-being of mental health service users and their families.

GM634

Richard Ries

State Council on Mental Health

(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the State Council on Mental Health? How would you overcome conflicts of interest?

I do not foresee any possible conflicts of interest that are likely to arise during my service on the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health. I did not experience anything of this nature in my last term. Should such a conflict of interest unfold, I would make every effort to seek guidance from colleagues and mentors in my professional life and take steps to eliminate the conflict. Ultimately, if it could not be resolved I would seek good potential candidates for the council to recommend and step down from my seat. Integrity is one of my highest personal values.