



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of Governor's Messages 647 – 653,
Nomination of Chad Koyanagi, Cashmire Lopez, Edward Mersereau, Lori Ferreira, and
Heather Lusk for Consideration and Confirmation as Commissioners on the Hawaii
Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances**

SENATOR JOSH GREEN, CHAIR

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: April 15, 2015

Room Number: 414

1 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) strongly supports confirmation for
2 the appointments of Chad Koyanagi (G.M. 647 and 648 - 6/30/2015 and 6/30/2019) joint State
3 Council on Mental Health and Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled
4 Substances (HACDACS) representative pursuant to Sections 329-2 and 334-10, Hawaii Revised
5 Statutes (HRS), Cashmire Lopez (G.M. 649 and 650 - 6/30/2015 and 6/30/2019), Edward
6 Mersereau (G.M. 651 - 6/30/2017), Lori Ferreira (G.M. 652 - 6/30/2019), and Heather Lusk
7 (G.M. 653 - 6/30/2019), for terms to expire as parenthetically indicated.

8 HACDACS appointees represent a cross-section of the community, including, but not
9 limited to pharmacological, medical, community and business affairs, youth action, educational,
10 legal defense, enforcement, and corrections segments of the community.

11 **Chad Koyanagi, M.D.**, is certified in psychiatry and addiction psychiatry by the
12 American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Among his many professional roles, he provides
13 expertise in psychiatry to the Department of Human Services, Med-QUEST Division, Helping

1 Hands Hawaii's Pathways to Housing Team, Institute for Human Services, Action with Aloha,
2 Castle Medical Center, and Molokai General Hospital. Dr. Koyanagi is also engaged in work
3 with organizations such as the Friends of the Missing Child Center; State Council on Mental
4 Health; American Psychiatric Association (APA) Committee on Graduate Medical Education;
5 Mental Health Association of America, Hawaii Chapter; and the APA Committee on Poverty,
6 Homelessness, and Mental Illness. He is a member of the American Psychiatric Association;
7 American Telemedicine Association, including its Pacific Island Chapter in which he has served
8 as Vice-President since 2013; and the Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association. A McKinley
9 High School graduate, he completed his undergraduate education at Harvard College and
10 medical school at the University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). He
11 is a teacher, trainer and mentor to JABSOM students and residents. He will serve as the
12 HACDACS member jointly appointed to the State Council on Mental Health, as he is
13 knowledgeable about the community and the relationships between mental health, mental illness
14 and substance abuse.

15 **Cashmire Lopez**, is a Registered Nurse with the Hawaii District Health Office. As a
16 public health nurse, she works collaboratively with DOH medical programs and other public and
17 private health and social services agencies in the community to effect positive changes in
18 individuals, families, groups and communities in the promotion of wellness, the maintenance of
19 health and the prevention of illness. Ms. Lopez has a broad-based background in nursing: she
20 has been an instructor who has trained nursing students; performed sex assault examinations and
21 collected evidence of sexual assault; provided care and management for infant, child, teen, adult
22 and geriatric patients in hospital, outpatient and community settings; managed public health

1 programs in health promotion, disease prevention and education, including communicable
2 disease, bio-terrorism, school health, maternal child and health, as well as capacity building with
3 community-based agencies; and provided supervision of staff and operations for programs,
4 which included the nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Kauai Early
5 Intervention Program, Children with Special Health Needs, Maternal Child Health and STD/HIV
6 prevention project and Family Health Services. The appointment of Cashmire Lopez will ensure
7 representation of the medical segment in Commission deliberations.

8 **Edward Mersereau** is the Executive Director and owner of Action with Aloha, LLC,
9 which provides individual and group counseling, marriage/couples counseling, substance abuse
10 treatment, consultation and assessment. Mr. Mersereau earned both his Bachelor and Master of
11 Social Work degrees at the University of Hawaii where he is also a part-time instructor. He is a
12 Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC).
13 Among his experiences in the field of behavioral health, Mr. Mersereau has served as an Adjunct
14 Instructor with the University of Hawaii School of Social Work, Preceptor for the Navy
15 Substance Abuse Program at Pearl Harbor, Program Director for the North Shore Mental Health
16 Access to Recovery Program, Adjunct Instructor at Hawaii Pacific University, Social Worker
17 with the Army Substance Abuse Program at Schofield Barracks, and Social Worker with the
18 Hawaii Drug Court Program. He currently serves as President of the National Association of
19 Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter; Vice-Chair for the Honolulu Community Action Program
20 (HCAP) Board of Directors, and Chair of the HCAP Program Planning and Evaluation
21 Committee. Edward Mersereau's appointment will ensure representation of the community and
22 business affairs segment in Commission deliberations.

1 **Lori Ferreira, Ed.D.**, is a mental health counselor with Kapiolani Community College
2 (KCC). She provides a range of counseling services, as well as wellness activities to support
3 students' academic and life goals. As the only licensed clinician on the KCC campus, she also
4 provides consultation and training for faculty and staff in concerns related to mental health
5 conditions. Prior to assuming her current position at KCC, Lori served as Project Specialist for
6 the State Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant Project, Site/Case Manager and Intensive
7 In-home Therapist with Hale Kipa, Inc., and Perinatal/Baby SAFE Case Manager with the
8 Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center. The appointment of Lori Ferreira to represent the
9 educational segment of the community in Commission deliberations will provide insights into
10 the college age population.

11 **Heather Lusk**, who currently chairs the Commission, is the Executive Director for the
12 Community Health Outreach Work (C.H.O.W.) Project whose mission is to prevent the
13 transmission of HIV/AIDS and other blood borne pathogens among high-risk drug users,
14 especially injection drug users (IDUs). Prior to assuming her present position with the C.H.O.W.
15 Project, Ms. Lusk served as the Hepatitis Coordinator with the Department of Health, STD/AIDS
16 Prevention Branch. She has in-depth experience in public health, having developed curricula
17 and conducting trainings on HIV, STDs and Hepatitis, and also having her work published in
18 professional publications. In addition, she serves on boards and councils of organizations such
19 as Hep Free Hawaii, Hawaii HIV Community Planning Group, Harm Reduction Hawaii, Drug
20 Policy Forum of Hawaii, and Salvation Army Addiction Treatment Services. Her professional
21 experiences both in Hawaii and in California as a public health educator, trainer and counselor

1 are assets to Commission deliberations. Her reappointment will ensure representation of the
2 educational segment in Commission deliberations.

3 We respectfully request your expeditious and favorable consideration for the nominations
4 of Chad Koyanagi to serve as the joint State Council on Mental Health and HACDACS
5 representative pursuant to Sections 329-2 and 334-10, HRS, and Cashmire Lopez, Edward
6 Mersereau, Lori Ferreira, and Heather Lusk to serve on HACDACS.

7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of these volunteers whose
8 appointments represent a cross-section of community interests on the Commission.

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HINAMAUKA

GM651: Relating to the confirmation of Eddie Mersereau to the Hawai'i Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances.

- COMMITTEE ON HEALTH: Senator Josh Green M.D., Chair; Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
- Wednesday, April 15th, 2015 at 1:15 p.m. in Room 414

Good morning Chair Green, Vice Chair Wakai and Distinguished Committee members: My name is Alan Johnson. I am the CEO of Hina Mauka, a non-profit, substance use disorder treatment and prevention agency serving Hawaii residents statewide.

Testimony by Alan Johnson:

Strong Support for the confirmation of Eddie Mersereau to the Hawai'i Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances.

I highly recommend Eddie Mersereau for Board membership to the Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances (HACDACs). Eddie is a leader in our field of addiction treatment as well as a leader in the community. Highly credentialed, Eddie leads his own private treatment company as well as teaches social work at the University of Hawaii. In addition, Eddie is the Chairperson this year for the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Hawaii chapter and an influential member of the Hawai'i Substance Abuse Coalition.

Through his noteworthy credentials and extensive experience, Eddie Mersereau is exceptionally knowledgeable about drug abuse and controlled substances. Eddie's role as a teacher and Chair of NASW demonstrates his collaborative leadership and effective communication skills. Despite his heavy workload in managing his own quality-oriented drug treatment company, Eddie makes time for substantial volunteer community work. Whenever Eddie commits to volunteer work, he is fully engaged by providing substantive and quality contributions to the group's goals. One of his great characteristics is that Eddie is trustworthy, which when coupled with his superb people skills, helps bring others together towards positive consensus.

I first met Eddie in 1996 when he was an adolescent drug treatment counselor for Hina Mauka. I was most impressed with his passion to provide caring and quality treatment for students at high schools. Since that time, Eddie has grown in his passion by helping the homeless as well as those adults suffering from alcohol and/or substance abuse addiction.

While Eddie Mersereau is compassionate through his direct services to help others, he also cares about advocating for policy changes to improve systems of care. In that

context, Eddie is vigilantly cost-effective as well as outcome focused. Also, Eddie has expanded his commitment to healthcare by being actively involved in providing education to the state legislature and various government agencies about systemic reforms.

Given his many positive attributes, such as an expert knowledge base and a consensus building attitude, I believe that Eddie is most appropriate to provide effective advice through this commission. As such, I wholeheartedly endorse Mr. Eddie Mersereau to the Hawai'i Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances. I very much appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.

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**Statement of Edward Mersereau
Regarding
Governors Message 651:
Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances.**

**Senator Green, Chair
Senator Wakai, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health**

Aloha Members,

I am deeply honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve on the Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances. I have worked in the substance abuse treatment field for over twenty-five years in various capacities from a front line counselor to program director. Over the years, the most important lesson I have learned about the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders in our community is that effective interventions require effective partnerships.

The partnership between government and the community is vital in that policies made by government affect and influence the way community address the problem of drug abuse. It is for this reason that I am excited to be a part of the advisory commission and honored to have an opportunity to assist in supporting the important work that is being done by both our government and our community. If afforded the opportunity, I will make every effort to serve the commission in a manner that befits the importance of its role and that contributes positively to achieving its goals and responsibilities.

In closing, I would like to quote the motto of the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration which is – “Behavioral health is essential to health”, “Prevention works”, “Treatment is effective”, and “People recover”.

Mahalo.



Edward Mersereau LCSW, CSAC



National Association of Social Workers Hawai'i Chapter

Date: March 30, 2015

To: Committee on Health
Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

From: Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LSW-Executive Director NASW-Hawai'i

The National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter (NASW) strongly supports GM 651, relating to Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances, Gubernatorial Nominee, EDWARD MERSEREAU, for a term to expire 6-30-2017

I believe Edward Mersereau to be an excellent candidate for the Hawai'i Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances. Mr Mersereau is a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) as well as a Master's level Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in the state of Hawai'i. These are the gold standards for certification in the field of substance abuse treatment. Mr Mersereau is extremely experienced in the field of substance abuse treatment and started the program Action With Aloha, which has grown to have programs in Honolulu, Pearl City and Kailua.

He is currently serving as the President of the NASW Hawai'i Board, where his leadership and professionalism have been impactful. In addition, Mr Mersereau lectures in the Master's level Social Work program at the University of Hawai'i.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LSW
Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter