

GM-576

Submitted on: 2/27/2025 10:49:41 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Stevens	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha and Mahalo for the opportunity to be considered for membership to the Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Hawai'i Service Area Board. Please see the information requested below.

1. Why do you wish to be a member of the Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Hawai'i Service Area Board.

I am a Native Hawaiian from Nanakuli, Oahu. My 20 years as a Nurse has been dedicated to Mental Health and I have worked for both private, public, and federal agencies both locally and in Nevada. I am now a resident of Hilo since 2017 and I am committed to ensuring that Hawai'i Island continues to grow our Behavioral Health Resources and that individuals receive the best possible care. Being a member of the Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Hawai'i Service Area Board is vital to establish and build relationships with individuals of the community so that we can all work together for a better and bright future for everyone.

2. What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Hawai'i Service Area Board.

The role and responsibilities of a member of this board is to commitment to participate, contribute in a meaningful manner, most importantly to build relationships with other community partners/families of individuals that suffer from mental illness or substance abuse. Listen to concerns shared by those who are in the community and provide assistance when necessary.

3. Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities as a member of the Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Hawai'i Service Area Board, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, and knowledge that would aid you as a member of the board.

I have been a Registered Nurse for 20 years. My mental health experience stems from employment with multiple agencies in the role of frontline nursing, quality, and

administration. I graduated from the University of Arizona with my Master Degree in Nursing with a focus on Clinical Systems Leadership. I have held positions in Hawai'i with the DOH, AMHD – CMHC for Hawai'i Island as the Quality Coordinator RN V and now currently works for HHSC – Hilo Benioff Medical Center as the Nurse Manager for the Behavioral Health Unit. My passionately serve my community and committed to improving and growing mental health resources on Hawai'i Island. I have since participated in the State Council for Mental Health Committee Mtgs, Hawai'i Service Area Board Mtgs, Big Island - NAMI, Adult Mental Health Summit "Reimagine Crisis Response" - organized by Mayor Roth's Office. Hawai'i Island Healthcare Conference 2024 - Presenter "Transforming Mental Health Crisis Care in Hawai'i County. Hawai'i County CIT Program - Trainer for HPD, Sheriffs, and DLNR 10/15/24.

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

I would like collaborate with other community partners so that we can build a structured foundation for those who are experiencing a mental health crisis or requiring stabilization within the community. I would also like to be a resource for other community partners and assist to address any concerns shared by the community.

5. Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will the Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Hawai'i Service Area Board.

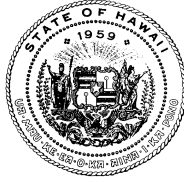
I am an advocate for individuals/families who suffer from mental illness and substance abuse. My education and employment history ensure that I am qualified member to share my expertise and lived experiences with others. As a nurse I bring empathy and commitment to a service of excellence.

6. Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a member.

I have had the opportunity to work for the Department of Veteran Affairs in Las Vegas as the Mental Health Nurse Manager for the Inpatient Unit. My time serving Veterans allowed me to learn and understand the challenges and success of navigating Mental Health Services within the VA along with caring for Veterans who suffer from severe mental illness and substance abuse. The Veteran population here on Hawai'i Island especially in Hilo is so under served. I am excited that Hilo is the new home to a new housing development that will serve our Veterans and I feel having that experience and background enables me to understand and be a resource as a board member.

7. Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Hawai'i Service Area Board. How would you overcome conflicts of interest?

I do not foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during my service on the Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Hawai'i Service Area Board. My education, leadership experience, and professionalism is validation of my ability to uphold my morale and ethical values as a member of the Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Hawai'i Service Area Board.



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Testimony in SUPPORT of GM576
Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the
Hawai'i Service Area Board for Mental Health and Substance Use
Gubernatorial Nominee, JESSICA STEVENS,
for a term to expire 06-30-2028

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATOR HENRY J.C. AQUINO, VICE CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date and Time: February 28, 2025, 1:00 p.m. Location: Room 225 and Video

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health ("Department") supports Jessica Steven's
2 nomination and confirmation to the Hawai'i Service Area Board on Mental Health and
3 Substance Abuse ("HiSAB").

4 **Department Testimony:** The Hawai'i Revised Statutes §334-11 provides for the establishment
5 of service area boards within the Department for administrative purposes to advise service area
6 administrators about service area needs to prevent and treat mental or emotional disorders,
7 combined mental illness substance abuse disorders, and persons afflicted by these disorders.
8 These Boards also provide advice, guidance, and recommendations to the State Council on
9 Mental Health and the Hawai'i Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances
10 as they deem appropriate. Each service area board shall consist of up to nine members who are
11 area residents and consumers or non-providers of mental health services and service area
12 providers, with a majority being non-state employees and non-providers of mental health or
13 other health services.

14 Jessica Stevens, a highly qualified professional, will be taking on the role of filling one of
15 the provider seats in HiSAB. This is a significant appointment, as HiSAB is a Board that covers

1 the largest rural island community in the State. Ms. Stevens currently serves as the Nurse
2 Manager of the Hale Ho`ola -Behavioral Health Unit of the Benioff Hilo Medical Center, bringing
3 a wealth of experience and expertise to the HiSAB.

4 Ms. Stevens has previously worked as a Registered V Quality Management Nurse with
5 the Department of Health. She is a committed, passionate caregiver and leader in the mental
6 health field. Her attendance at HiSAB meetings, where her mana`o as a member of the public
7 has deepened other attendees' understanding of Big Island's behavioral health landscape. She
8 has demonstrated the capacity to assess information and data and connect the dots, a skill that
9 is much needed in addressing opportunities and needs for helping residents with mental
10 illnesses.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this nomination and your consideration of
12 Jessica Stevens.