

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony in SUPPORT of GM549
Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Administrator of the State Health
Planning and Development Agency, Gubernatorial Nominee, SERAFIN
COLMENARES, JR., for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.

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

Hearing Date: May 13, 2020

Room Number: 229

1 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health strongly supports the nomination of Serafin
2 Colmenares for Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA).

3 “Jun” Colmenares has a strong record of working for the betterment of our community,
4 particularly underserved or vulnerable populations. His focus on health equity and the social
5 determinants of health will benefit SHPDA, whose responsibility is to assure access to health
6 care as equitably and economically as possible for Hawaii’s residents. He is also known for his
7 scholarship and advocacy, often on health care quality and language access in Hawaii.

8 The department looks forward to working with SHPDA under Jun’s leadership to revitalize
9 Hawaii health planning activities.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

11 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.

12

Harry Kim
Mayor



William H. Farr
Executive on Aging

County of Hawai'i

OFFICE OF AGING

Aging and Disability Resource Center, 1055 Kino'ole Street, Suite 101, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-3872
Phone (808) 961-8600 • Fax (808) 961-8603 • Email: hcoa@hawaiiintel.net
West Hawai'i Civic Center, 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Highway, Kailua-Kona 96740
Phone (808) 323-4390 • Fax (808) 323-4398

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Senator Rosalyn H. Baker
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 230
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: Governor's Message No. 640 (GM640) - Nomination of Serafin P. Colmenares
Jr. as SHPDA Administrator

Dear Senator Baker:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for Serafin P. Colmenares, Jr. nomination as the SHPDA Administrator, as being submitted by David Ige, Governor, State of Hawaii GM640.

In the 29 years that I have been working for the Hawaii County Office of Aging (HCOA), it has been my privilege to have worked with Serafin for the past 20 years. In the role of an Evaluation Analyst with the State Executive Office on Aging (EOA, DOH); Executive Director of the Office of Language Access with Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and the State Department of Health, and Acting Administrator for the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) DOH, Serafin has demonstrated the knowledge and skills necessary to plan, design, coordinate, and implement services that will serve the constituents of the State of Hawaii.



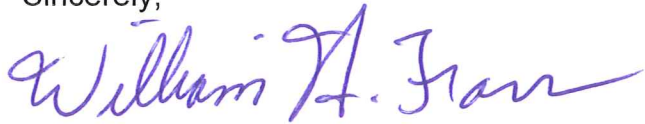
An Area Agency on Aging

Hawai'i County is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The Honorable Senator Rosalyn H. Baker
May 12, 2020
Page 2

In conclusion, I fully support the nomination of GM640, Nomination of Serafin P. Colmenares, Jr. as SHPDA Administrator. I believe he will be a valuable and effective SHPDA Administrator in serving the needs of the State of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William H. Farr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "F".

William H. Farr, Executive on Aging
Hawaii County Office of Aging

/whf



May 12, 2020

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

Re: GM 640 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency, Gubernatorial Nominee, SERAFIN COLMENARES, JR., for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of GM 640, the confirmation of Serafin Colmenares as the Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA).

Mr. Colmenares has served the people of Hawaii well in various capacities in both the public and private sectors since 1990. Mr. Colmenares joined SHPDA in 2015 as a Comprehensive Health Planning Coordinator and has been serving as the Acting Administrator since 2019. Prior to working at SHPDA, Mr. Colmenares was the Executive Director of the Office of Language Access for both the Department of Health (2012-2015) and the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (2007-2012). He also served in the Department of Health Executive Office on Aging and held positions at the Hawaii Community Foundation, HMSA, and East West Center Population Institute. Prior to working in Hawaii, Mr. Colmenares was also a Professor and Assistant Dean of Mindanao State University in the Philippines.

Mr. Colmenares is also a published author and accomplished presenter. He has been recognized for his active engagement in the Filipino community in Hawaii with several awards.

We believe that his extensive experience coupled with a Master of Public Health (MPH) from the University of Hawaii, Graduate Certificate in Governmental Management from Mindanao State University, Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science from the University of Delhi, Master of Arts in Political Science from the University of Delhi, and Bachelor of Arts from Mindanao State University qualifies Mr. Colmenares for this position.

Thank you for the opportunity to support GM 640. Your consideration of the confirmation of Mr. Serafin Colmenares as the Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Pono Chong
Vice President, Government Relations



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO

DATE: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 (9:30 a.m., Conference Room 229)

RE: **IN SUPPORT of GM 640, Serafin Colmenares, Jr. as SHPDA Administrator**

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 70 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i.

CCH would like to express support for the nomination of Serafin Colmenares, Jr. as the Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA).

Dr. Colmenares has been SHPDA's Acting Administrator since July 1, 2019. Prior to that, he was SHPDA's Comprehensive Health Planning Coordinator for four years. He also has extensive background and experience due to his former roles as Executive Director of the State Office of Language Access, and in positions he has held at the Executive Office on Aging, Hawaii Community Foundation, Hawaii Medical Services Association (HMSA) and the East West Center's Population Institute.

Dr. Colmenares has worked with several of CCH staff on various initiatives over the years and we support his confirmation in this position. We believe his expertise and experience will be highly beneficial in this role as Administrator of SHPDA.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i asks for your support of GM 640. For more information or questions, please feel free to contact Diane Terada, Division Administrator, via email at diane.terada@catholiccharitieshawaii.org or via phone at 527-4702.

Thank you.



GM-640

Submitted on: 5/8/2020 3:34:49 PM

Testimony for CPH on 5/13/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dominic Inocelda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

From: [Federico Magdalena](#)
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony for Dr. Serafin Colmenares, Jr.
Date: Friday, May 8, 2020 3:52:17 PM

I'd like to vouch for the competence, intellectual capacity, administrative experience and managerial ability of Dr. Serafin Colmenares, Jr for the position as Administrator in the Hawaii State Department of Health. This position is well deserved, having been in the department for a very long time. He is also vastly prepared for the job, and has solid community connections needed to boost programs of the Department of Health.

He previously served for many years as Executive Director of the Office of Language Access under the Department of Labor, where he proved to be an excellent administrator. I worked with him in some aspects of the operation like creating an outreach program that will respond more effectively to the vast immigrant communities in Hawaii whose members have limited understanding of the English language.

Given the opportunity to manage a similar office, especially one that falls within his expertise and educational background, am certain that he will succeed and bring good results for the department.

If you have questions, please email me at fm@hawaii.edu or call me 808-218-3185.

Federico Magdalena, PhD
Associate Director & Specialist
Center for Philippine Studies
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Honolulu, HI 96822
Tel (808) 956-6086 (Office)
(808) 218-3175 (Mobile)

From: [Susie Chun Oakland](#)
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Subject: GM640 Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA)
Date: Saturday, May 9, 2020 3:34:00 PM

Dear Chair Baker and Members of the Senate Committee on Consumer Protection and Health:

I strongly support GM 640 and the appointment of Serafin "Jun" Colmenares Jr. as Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency. I have known Jun for most of his government career. He is an upstanding individual with a strong work ethic, sincere compassion for people, and a deep understanding of the health system in Hawaii.

Thank you for your kind consideration of Jun for this very important position as Administrator of SHPDA.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Susie Chun Oakland

Retired Hawaii State Senator

(808) 778-9146

From: [John A. H. Tomoso](#)
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: [Jun Colmenares](#)
Subject: Nomination of Dr. Colmenares as Administrator of the State Health Planning & Development Agency (SHPDA).
Date: Monday, May 11, 2020 8:48:00 AM

05-11-20

Aloha mai,

I am sending this Testimony on behalf of Serafin P. Colmenares Jr., PhD, MPH. I am in strong support of his nomination, by Gov. Ige, as the Administrator of SHPDA. I know Dr. Colmenares to be eminently qualified and able to serve in this capacity. His academic, professional and community experiences verify and validate, in my opinion that he is also willing to serve the people of the State of Hawai'i in this important capacity. I know that he is now the Acting Administrator of SHPDA. I am stating my support of Dr. Colmenares' nomination with no reservation. I ask that you confirm this nomination.

Aloha me ka 'oia'i'o,

/S/ John A. H. Tomoso +

Board Member- Hawai'i Pacific Gerontological Society
Board Member- Hawai'i Public Health Association
Board Member- Maui Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce
Board Member- Tri-Isle Resourced Conservation & Development Council
Member-Coalition for a Tobacco Free Hawai'i-Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Member-Stand Up Maui
John A. Hau'oli Tomoso+, MSW-retired
Episcopal Priest & Social Worker
51 Ku'ula Street, Kahului, Maui, HI 96732-2906
[808-280-1749](tel:808-280-1749)

The Episcopal Churches of Maui, <https://mauiepiscopal.church/>

S.C.P.

photo



The Episcopal Churches of Maui, <https://mauiepiscopal.church/>

May 11, 2020

The Honorable Rosalyn Baker
Chair, Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health
Hawaii State Senate

RE: CPH Hearing

Wednesday, May 13, 2020, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229, State Capitol
GM640, Appointment of Serafin Colmenares, Jr. as SHPDA Administrator

Dear Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Melba Bantay and I was the Program Director of the General Immigration Services at Catholic Charities Hawaii.

I am writing in strong support of the nomination of Dr. Serafin Colmenares, Jr., as Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA). I have worked with Dr. Colmenares for many years providing services to immigrants and refugees and I can vouch for his unwavering commitment to provide the best to the people he serves.

Dr. Colmenares is not only very qualified for the position because of his various and effective leadership in many government positions, such as, SHPDA's Comprehensive Health Planning Coordinator, the Executive Director of the Office of Language Access, and positions in the Executive Office on Aging, but he is also a well-respected community leader in many Filipino and other community organizations.

Dr. Colmenares also holds masters and doctoral degrees in political science and post-graduate certificate in government management from a prestigious university in the Philippines. In addition, he is also a gifted multilingual, which is a tremendous asset in the position that requires effective communication with the various ethnic groups in our state.

I urge the committee to approve Dr. Colmenares' nomination.

Respectfully,

Melba Bantay

GM-640

Submitted on: 5/11/2020 10:24:31 AM

Testimony for CPH on 5/13/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Romala Radcliffe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senator Baker,

As the previous Administrator for State Health Planning and Development Agency, I urge you to support the appointment of Serafin Colmenares to serve as the next SHPDA Administrator.

With his years of leadership serving as the Office of Language Access Executive Director and his four years at SHPDA he has a firm understanding of the Department of Health and he knows the interplay between Hawai'i 's healthcare systems and the non-profit community.

Thank you for your support of Mr. Colmenares's confirmation.

Romala Radcliffe

GM-640

Submitted on: 5/11/2020 12:09:17 PM

Testimony for CPH on 5/13/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Speedy Bailey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

GM-640

Submitted on: 5/11/2020 4:53:56 PM

Testimony for CPH on 5/13/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Aphirak Bamrungruan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Aphirak Bamrungruan. I am the Executive Director of the Office of Language Access (OLA), Department of Health (DOH). I submit this testimony in my personal capacity in support of SERAFIN COLMENARES, JR.'s appointment to the Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency.

I have known and worked with Mr. Colmenares for several years in his role as the OLA Executive Director and other various roles at DOH. I have had the opportunity to witness first-hand Mr. Colmenares's passion for serving those in need. In my years working with Mr. Colmenares, I have found him to be a committed and caring public servant. Mr. Colmenares has continued to be an approachable and invaluable resource for OLA. I believe that Mr. Colmenares's years of experience and dedication will be a great benefit to the State Health Planning and Development Agency should he be appointed the Administrator of the Agency.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

GM-640

Submitted on: 5/12/2020 10:54:25 AM

Testimony for CPH on 5/13/2020 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Raymund Liongson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

May 12, 2020

The State Senate
State of Hawaii

Your Honor,

I consider it a privilege to submit my strong support for the appointment of the gubernatorial nominee, Dr. SERAFIN P. COLMENARES, Jr., as the Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency of the Department of Health.

I have known Dr. Colmenares for over 20 years and I can personally attest to his efficient and effective leadership, compassionate character, and dedication to work and community endeavors. I have worked with him in the community on many capacities – through the Filipino Community Center, University of Hawaii-Leeward undertakings, the local and global Knights of Rizal, and countless community service initiatives.

Dr. Colmenares is a visionary and mover. I have observed his keen evaluative abilities and sharp, innovative ideas. He has a calm, respectful, and considerate demeanor, and is open to other people's ideas. He is methodical in his analysis and objective in the way he assesses situations. He views things and conditions comprehensively and on long-term effects, rather than narrowly and myopically. He inspires other people around him and makes them bring out the best of what they can offer.

For these qualities, he has been severally acknowledged and recognized for his leadership and outstanding work locally and globally.

Given these qualities, Dr. Colmenares would be the best candidate to serve as the administrator of SHPDA – not to mention that he already is doing the work as the acting administrator of the Agency.

The Department of Health is fortunate to have Serafin P. Colmenares, PhD, MPH in its ranks. I STRONGLY ENDORSE him for the position of Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency.

Thank you for considering my endorsement.

Raymund Liongson, PhD
Ewa Beach, Hawaii

May 11, 2020

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Re: GM640 SHPDA Appointment Serafin Colmenares Jr.

Honorable Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Committee:

My name is Tito Villanueva, Kauai Emergency Medical Services Chief.

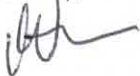
I had the opportunity to work with Mr. Colmenares when I served on the Kauai County Subarea Health Planning Council.

Mr. Colmenares as the acting Administrator has been instrumental in making sure that Oahu and all neighbor island subarea councils have coordinated health planning activities. He has been working collaboratively with State, County, and non-government organizations to determine the health needs of our County. His plans and goals for Kauai County and the State as it relates to health planning are important connecting communities.

As a diverse community, we are both apprised of State health plans but, also and even more so, inspired by Mr. Colmenares as a Filipino who by his merit, education, accomplishments as evident by his CV, and dedication at this leadership opportunity.

I personally and professionally support Mr. Serafin Colmenares Jr. appointment and humbly ask for your support. Thank you for your time and consideration. Should I be of additional assistance, please feel free to contact me at 808-639-3819.

Sincerely,



Tito Villanueva



May 10, 2020

The Honorable Rosalyn Baker
Chair, Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health
Hawaii State Senate

Re: GM640, Appointment of Serafin Colmenares Jr. as SHPDA Administrator
CPH Hearing, Wednesday, May 13, 2020, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229, State Capitol

Dear Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

I am Chona Montesines-Sonido. I am a businesswoman and the owner, publisher and managing editor of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle.

I am writing in strong support of the nomination of Dr. Serafin Colmenares Jr. as Administrator of the State Health Planning & Development Agency (SHPDA). I have known Dr. Colmenares for many years, both as a contributing writer to our local newspaper and as a leader in the Filipino community. We have worked together in various community projects and I have known him to be a hard worker, committed, and fully vested in the welfare and interests of the community.

Dr. Colmenares has been SHPDA's Acting Administrator since July 1, 2019. Prior to that, he was SHPDA's Comprehensive Health Planning Coordinator for four years. As Acting Administrator, Dr. Colmenares has performed well and provided able leadership which prompted the Department of Health and the Governor to appoint him as full-fledged Administrator.

Prior to joining SHPDA, Dr. Colmenares established and served as executive director of the Office of Language Access from 2007 to 2015. During that time, he earned the 2013 William J. Harris Equal Opportunity Award from the National Association of State Workforce Agencies for achieving a national standard of excellence in the development and implementation of an effective equal opportunity program in Hawaii. Dr. Colmenares has also held positions at the Executive Office on Aging, Hawaii Community Foundation, Hawaii Medical Services Association (HMSA), and East West Center Population Institute.

Dr. Colmenares holds a master's degree in public health from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in addition to master's and doctoral degrees in political science from the University of Delhi in India. He also earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a post-graduate certificate in governmental management from Mindanao State University in the Philippines.

Dr. Colmenares' expertise and experience would be highly beneficial to the Department of Health and to the State of Hawaii. I recommend him for the position without any reservation. I urge the committee to approve his nomination.

Thank you.

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido
Publisher and Managing Editor
Hawaii Filipino Chronicle

From: [G Ohta](#)
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Subject: In support of the confirmation of Dr. Serafin P. Colmenares as SHPDA Administrator
Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 1:23:05 PM

Attention: the Honorable Senator Roslyn Baker
RE: Governor's Message 640

Aloha Senator Baker and committee members:

Dr. Serafin P. Colmenares has been an able and articulate advocate and administrator.

His experiences through at least three administrations are testimony enough to his competence, perseverance, tenacity, and attention to task. I am familiar with his work in the Executive Office of Aging, the Office of Language Access as well as at the State Health Planning and Development Agency.

He was the founding administrator of the Office of Language Access and brought that agency to life. He formulated legislation that you enacted to advance the purposes and solidify its establishment as an attached agency in the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and now in the Department of Health. He developed processes, conferences and trainings that improved the knowledge and resources on the status and needs for providers and the community.

He is also active in the community with Filipino, ethnic, immigrant, and public health issues. He has represented the State of Hawaii to the Philippines, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He has developed linkages and partnerships with a host of public and private agencies throughout the U.S..

He is a man of proven vision and accomplishment. I unequivocally endorse his confirmation.

Mahalo for this opportunity.

Gerald Ohta

Affirmative Action Officer (retired)
Language Access Advisory Council (past vice-chair)
Inter-agency Council on Immigrant Services (past member)
Hawaii Supreme Court Committee on Equality and Access to the Courts (past executive committee member)
CDC Public Health Training Network (past team leader)

2916 Date Street, Apartment 21H
Honolulu HI 96816-1189
(808) 295-4074
gohtahpa@yahoo.com

Geminiano Q. Arre, Jr.

qqajunior@hotmail.com ■ 155 N Beretania St, Apt #903 ■ Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817-4783

May 12, 2020

Senator Rosalyn Baker
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce,
Consumer Protection and Health
Hawaii State Legislature

Subject: GM 640 Nominating Serafin Colmenares, Jr. as
Administrator of The State Health Planning and
Development Agency

Dear Senator Baker:

I write in support of the nomination of Serafin Colmenares, Jr. as Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency.

I have known and worked with Mr. Colmenares over the last twenty-five (25) years. He is a man of integrity, community-oriented and a devoted family man. He has the educational background and the requisite experience for the position he is being nominated for, and I am certain he will be an asset to the State and the community.

I highly recommend approval of his nomination as Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency.

Sincerely,

Geminiano Q. Arre, Jr.
Geminiano Q. Are, Jr.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM640

Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health

TO: Honorable Senator Rosalyn Baker
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health

FROM: Lito M. Asuncion
P.O. Box 4216
Hilo, HI 96720
litoasuncion@hotmail.com

RE: GM640 Nomination of Serafin Colmenares, Jr. as Administrator of State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA)

My name is Lito M. Asuncion, a 3-year term committee member of SHPDA's Hawaii County Sub-Area Advisory Council under governors John Waihee and Benjamin Cayetano and recently retired as a Program Planner/Specialist for the Kauai Agency on Elderly Affairs and Hawaii County Office of Aging. I was also a 3-year term member of the Office of Language Access's Language Advisory Committee Council (LAAC) under governors Linda Lingle and Neil Abercrombie.

It was during my professional employment with the Area Agencies and Aging and my active participation and involvement in the LAAC that I got to know, understood and appreciated Dr. Serafin Colmenares, Jr's unquestionable commitment for transparency, open-mindedness, welcoming nature for listening to other viewpoints and perspectives and most importantly, his unvarnished quality of objectivity when it comes to decision making at program or policy levels.

I am submitting my strong support for confirming Dr. Serafin Colmenares, Jr.'s nomination as Administrator of State Health Planning Development Agency. Your committees' positive action towards Dr. Colmenares confirmation shall insure that medical cost containment in Hawaii shall be safeguarded through SHPDA's established review and approval protocols for new or expanded health and medical initiatives throughout the state. Dr. Colmenares's initial professional employment with SHPDA as Program Specialist, then promoted as Acting Administrator and recently appointed by Governor David Ige as Administrator more than qualify him to continue smooth operations of the agency without interruptions. Dr. Colmenares is job-ready. He has a full grasp and understanding of the intricacies of communicating and dealing with political networks the agency has to interact with and he is grounded with skills that effectively and efficiently serve our island communities.

Thank your very much for the opportunity to support Dr. Colmenares confirmation.

Sincerely,



Lito M. Asuncion

From: [M. Kaahanui](#)
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Subject: TESTIMONY: Confirmation Hearing for Dr. Serafin Colmenares
Date: Monday, May 11, 2020 4:06:15 PM

The Honorable Rosalyn Baker
Chair, Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health
Hawaii State Senate

Re: CPH Hearing
Wednesday, May 13, 2020
Conference Room 229, State Capitol
GM-640 Appointment of Serafin Colmenares, Jr. as SHPDA
Administrator

Dear Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mila Medallon Kaahanui, and I'm submitting this testimony in strong support of the nomination of Dr. Serafin Colmenares, Jr. as Administrator of the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA). I have known him for more than 20 years, worked closely with him while he served as Executive Director of the Office of Language Access.

He has served as SHPDA's Comprehensive Health Planning Coordinator for four years and Acting Director for almost a year. This gave him ample opportunity to acquire vast institutional and operational knowledge that would be highly beneficial to SHPDA, the Department of Health and the State of Hawaii.

I urge the committee to approve his nomination.

Thank you.

GM640

Re Nomination of Serafin Colmenares Jr. as Administrator, State Health Planning & Development Agency (SHPDA)

- (1) Why do you want to be SHPDA Administrator?

I want to be the Administrator of the State Health Planning & Development Agency because (1) I believe that I possess the qualifications and experience needed to do the job and (2) because I believe that I can contribute to and be of service to the State and the people of Hawaii.

- (2) What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of an administrator?

In addition to providing overall leadership to the agency and its staff, the Administrator has the responsibility of overseeing an agency whose primary responsibility is “promoting accessibility for all the people of the State to quality health care services at reasonable cost.” The Administrator will be responsible for administering the State’s Certificate of Need (CON) program, a requirement needed for the construction, expansion or modification of a health care facility or services in the State of Hawaii. In addition, he oversees the preparation, revision and implementation of the State’s Health Services and Facilities Plan (HSFP) which is the guiding document for both the CON process and health care services planning in Hawaii. He ensures that coordinated community health planning activities are conducted through its various subarea and statewide health planning councils to determine the health needs of the State. Under his direction, SHPDA is also responsible for collecting health care utilization data from providers across the State which is produced into an annual Utilization Report; as Administrator, he provides input and collaborates with other agencies in the collection of data and the maintenance of Hawaii’s All Payer Claims Database.

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

I can help protect the consumer by making sure that they are represented and are able to participate in the various subarea and statewide health planning councils of the Agency. In addition, I would be able to help consumers gain access to quality health care services at reasonable cost by making sure, through the CON process, that the construction, expansion or modification of health care facilities and services are regulated according to law, by making sure that they are based on need and that the local demand is sufficient to allow them. This will help ensure that there will be no unnecessary duplication or monopoly of health services that would affect the quality and increase the cost of health services to the detriment of the consumer.

- (4) Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an administrator, 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 an administrator.

I have a master's degree in public health from the University of Hawaii and master's and doctoral degrees in political science from the University of Delhi in India, providing me the knowledge base to navigate both our public health and government infrastructures. I have management experience, having established and served as executive director of the Office of Language Access for eight years and my almost one year as acting SHPDA administrator. In addition, my various stints at the Executive Office on Aging (as evaluation analyst), the Hawaii Community Foundation (as program officer for health) and HMSA (as utilization review analyst) have given me experience in program planning, evaluation, and management, both in the public and private sectors. I have also been active in the community thereby providing me with the knowledge of and connections to Hawaii's people. Finally, I have served SHPDA for four years as Comprehensive Health Planning Coordinator and for almost a year as its Acting Administrator, thereby giving me ample knowledge and understanding of the actual workings of the agency. Given my background and experience I believe I am qualified to be the administrator of SHPDA.

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

I hope to accomplish the following: update/revise the State Health Services and Facilities Plan (the last time it was revised was in 2009, using 2006 data); revive the dwindling membership of the subarea health planning councils on Oahu and the neighbor islands; conduct community health needs assessment on Oahu and the neighbor islands.

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

I have a strong work ethic and believe that hard work has its rewards not only for the individual but for the organization one works for as well as for society in general. Coupled with this is my commitment and persistence – I fully commit to what I promise I would do and try my best to see it through its completion; I don't get easily discouraged; while aware of challenges that may come, I always look at things positively and maintain a can-do attitude. Finally, I have compassion for people, especially for those in the margins, regardless of color, religious persuasion, sexual orientation or national origin; I believe in justice and fair treatment, and always consider the good of the greater number while taking into consideration the rights of the minority. I believe that these qualities will help in my dealings with staff, with other agencies, as well as with the community.

- (7) Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as an administrator.

My 8-year stint as executive director of the Office of Language Access has given me ample experience in running a government agency. In addition, my almost 11 months experience as acting administrator of SHPDA and 4 years as its comprehensive health planning coordinator have prepared me for the job and will prove to be beneficial in my position as Administrator of the agency.

- (8) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service as an administrator? How would you overcome conflicts of interest?

I believe that public service is a public trust and I adhere to the rules governing conflicts of interest. I have always made sure that my personal interests do not interfere with my official duties. I do not foresee any possible conflicts of interest during my term of office but if any appearance of a possible conflict of interest should ever arise, I would be willing to recuse myself from participation in any proceedings or decision-making.