



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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