



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of GM538
Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the
State Council on Mental Health,
Gubernatorial Nominee, TARA REED,
for a term to expire 06-30-2025

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOLE, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 2/18/2022

Hearing Time: 1:00 p.m.

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) **SUPPORTS** the nomination
2 and confirmation of Tara Reed to the State Council on Mental Health.

3 **Department Testimony:** The role of the State Council on Mental Health is to advise, monitor,
4 review and evaluate the provision of mental health services in the state. The State Council on
5 Mental Health is an active advocate who provides a voice for children, youth, adults, and their
6 families on behavioral health issues. Its membership is comprised of twenty-one dedicated
7 volunteers representing consumers, family members, community members and state
8 employees who give their time, energy, expertise and experience to improve and advocate for a
9 system of care that provides quality mental health service to the people of Hawaii. The State
10 Council on Mental Health is administratively attached to the Department.

11 Ms. Tara Reed fills the community member segment of the board who is a non-state
12 employee, pursuant to Chapter 334-11 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes.

13 Ms. Reed holds a bachelor’s degree in social work from the University of Hawaii at
14 Manoa. She has completed master’s degree coursework as well. She recently completed the
15 Adult Mental Health Division’s training and certification for Forensic Peer Specialists, and is

1 actively assisting the Maui Police Department with their efforts to strengthen their Crisis
2 Intervention Teams (CIT).

3 Ms. Reed is a keen advocate who is passionate about helping others, particularly those
4 who are experiencing co-occurring mental health and substance abuse challenges. She has
5 been involved in providing substance use services and has been a recipient of those services as
6 well. Having worked in the substance abuse field, she is acutely aware of the critical nature of
7 issues facing her community.

8 Ms. Reed has been an active attendee and participant at State Council on Mental Health
9 and Maui Service Area Board on Mental Health and Substance Abuse meetings for over 10
10 years.

11 The Department respectfully requests your favorable consideration in confirming the
12 appointment of Ms. Reed to the State Council on Mental Health.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

GM-538

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 11:27:23 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/18/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tara Reed	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to serve on the Hawaii State Board on Mental health. I am currently a long time standing participating member (4+ years) of Maui Area Service Board on substance abuse and mental health.

I was recently trained by the Hawaii ADAD as Maui's first forensic peer specialist. I also hold a certificate in mental health peer specialist.

I believe strongly that the paradigm shift that needs to happen within our community of this high risk population needs to come from within, others like me that have made life changing positive choices to become a more productive Hawaii citizen. I believe strongly in the principle of, "a hand up not out."

Thank you,

Tara Reed, BSW

GM-538

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 11:54:22 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/18/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Wayne Ray Bellinger	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support Tara Reed to be appointed to the state board on mental health.

She is a caring kind individual that believes passionately in helping others that are in similar situations as she has been.

She is a strong mother that volunteers her time and energy to a number of social causes such as harm reduction, peer education, and safe sex practices.

Aloha,

W Bellinger

February 17, 2022

LATE

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in support of Tara Reed as Board Member for the State Board on Mental Health. I have attempted to submit testimony for the hearing scheduled for Friday, February 18, 2022, at 1:00 pm/ Hearing_HTH_02-18-22. Unfortunately, I have not been successful in navigating the process of submitting testimony; hence, I am sending this to you. I apologize for not sending it directly to the legislature. Please assist me in getting it before the Committee that will be considering Ms. Reed's Board Membership. Mahalo. M.Verdine Kong (808)268-1414

My name is M. Verdine Kong. I am a retired attorney. In 2015, I worked part-time for Parents and Children Together (PACT) as a co-facilitator of a Women's Empowerment Group in Maui Community Correctional Center. There, I met a weekly participant, Tara Reed. Tara impressed me as creative, compassionate, and intelligent. Moreover, she was a good listener, respectful and open to others' input and ideas. She actively engaged in group discussions and was willing to share her knowledge with other participants. During private discussions, I learned that Ms Reed earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Work from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, in 2009. Previously, she had been diagnosed to suffer from recurrent depression, severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and anxiety largely stemming from a childhood lacking parental involvement. Ms. Reed was not treated for these issues and began self-medicating with drugs and alcohol, eventually being incarcerated for drug-related offenses.

Since Ms Reed's release from jail in 2015, Tara has achieved success as a thriving mother, community member and a friend to many. I am one of the fortunate persons who has developed a growing friendship with Tara. This year, Ms. Reed will be celebrating her 7th year of sobriety. She identifies her role as a "grass roots organizer creating working relationships with Maui's adult high-risk population".

Tara has been recognized on Maui, as a credible representative of the Mental Health community. She acts as a bridge in communication and services to persons suffering from a variety of mental health concerns. She seeks to close the gaps between persons in need, with appropriate resources. She has been selected to serve on the Governor's Area Service Board for Mental Health and Substance Abuse since 2018. In this capacity, Ms. Reed has been instrumental in highlighting the need for harm reduction education. In 2021, Ms. Reed completed training and became certified as an adult mental health division peer specialist. In May, 2020, Ms. Reed was awarded the Adult Mental Health Consumer Advocate by Mental Health America of Hawai'i.

I firmly believe that Ms. Reed will be an asset to the State Board on Mental Health because she

fulfills an important component in strengthening, advocating for, and encouraging inclusion of members of our community who are challenged by mental health issues. She will share her vision of those with mental health challenges as persons who are significant in strengthening the fabric of our communities.

I offer my strong support to Ms. Reed as Board Member for the State Board on Mental Health. Mahalo for taking the time to consider my testimony.

With aloha,

Verdine Kong
(808)268-1414