

March 4, 2024

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura
Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Service
State of Hawaii

Re: Nomination to the State Council on Mental Health

Dear Senator Buenaventura,

I am humbled by the nomination to the State Council on Mental Health. Thank you for the opportunity to answer the questionnaire regarding my desire to serve on the State Council on Mental Health.

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

My desire to be a member of the State Council on Mental Health is both professional and personal. Professionally, I would represent the Department of Education on the State Council on Mental Health. In my current position as the Hawaii Department of Education State Mental Health Agency Coordinator, Project HI AWARE2, my primary role is statewide community outreach and awareness to ensure seamless access to behavioral health services for students and families. This includes collaboration with state agencies, community partners, mental health agencies, parents, and youth. Additionally, I participate in advocacy efforts to impact policy related to school-based mental health and support the suicide prevention and awareness training efforts. Personally, my life purpose and work has centered around mental health. One of my early memories was visiting my grandmother in the hospital and not understanding why the hospital ward she was on was locked. Later I came to understand that she suffered from a mental illness. Having someone I loved living with mental illness has been the driving force behind the work I do as well as knowing mental health affects us all.

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

I perceive my role and responsibilities of a member of the State Council on Mental Health is to advise the Department of Health of statewide needs, programs and to advocate for individual experiencing mental illnesses and substance use disorders especially our keiki (children).

(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.

I began my career as a Licensed Professional Counselor providing individual, group and family counseling to youth and their families. I have worked in multiple settings including residential, outpatient, school & community. My experience in mental health and substance use prevention has equipped me with a solid foundation around the issues and concerns of those affected by mental illnesses. I have more than 10 years of senior leadership and management experience focusing on mental health, substance use prevention and homelessness. I have worked with collaborative partners promoting advocacy and community development. My experience has included community engagement and outreach, building community partnerships, establishing relationships with outside organizations to meet consumer needs

(i.e., healthcare, mental health, education, employment, and housing), developing policies and procedures, serving on board of directors, advisory boards, collaborations and coordinating resources to sustain programs. I believe my experience would aid in my decision-making ability as a member of the State Council on Mental Health.

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

One goal I hope to accomplish during the term of services is to impact policy and legislation related to school-based mental health and support the suicide prevention and awareness training efforts. I also hope for the opportunity to assess the system in which our keiki (children) access mental health services and the effectiveness of cross agency collaboration around the mental health needs of our children and youth.

(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?

Compassionate, dedicated, and collaborative are the three qualities that would describe me.

Compassionate: I have a heart for people, especially, those who may be considered vulnerable. My compassion is what drives my dedication for the work to support individuals living with mental illness.

Dedicated: I am committed to working to improve the lives of our children and youth so that they may thrive and be healthy. I am also dedicated in providing awareness of mental health challenges and advocating for needed supports.

Collaborative: I believe that working together we can accomplish so much more than working alone. As a member of the State Council on Mental Health we would be using our collective efforts to advance mental health in the state of Hawaii.

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

I have previous experiences serving on nonprofit board of directors. This has provided me with valuable insights into effective committee operations and decision-making processes.

(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?

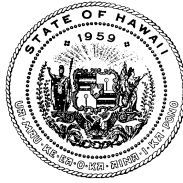
I do not foresee any possible conflict of interests. However, should a conflict arise I would communicate the conflict with the council as well as any other entity and discuss ways to best resolve the conflict.

Thank you again for the opportunity.

Sincerely,

Lillie Christine Montague-Hicks

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII



KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A., M.P.H.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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

WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM 638
Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the
State Council on Mental Health
Gubernatorial Nominee, LILLIE CHRISTINE MONTAGUE-HICKS,
for a term to expire 06-30-2028**

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 LILLIE CHRISTINE MONTAGUE-HICKS to the Hawaii State Council on Mental
- 3 Health (“Council”) and offers comments.

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

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

6 Ms. Montague-Hicks fills the mandated Council membership position of a State agency
7 employee that represents education, pursuant to Chapter 334-10, Hawai'i Revised Statutes and
8 Federal Law, Public Law 102-321, Section 1914(c). Ms. Montague-Hicks is the State Mental
9 Health Agency Coordinator, covering Project HI AWARE2 and other initiatives. AWARE stands
10 for "Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education," and funded by the Federal Department
11 of Health and Human Services- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
12 (HHS-SAMHSA). The funding and program support, in a major way, the State Department of
13 Education's Multi-Tiered System of Support to implement mental health-related awareness,
14 prevention, intervention, and resilience activities with the goal of ensuring that students have
15 access to and are connected to appropriate and effect appropriate behavioral health
16 supports.

17 Ms. Montague-Hicks is aptly positioned within the Department of Education system to
18 fulfill her role as an education representative on the Council. The State looks forward to her
19 joining the others in contributing to positive Council dynamics and results.

20 The Department respectfully requests your favorable consideration in confirming
21 Ms. Montague-Hicks' appointment to the State Council on Mental Health.

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