



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM541**  
**Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the**  
**State Council on Mental Health,**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, KATHLEEN MERRIAM,**  
**for a term to expire 06-30-2024**

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 Kathleen Merriam 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 Mrs. Kathleen Merriam fills the mandated State Council on Mental Health membership  
12 position of the principal state agency with respect to health, pursuant to Chapter 334-10 of the  
13 Hawaii Revised Statutes and Federal Law, Public Law 102-321, Section 1914(c).

14 Her background in mental health spans over 37 years and four states and her  
15 professional background is multidisciplinary, inclusive of treatment and clinical care,

1 specializing in trauma-informed care, co-occurring disorders, suicide prevention and case  
2 management coordination. Her strengths include team building, therapeutic listening and  
3 problem solving, and providing holistic peer supports.

4 She moved to Hawaii 18 years ago to work for the Adult Mental Health Division as the  
5 Statewide Clubhouse Coordinator before transitioning to an administrative service coordinator  
6 position overseeing the Adult Mental Health Division's contracted case management and  
7 Recovery support services. Currently, Mrs. Merriam is the Mental Health Supervisor for the  
8 Adult Mental Health Division, Windward Oahu Mental Health Center (Treatment Services  
9 Section).

10 Mrs. Merriam brings to the State Council on Mental Health, consumer, family member,  
11 provider and administrator perspectives.

12 XX

13 The Department strongly supports the appointment of Mrs. Merriam to the State  
14 Council on Mental Health.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**GM-541**

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 7:37:22 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Aliman Sears	Testifying for Community Empowerment Resources	Support	No

Comments:

GM 541, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Council on Mental Health, Gubernatorial Nominee, KATHLEEN MERRIAM, for a term to expire 06-30-2024.

**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT RESOURCES (CER) IS IN SUPPORT OF KATHLEEN MERRIAM:**

CER has worked extensively with KATHLEEN MERRIAM and she is ideal for this position. CER is a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing case management, psychiatric, and crisis services to the mentally ill population via contracts with the State of Hawaii Department of Health, and with the various QUEST insurance providers. We have extensive experience and expertise in the area of social services (15 years in Hawaii) as an agency helping the mentally ill homeless to get needed medical and psychiatric care, helping this population to live fuller lives.

CER fully supports KATHLEEN MERRIAM.



**HINAMAUKA**

**GM541 Kathleen Merriam for State Council for Mental Health**

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Monday, Feb 18 2022: 1:00 pm : Videoconference

**Hina Mauka strongly recommends Kathleen Marriam for State Council for Mental Health:**

*ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the CEO of Hina Mauka, providing services for substance use disorder and mental health including programs for prevention, adult addiction treatment, adolescent treatment, case management, and withdrawal management. We have services on Oahu and Kauai as well as help all people from all islands.*

We have known Kathleen Merriam since the late 1990's, after she started working with the Department of Health, Adult Mental Health Division.

Kathleen is a person with an uncommon good heart and great attitude. She has tremendous empathy for people and a wonderful insight into chronic mental health conditions.

Ms. Merriam has all the amazing attributes for being on the council: a strong sense of responsibility, practiced supervisor experience, years of information about coordination and collaboration of various service providers, professional leadership and training skills, as well as a technician's perspective for improving quality metrics.

We highly recommend Kathleen Merriam for the State Council for Mental Health.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for further questions.

**GM-541**

Submitted on: 2/15/2022 2:04:25 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Heather Lusk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha and thank youi for the chance to testify in support of Keathleen Merriam for the State Council on Mental Health. Ms. Merriam would be the perfect member as she has both professional and personal experience with mental health. She is a true advocate and is aloha in action. Please confirm Kathleen.

Sincerely,

Heather Lusk

**GM-541**

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 8:45:25 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kumi Macdonald	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern.

I fully support Kathleen Merriam GM 541 for the State Council on Mental Health. She has a proven track record of representing consumer/peers in recovery from mental illness as well as a champion for mental health in her profession. She also serves as a volunteer for NAMI Hawaii, CIT Police Training and so many other mental health related organizations.

Mahalo,

Kumi Macdonald

**GM-541**

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 8:54:57 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To the Committee Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

RE: GM 541: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Council on Mental Health, KATHLEEN MERRIAM

I strongly support the appointment of Kathleen Merriam to the State Council on Mental Health.

I have personally and professionally known Kathleen for over 15 years. She brings to the State Council on Mental Health her work years of experience in Hawaii, nationally, and internationally in positions such as a Mental Health Coordinator, Director of International Training, Statewide Clubhouse Coordinator, Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Case Management Service Director, and currently as the Mental Health Supervisor for the Windward Oahu Community Mental Health Center. In these positions she has worked alongside individuals with intellectual disabilities and those individuals with mental health disabilities in a sensitive and caring way. She has been an advocate for those who are unable to voice their opinions and concerns to others for fear of being judged or ridiculed.

Kathleen will bring a perspective that will add a diverse look at people in our communities statewide which will be a benefit to the State Council on Mental Health. I strongly support her confirmation as a member on the State Council on Mental Health.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**GM-541**

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 9:33:27 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Erika Vargas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Kathleen Merriam would be a great addition to the State Council on Mental Health. For many years, she has been a staple and a driving force within the mental health community. Her passion and commitment to the mental health community has been an asset in advancing rights and addressing social inequities for this population. I highly recommend Ms. Merriam to become a member of the State Council on Mental Health. Mahalo