



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY**

**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM589
Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the
State Council on Mental Health,
Gubernatorial Nominee, ANTONINO BENINATO,
for a term to expire 06-30-24.**

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOPE, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 4/5/2021

Hearing Time: 1:00 p.m.

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) supports the nomination and
2 confirmation of Antonino Beninato to the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH).

3 **Department Testimony:** The subject matter of this measure intersects with the scope of the
4 Department’s Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) whose statutory mandate is to assure a
5 comprehensive statewide behavioral health care system by leveraging and coordinating public,
6 private and community resources. Through the BHA, the Department is committed to carrying
7 out this mandate by reducing silos, ensuring behavioral health care is readily accessible, and
8 person-centered. The BHA’s Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) provides the following
9 testimony on behalf of the Department.

10 Mr. Beninato fills the mandated SCMH membership position of student/youth advocate,
11 pursuant to Chapter 334-10 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes and Federal Law, Public Law 102-
12 321, Section 1914(c).

13 Mr. Beninato has been involved with the work of the SCMH since October 2020. His
14 foundational knowledge comes from both earning a bachelor’s degree and from working as a
15 Habilitation Technician with Bayada where he has applied his critical thinking and solution

1 focused strategies to address the needs of the individuals he works with. He brings to the
2 SCMH a refreshing perspective from the student/youth advocate point of view including his
3 interest in exploring opportunities to connect with youth about topics related to mental health.

4 We respectfully request your favorable consideration in confirming the appointment of
5 Mr. Beninato to the SCMH.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Mr. Beninato's behalf.