

Senate letter asking survey questions for mental health council

John F Betlach answers

(1) Why do you wish to join the State Council on Mental Health?

It is a great opportunity to help people with serious mental health conditions and those that serve them. I had several friends and family with serious mental health issues. I saw their journey, the struggle of those trying to help them, and the complexity/system theory approaches needed to address challenged people in the future. I promised to help years ago, and I am still at it.

(2) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the State Council on Mental Health?

- Advocacy
- Advisor on barriers to services and policies
- Providing guidance on the development and implementation of mental health services in the State of Hawaii
- Monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing the allocation and rollout of services in our community and statewide

(3) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a State Council on Mental Health member, why do you believe you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a State Council on Mental Health member.

- I am qualified because I have been gathering the tools needed to identify better and address the complex barriers faced today in mental health in our community and our country. I got training to answer how we can address the complex issues in mental health delivery.
- The process. I attended area service board meetings for six months before applying and serving on the Hawaii Area Service Board (HSAB) for Mental Health and Substance Abuse. I attended several State Council on Mental Health meetings over a year before applying to be on the Council.
- Education. I tap into five graduate specializations -MBA from a public administration school, MA in holistic education and psychotherapy, organizational leadership, public administration, and nonprofit management.
- Board experience. I have served on at least five boards- disciplinary action board member; nonprofit much like DHS or hope services that feed 5-8k homeless a day (15k plus on one day)and where a gateway to services for mental health-challenged homeless people; we invented the resource guide now used by eight counties; started the coalition against homelessness.
- Been on the federal funders level. Advisor on the national committee for Health promotion run by the director of health promotion for the Federal Dept for Health and state directors of health for 6.5 years – one effect was a 7 billion rollout that brought Hawaii 313 million.

(4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

- By identifying barriers, providing guidance, monitoring, evaluating, reviewing, working on interventions and advocating-I hope to help all the amazing people that are helping in our community and government to make Hawaii a better place for Hawaii's ohana with serious mental health illness.
- Access to all four block grants for Hawaii, more outside funding

-Lower costs, build retention and empowerment of state employees, build capacity to serve, and close the cracks in service.

-Learn from department heads, reps, senate reps, state reps, front-line staff, and fellow council members so that I can be of even more service.

(5) Name three qualities that best describe you, and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the State Council on Mental Health?

-As a mental health professional, administrator, organizational development coach, family member, and friend/advocate, I am able to see mental health from a variety of perspectives.

-Ohana, I believe we can make a difference, and our community and families are worth it.

-I have a history of bringing people together to find new solutions to our ever-changing world challenges.

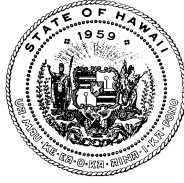
-My hope is that I can provide valuable insights, information, and resources.

-Be able to catch some of the pitfalls and help uplift the Council.

-I could help people, non-profit services, and departments to better contribute and assist the State Council on Mental Health and the State in improving mental services.

I am thankful for your service to the State and the hard work you took to get elected and take to review applicants. Thanks for your consideration and the malama for our community.

John F Betlach at your service



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**WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY**

Testimony in SUPPORT of GM 612
Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the
State Council on Mental Health
Gubernatorial Nominee, JOHN BETLACH,
for a term to expire 03-31-2026

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: Friday, March 31, 2023, 1:05 p.m. in Rm. 225/VIDEO

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) **SUPPORTS** the nomination
2 and confirmation of JOHN BETLACH to the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health (“SCMH”) and
3 offers comments.

4 **Department Testimony:**

5 Mr. Betlach fills the mandated SCMH membership position of mental health
6 stakeholder/community member, pursuant to Chapter 334-10, Hawaii Revised Statutes and
7 Federal Law, Public Law 102-321, Section 1914(c).

8 As an interim SCMH member, Mr. Betlach has shared ground-level stories that has
9 deepened the SCMH’s understanding of issues from clients’ viewpoints. He had been attending
10 SCMH meetings before he became a member. He was inspired by what he witnessed during
11 SCMH meetings, and stepped forward to be the Hawaii Service Area Board on Mental Illness
12 and Substance Abuse (HSAB) representative.

13 Mr. Betlach is an experienced clinical professional having provided direct care,
14 treatment, intervention, case management, and counseling in both inpatient and outpatient

1 settings. He has shared about his interest in doing outreach and volunteering. Figuratively and
2 literally, he faithfully goes the extra mile to bring clients and resources together. For example,
3 he takes initiative to bring clients to meet those who are able to provide support. Recently, he
4 accompanied a guest speaker to the Hawaii Island Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. With
5 Mr. Betlach's logistical help, this person was able to share their firsthand experiences with law
6 enforcement officers to help them understand what it is like to live with mental illness and
7 receive feedback on how to effectively help someone in the community who may be in need of
8 mental health supports. We look forward to Mr. Betlach's continued participation and
9 advocacy.

10 We respectfully request your favorable consideration in confirming the appointment of
11 Mr. Betlach to the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on his behalf.

13

14 **About the SCMH**

15 The SCMH is an active advocacy group with 21 volunteers representing service
16 recipients, family members, community members and state agency representatives who
17 provide a voice for children, youth, adults and their families on behavioral health issues.
18 Established in 1984, the SCMH's mission is to advise, monitor, review and evaluate the
19 provision of mental health services in the state. Collectively, the SCMH advises the Department
20 through the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD), and
21 Child Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) on issues of concern, policies and programs;
22 providing guidance in the development and implementation of the state mental health plan,
23 and serving as an advocate for adults diagnosed with serious mental illness (SMI) and for
24 children and youth diagnosed with serious emotional disturbance (SED).