

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

Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 899 S.D.1
RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH

SENATOR KARL RHOADS, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Hearing Date: 3/4/2022

Hearing Time: 10:30 a.m.

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) supports this measure and
2 offers comments.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) offers the following
4 testimony on behalf of the Department.

5 The Department is committed to protecting and improving the health and environment
6 for all people in Hawaii, including assuring that basic mental health care is available,
7 appropriate, assured quality, and accessible. The Department’s statutory mandate includes
8 utilizing public and private resources to reduce the incidence of mental and substance use
9 disorders, including care and treatment for homeless individuals with serious mental health
10 challenges. The AMHD is responsible for leading, fostering, and coordinating a comprehensive
11 mental health system that promotes mental wellbeing by delivering dignified, holistic, and
12 culturally-relevant mental health care and services.

13 The Hawaii State Legislature created the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health
14 (“SCMH”) in 1984 (ACT 218). The Hawaii State Boards and Commissions Office processes
15 applicants for SCMH membership based on general and specific criteria for the SCMH’s member
16 composition as outlined in §334-10, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The SCMH is administratively
17 attached to the Department. The AMHD provides administrative support to the SCMH.

1 As an advisory body, the SCMH advocates for Hawaii adolescents, adults, and their
2 families, and provides recommendations to the Department on community issues related to
3 mental health and substance abuse. Additionally, the SCMH is our State’s federally-mandated
4 planning council for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and
5 Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Community Mental Health Services Block Grant.

6 The Department recognizes that diversity within the SCMH broadens the SCMH
7 membership. Data and research have linked Native Hawaiians and Hawaiian ancestry with an
8 increased risk for mental health issues. A SCMH membership that includes community
9 advocates who are knowledgeable and understanding of cultural awareness and loss of ethnic
10 identity, as well as other Native Hawaiian healing and health practices may be better positioned
11 to promote holistic and person-centered recovery for mental health service recipients.

12 We look forward to the potential that members of the SCMH, under this measure,
13 would bring to the Department’s awareness of mental health needs in our community.

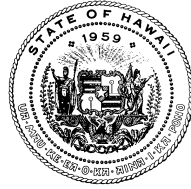
14 The Department also encourages the SCMH to be actively included in the discussion of
15 its membership.

16 **Offered Amendments:** None.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

18 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378, Room 256
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STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary
in SUPPORT of S.B. 899 S.D. 1
RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH

Hearing Date: Friday, March 4, 2022 at 10:30 a.m.

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

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1st VICE CHAIRPERSON
Christopher Knightsbridge,
MAIR, MACL

2nd VICE CHAIRPERSON
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Kathleen Rhoads Merriam, LCSW,
CSAC

Tara Reed, BSW

Jennifer Renfro

EX-OFFICIO:

Marian Tsuji,
Deputy Director, Behavioral
Health Administration

In alignment with §334-10, HRS, the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH) is a 21-member Council responsible for advising, reviewing and monitoring the provision of mental health services statewide. SCMH members from diverse backgrounds serve as volunteers, collectively representing mental health service recipients, students and youth, parents and family members, providers, and state agencies including the Hawaii Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and the Judiciary.

The SCMH offered amendments to the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs and those amendments were subsequently adopted. As drafted, the SCMH supports this measure and shares the following comments.

- The SCMH is strongly supportive of increasing diversity within the SCMH and increasing services to marginalized groups within our State.
- The SCMH recognizes the significance of diversity in addressing access to treatment.

The mission of the SCMH is to advocate for a Hawaii where all persons affected by mental illness can access treatment and support necessary to live a full life in the community of their choice.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please contact us at DOH.SCMHChairperson@doh.hawaii.gov.



Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
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www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521-8995

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 4, 2022- 10:30 a.m. - Videoconference

**Support for SB899 SD1
RELATING TO THE STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH**

HPA supports SB899 SD1 which requires was amended to require that members of the State Council on Mental Health receive training in Native Hawaiian concepts of well-being, culturally informed mental health treatment and traditional healing and health practices. It is necessary that initiatives or actions taken by the State Council on Mental Health reflect an underlying understanding of how culture influences the experience of distress, dysfunction, strength and resilience. Despite the best of intentions, a lack of this understanding may unintentionally interfere with the development of quality mental health programs, the building of effective alliances between stakeholder groups, and may undermine the delivery of effective multi-culturally competent services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important bill.

Sincerely,

Alex Lichton, Ph.D.

Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee

Helping Hawai'i Live Well

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Thursday, March 4th, 2022, 10:30am
Via videoconference

SB899 SD1, Relating to the Composition of the State Council on Mental Health

Dear Senator Rhoads, Chair, and Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

Mental Health America of Hawaii is in **strong support of SB899 SD1**, which requires that members of the State Council on Mental Health receive annual training that includes topics relating to cultural awareness and loss of ethnic identity, as well as other topics that address Native Hawaiian healing and health practices.

Mental Health America of Hawai'i (MHAH), an affiliate of the renowned national organization, is a highly regarded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the State of Hawai'i. For nearly 80 years, MHAH has been fulfilling its mission "to promote mental health & wellness through education, advocacy, service, and access to care" through its vision of 'mental wellness for all.' We endeavor to reduce the shame and stigma of mental illness and improve the overall care, treatment, and empowerment of those with or at risk for mental health challenges across all stages of life in Hawai'i.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health, in 2019, Native Hawaiians were three times less likely to receive mental health services and that death by suicide was the leading cause of death for those aged 15-24.¹ Another article published in 2019 demonstrated that data revealed the presence of a stigmatizing context in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities that likely restrict NHPI from seeking help.² There is clear evidence that deep representation, as well as cultural influence, awareness, and promotion within entities like the Council can result in improved outcomes for the community they serve. Furthermore, we believe that passage of this bill is a significant contribution towards the reduction of the shame, stigma, and discrimination associated with mental health for NHPI; and ultimately can result in improved mental health outcomes for the Hawaiian community.

Respectfully,



Bryan L. Talisayan
Executive Director

¹ "Mental and Behavioral Health - Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders - the Office of Minority Health." *Minorityhealth.hhs.gov*, US HHS, 2019, minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lv=4&lvlid=172. Accessed 1 Mar. 2022.

² Subica, Andrew M., et al. "Mental Illness Stigma among Pacific Islanders." *Psychiatry Research*, vol. 273, Mar. 2019, pp. 578-585, [10.1016/j.psychres.2019.01.077](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2019.01.077). Accessed 3 Mar. 2022.



The Hawaiian Islands Association
for Marriage and Family Therapy
(HIAMFT)

We know systems.
We know relationships.
We know FAMILY MATTERS.

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Friday, March 4, 2022 - 10:30am - via videoconference

Testimony in Strong Support and Comments for SB899 SD1 RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH

The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (HIAMFT) strongly supports SB899 SD1, requiring members of the State Council on Mental Health to receive annual training involving Native Hawaiian concepts of well-being, culturally informed mental health treatment and traditional healing and health practices.

The statistics indicating the profound mental health disparities experienced by Native Hawaiians - particularly the youth - are deeply concerning. There are several means of addressing these inequities through improved channels of access and treatment modalities; however, ensuring that the breadth and depth of mental health services available and directly responsive to Native Hawaiian needs must be made a priority. We should not allow a cultural disconnect between a provider and patient discourage anyone in distress from seeking help. We need to foster a network of care where our Native Hawaiian population can feel seen, heard, and understood.

This very issue arose in HIAMFT's testimony a few weeks on SB2829 (to create an Associate Licensing framework for mental health professionals), when I shared an experience I had supervising a Marriage and Family Therapist Associate seeking to build a practice conducted in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i. Unfortunately, we had to shut down that practice for lack of support and resources. With members on the State Council on Mental Health advocating for practices like this, we might be able to bring it back and create a model that can be replicated and shared to serve the many who are in need. Thus, HIAMFT fully recognizes the need and supports capacity building in Hawaii for culturally-competent services.

We believe initiatives taken by the State Council on Mental Health should reflect an understanding of how culture influences the experience of distress, dysfunction, strength and resilience by all our residents; and this bill is a strong step toward achieving that goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Souza, Jr., LMFT, DMFT, President
The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

LATE



To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary

Re: **SB 899 SD 1 RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION FO THE STATE
COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH**

Hearing: Friday, March 4, 2022, 10:30 p.m., via videoconference

Position: Strong Support

Aloha, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee Judiciary:

The Health Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i stands in strong support of SB 899 SD 1. This measure would require members of the State Council on Mental Health receive annual training that includes topics such as cultural awareness and loss of ethnic identity, as well as other topics that address Native Hawaiian healing and health practices.

The Health Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports this bill as it will assure that mental health services to Native Hawaiians are congruent with Native Hawaiian values and beliefs. Thus, by requiring members of the State Council on Mental Health receive annual training on cultural awareness and loss of ethnic identity, as well as other topics that address Native Hawaiian healing and health practices will assist in reducing health disparities among the native Hawaiian community and its peers as mental health services will become more relatable.

This is important because mental health disparities for Native Hawaiians start at a very young age and is oftentimes transgenerational. Native Hawaiian keiki are over-represented as victims of abuse and neglect and native Hawaiian students continue to experience sadness or hopelessness at school. Native Hawaiian youth have the highest rate of drug use and incarceration in the State. Unfortunately, these mental health disparities persist through adulthood. Reducing these health disparities and achieving health equity can start with the passage of this bill.

Respectfully yours,

/s/ *Melodie R. Aduja*

Chair, Health Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Friday, March 4, 2022 – 10:30AM – Via Videoconference

**Testimony in Strong Support for SB899 SD1 RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATE
COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH**

The National Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) strongly supports SB899 SD1, which would ensure the State Council on Mental Health receives trainings on Native Hawaiian history, culture, and practice; and how they interface with the experiences of distress, dysfunction, strength, and resilience by this vulnerable population. Without an awareness and appreciation of cultural context, history, and Native Hawaiian ways of knowing and relating; and how these factors clash with western systems and interventions, we may hamper the development of quality mental health programs for our Native Hawaiian residents. This measure encourages the mental health community build effective alliances between stakeholder groups so as a system, we can all deliver effective multi-culturally competent services.

This measure also comports with the NASW code of ethics, regarding Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients – Cultural Competence, as follows:

- (a) Social workers should demonstrate understanding of culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- (b) Social workers should demonstrate knowledge that guides practice with clients of various cultures and be able to demonstrate skills in the provision of culturally informed services that empower marginalized individuals and groups. Social workers must take action against oppression, racism, discrimination, and inequities, and acknowledge personal privilege.
- (c) Social workers should demonstrate awareness and cultural humility by engaging in critical self-reflection (understanding their own bias and engaging in self-correction), recognizing clients as experts of their own culture, committing to lifelong learning, and holding institutions accountable for advancing cultural humility.
- (d) Social workers should obtain education about and demonstrate understanding of the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- (e) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients' use of and access to electronic technology and seek to prevent such potential barriers. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support.

Sincerely,

 MSW, LCSW

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LCSW

Executive Director,

National Association of Social Workers- Hawai'i Chapter



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Jacce Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: March 4, 2022

Re: Support for SB 899 SD1 – Relating to the Composition of the State Council on Mental Health

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a not-for-profit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, 66 health care centers and labs, and more than 1,600 physicians statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of SB899 SD1, which requires that members of the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH) receive annual training that includes topics such as cultural awareness and loss of ethnic identity, as well as other topics that address Native Hawaiian healing and health practices. We support this effort to bring greater understanding and deeper appreciation of/for Native Hawaiian health and healing practices to members serving on the SCMH. Furthermore, we see this type of training as an appropriate extension of the recommendations provided within the 2017 Native Hawaiian Health Task Force report to the Legislature.

Thank you for allowing Queen's to provide testimony in support of SB 899 SD1.

The mission of The Queen's Health Systems is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.

Aloha President Senator Ronald D. Kouchi and Members,

I am a concerned citizen writing regarding Bill SB899 RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH. My name is Kori Higdon, and I am in strong support of this bill. I am a graduate student at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, specializing in behavioral mental health. Through my academic studies, as well as my experience in directly working with the Native Hawaiian population, I am fully convinced of the mental health and health disparities amongst this population. I have worked with Native Hawaiian kupuna in Kalihi Valley, as well as with pregnant Native Hawaiian youth in Kailua, witnessing first-hand the devastating effects of the lack of accessible, affordable, and culturally grounded mental health/ health care. With the context of Hawaii's history taken into strong consideration, it is especially important provide services to Native Hawaiians that are culturally informed, grounded, and delivered for a variety of reasons if we are to address and overcome these disparities. For example, a common barrier to seeking treatment can include a mistrust of providers that operate within Western modalities. I am in strong support of this bill requiring that all (not just three) members of the Council on Mental Health receive annual training on topics involving cultural awareness, loss of identity, Hawaiian health practices, and more. Education builds awareness, which is a critical first step to making change and promoting justice amongst and for Native Hawaiians. The more educated our council members are on these matters, the better they can serve the population in which their decisions will have a direct impact. I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,

Kori Higdon

LATE

Date: March 4, 2022

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Jethro Macaraeg
Master of Social Work Candidate
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

**RE: SUPPORT for SB899 SD1, RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATE
COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Committee Members:

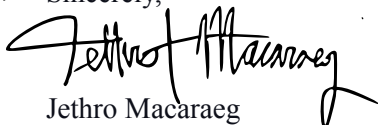
My name is Jethro Macaraeg, current Master of Social Work (MSW) Candidate. I am completing mental health coursework, in addition to 450 practicum hours as a care coordinator within integrated primary care. My personal and professional experiences inform my **support for SB899 SD1**.

I believe annual, additional training on culturally-grounded modalities is critical in filling the gaps of mental health education. As a social worker and therapist in-training, I recognize the Eurocentrism roots of the mental health field. Western research, policy, and practice reduce the value Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) healing modalities bring to our communities. As a psychology undergraduate in the continental United States, I did not receive formal education on cultural trauma, colonization, and BIPOC healing perspectives related to mental healthcare. In contrast, my graduate coursework in Hawaii introduced me to Native Hawaiian healing practices, systemic oppression, and community-based evaluation methods. Acquiring this knowledge allows me to embrace a client-centered lens and advocate for patients to receive culturally-responsive treatment. Similarly, I believe this bill allows the State Council of Mental Health to center Native Hawaiian ways of life within our current mental health system.

As a care coordinator intern, I connect clients to behavioral health treatment. Accessing behavioral health care in the State of Hawai'i can be a convoluted process due to limited provider coverage, lengthy waitlists, and minimal specialty services. Frequently, these factors can evoke discouragement among clients, resulting in poor health outcomes. Through this bill, increased training among the council can create opportunities for subsequent professional development for the broader mental health community. Moreover, this bill provides the council guidance in determining future policy, research, and practice specific to the people of Hawaii.

I encourage your committee to support SB899 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Jethro Macaraeg