

Lea Dias

March 1, 2024

SUBJECT: GM 0557- Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Council on Mental Health, Gubernatorial Nominee, LEA DIAS, for a term to expire 06-30-2027

Hearing: Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 1:00 PM

Conference Room 225, State Capitol & Video Conference

Aloha, Honorable Chair San Buenaventura,

Thank you for requesting more information regarding my nomination to the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH). Please find my responses as follows:

(1) Why do you wish to be a member of the State Council on Mental Health?

I have been honored to be an active member of the SCMH since July 1, 2022. I am seeking re-appointment to the Council per section 334-10(a)(1), HRS, representing a principal state agency with respect to vocational rehabilitation. Beyond that, I was born and raised in Hawaii, and the health, opportunity and security of our people are of utmost importance to me. I have spent my entire career working for the DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, assisting those with disabilities, including psychiatric disabilities, by providing counseling, training, peer supports, higher education, reasonable accommodations, and other assistance, with the ultimate goals of self-sufficiency, empowerment, independent living, and competitive, integrated employment. My hope is to learn and share information with the other council members, as well as with the public, regarding the needs and capabilities of individuals with mental health disabilities in all areas of life, and particularly as related to employment.

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

Per section 334-10(c), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH) advises the Department of Health on the allocation of resources, statewide needs, and programs affecting two or more service areas, reviews and comments on the statewide comprehensive integrated service plan, and advocates for adults with serious mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbances, other individuals with mental illnesses or emotional problems, and individuals with combined mental illness substance abuse disorders. Through monthly meetings, all members of the community are invited to share insights and concerns about the issues affecting mental health in the State.

I believe it is imperative that all Council members dedicate ourselves to hearing and addressing concerns from the public; review and advise on statewide mental health programs, resources and areas of need; advocate for the needs of individuals with mental health concerns and their families; and actively, regularly participate in all meetings of the Council.

(3) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the State Council on Mental health, why do you believe that 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 member of the State Council on Mental Health.

As mentioned in response (1) above, I have been employed by the DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) as a counselor, supervisor and branch administrator for over 30 years and currently serve as the DVR Administrator. Throughout my career, I have counseled countless individuals with mental health disabilities as they work toward employment. I have had the opportunity to interface with various Department of Health programs and other mental health care provider with whom I have shared mutual consumers, including being assigned as the DVR liaison to the Koolau Clubhouse for a number of years.

I have a master's degree in education with a specialization in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. My experience as a counselor, and now a leader, in DVR has given me experience, skills, and knowledge in the importance of listening to others, communicating clearly, working cooperatively, analyzing the needs and strengths of programs, and making decisions which result in improvements for the constituents we serve.

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

In working together with the Council and listening to the concerns and needs of the public, I hope to be a part of improving mental health services for the people of Hawaii. I also hope to be a voice for the need for more training and employment opportunities for individuals with mental health disabilities.

(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?

- I am passionate about assisting individuals with disabilities, including those with significant mental health challenges, to overcome obstacles, recognize their strengths, and attain their career and life goals.
- I understand the importance of working together with others, including community members, in order to effectuate positive change.
- I am compassionate to the needs of our ohana nui and I work hard to help those in need.

I believe these qualities will benefit the SCMh as it is important for the Council to listen to the needs of individuals and families struggling with mental health concerns, and to work together to examine current programs' effectiveness in meeting those needs, including but not limited to opportunities for wellness and economic self-sufficiency.

(6) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the State Council on Mental Health?

I believe my experience in working as a counselor with individuals with psychiatric disabilities toward their career goals makes me stand out. This would benefit the SCMh by keeping the importance of employment and self-sufficiency opportunities on the table.

(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the State Council on Mental Health? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?

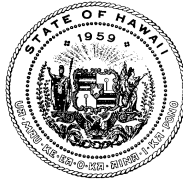
If there is a vote to be made which could result in a conflict of interest as an employee of DHS/DVR, I would abstain from voting.

Thank you for your consideration of my nomination to the State Council on Mental Health.

Sincerely,



Lea Dias



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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM 557
Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the
State Council on Mental Health
Gubernatorial Nominee, LEA DIAS,
for a term to expire 06-30-2027**

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

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 1:00 p.m. in Rm. 225/VIDEO

- 1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) SUPPORTS the nomination
- 2 and confirmation of LEA DIAS to the Hawai’i State Council on Mental Health (“Council”) and
- 3 offers comments.

- 4 **Department Testimony:** The Hawai’i Revised Statutes 334-10 call for a State Council on Mental
- 5 Health of twenty-one members. Members must be individuals representing the principal state
- 6 agencies for mental health, education, vocational rehabilitation, criminal justice, housing,
- 7 Medicaid, and social services; public and private entities concerned with the need, planning and
- 8 operation, funding, and use of mental health services and related support services; adults with
- 9 serious mental illness who are receiving, or have received, mental health services; Families of
- 10 such adults or families with children with serious emotional disturbances; and The Hawai’i
- 11 advisory commission on drug abuse and controlled substances. The Council's mandate includes
- 12 advising the Department of Health on allocating resources, statewide needs, and programs
- 13 affecting two or more local areas. It reviews and comments on the statewide comprehensive,
- 14 integrated service plan. Collectively, members advocate for adults with serious mental illness,
- 15 children with serious emotional disturbances, other individuals with mental illness or emotional

1 problems, and individuals with combined mental illness and substance abuse disorder. In 2020,
2 the Council adopted the vision of a Hawai'i where people of all ages with mental health
3 challenges can enjoy recovery in the community of their choice. It adopted the mission to
4 advocate for a Hawai'i where all persons affected by mental illness can access necessary
5 treatment and support to live full lives in the community of their choice.

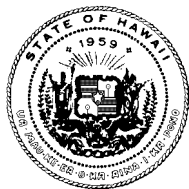
6 Ms. Dias fills the mandated Council membership position of a State agency employee
7 representing vocational rehabilitation under Chapter 334-10, Hawai'i Revised Statutes and
8 Federal Law, Public Law 102-321, Section 1914(c). She was recently promoted to be the
9 Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator.

10 Since her first appointment to the Council in 2022, Ms. Dias enthusiastically brought
11 attention to vocational rehabilitation services that are helping many, including the mentally ill,
12 prepare for, find, and keep competitive employment. The attention increased interest,
13 information exchange, and clarity about employment services and opportunities for the
14 individuals that the SCMH advocates for. She provided leadership in regular statistical reports
15 while offering insights into the person-centered nature of vocational rehabilitation services.
16 Ms. Dias has been an attentive member of the Council and will continue to contribute to
17 positive Council dynamics and results.

18 The Department respectfully requests your favorable consideration in confirming
19 Ms. Dias' appointment to the State Council on Mental Health.

20 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on her behalf.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
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Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

February 27, 2024

To: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **GM 557 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Council on Mental Health, Gubernatorial Nominee, LEA DIAS, for a term to expire 06-30-2027.**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 1:00 PM
Conference Room 225 & Videoconferencing, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the nomination and confirmation of Lea Dias to the State Council on Mental Health.

PURPOSE: Per section 334-10(c), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the State Council on Mental Health advises the Department of Health on the allocation of resources, statewide needs, and programs affecting two or more service areas, reviews and comments on the statewide comprehensive integrated service plan, and advocates for adults with serious mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbances, other individuals with mental illnesses or emotional problems, and individuals with combined mental illness substance abuse disorders. Through monthly meetings, all members of the community are invited to share insights and concerns about the issues affecting mental health in the State.

Ms. Dias seeks an appointment to the SCMHS per section 334-10(a)(1), HRS, representing a principal state agency with respect to vocational rehabilitation. Ms. Dias has been employed by the DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) for over 30 years and currently serves as the DVR Administrator.

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Ms. Dias has been an active member of the SCMH since July 1, 2022. She holds a master's degree in education with a specialization in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Ms. Dias is passionate about assisting individuals with disabilities, including those with significant mental health challenges, to overcome obstacles, recognize their strengths, and attain their career and life goals.

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

Hawaii State Senate
Committee on Health and Human Services

March 6, 2024, 1:00 pm
Room 225

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

GM 557 Confirmation of Lea Dias to the State Council on Mental Health

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Committee,

I fully support the nomination of Lea Dias to the State Council on Mental Health. Lea and I have known each other for over twelve years as both colleagues and co-workers. I have nothing but the utmost respect for her as a professional and person of integrity.

As you can see from her resume, Lea is very knowledgeable about disabilities and the vocational rehabilitation system. Employment is an important factor in treatment, recovery and support for those with mental illness and co-occurring disorders. Her input in shaping the Council will be very valuable.

Thank you for your consideration.