



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM0695
Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawaii Advisory Commission on
Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances, Gubernatorial Nominee, ERIKA VARGAS, for
a term to expire 06-30-2025**

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOOLE, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 3/31/2021

Room Number: Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None

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

9 The Department of Health strongly supports the nomination and confirmation of Erika
10 Vargas to the Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances
11 (HACDACS) for a term to expire 6/30/2025.

12 HACDACS appointees represent a cross-section of the community, including, but not
13 limited to pharmacological, medical, community and business affairs, youth action, educational,
14 legal defense, enforcement and corrections segments of the community, pursuant to HRS §329-2.

15 Ms. Vargas has a Masters in Social Work (M.S.W.) from Boston University and is the
16 Manager of Adult Services at Hina Mauka, overseeing operations of residential and outpatient
17 services for patients with alcohol and substance use disorders, and where she also previously

1 served as a clinical team leader and an intake coordinator. Besides her passion for promoting the
2 social work profession, she has a strong interest in community involvement, is active with the
3 Aiea Community Association, served in a Latino re-entry program where she provided cultural
4 services to reduce recidivism of offenders in recovery, and once collected and analyzed data on
5 homeless injection drug users in Puerto Rico. The appointment of Erika Vargas will ensure
6 representation of the community and business affairs segment in Commission deliberations.

7 We respectfully request your expeditious and favorable consideration for the nomination
8 of Erika Vargas to serve on HACDACS.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of a committed volunteer
10 whose appointment adds to the cross-section of community interests represented on HACDACS.

11 **Offered Amendments:** None

GM-695

Submitted on: 3/30/2021 12:03:03 PM

Testimony for HTH on 3/31/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Hatch	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is David Hatch. I am writing to give my testimony for Erika Vargas. I've known Ms. Vargas for more than one year. She has demonstrated commitment to helping her community personally and professionally. I strongly support her nomination to the HACDACS. Ms. Vargas has experience working with individuals living with substance use disorder and has demonstrated leadership and helped guide and develop new counselors and professionals in her capacity as manager of Adult Client Services at Hina Mauka. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for such a remarkable applicant.