



**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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**GM653**

Submitted on: 4/14/2015

Testimony for HTH on Apr 15, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Alan Katz	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a public health physician who has worked closely with Ms. Lusk over the past several years, I can attest to her professionalism, integrity, knowledge-base, and expertise in the field of controlled substances and drug abuse. She currently is the executive director of the CHOW project, the state's sterile needle exchange program, and has been involved with the field of substance abuse on both the state and national level. The CHOW project is considered a model program based in large part on Ms. Lusk's expert guidance. We are indeed fortunate to have a professional of Ms. Lusk's stature and expertise to serve in this capacity. Thank you in advance for your support of Ms. Lusk.

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**GM653**

Submitted on: 4/14/2015

Testimony for HTH on Apr 15, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Stefan Keller	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha, I understand that Heather Lusk is up for re-appointment as chair of the Hawaii Advisory Council on Drugs and Controlled Substances. I strongly support this confirmation without reservations. While testifying as a private person, I have known Heather since 2011 when she was selected as executive director of the CHOW Project where I am a member of the Board of Directors. Since her start in this function, Heather has continued to amaze me with her understanding of the 'bigger picture' and the implications of drug use in the State of Hawaii, with her incredible networking skills, her leadership in creating positive change, her passion for the people who are affected by drug use as well as the people who spend their time helping them. Heather is extremely knowledgeable in the area, a strong communicator, a real advocate and leader. I have no doubt, whatsoever, that Heather will excel in her function in the Hawaii Advisory Council on Drugs and Controlled Substances, and that her input will help improving public health in the State of Hawaii. I therefore strongly recommend her confirmation without any reservations. Thank you, Stefan Keller, Ph.D.

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Dear Chair Green and members of the committee,

I am writing in support of GM 653, for Heather Lusk to be confirmed on the Hawaii Advisory Council on Drugs and Controlled Substances (HACDACs). This will be Heather's second term - she currently serves as chair.

Heather is the current Executive Director of the Community Health Outreach Work (CHOW) Project. The CHOW Project works to reduce drug-related harms such as but not limited to HIV, hepatitis B / C and overdose. CHOW has operated the statewide syringe exchange program for the past twenty years.

My position on the board of the CHOW Project has given me a chance to work with Heather, and she is beyond capable, increasing the scope of the organization, securing grants, and deftly handling bumps in the road. Heather has over twenty years of experience in this fields.

I have several other jobs, mostly working with the mental health arena, and many of my clients have or have had drug abuse issues. I myself have overcome substance abuse with the help of professionals like Ms. Lusk.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

David Mike Chung

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT GM 653 HEATHER LUSK FOR HAWAII ADVISORY COMMISSION ON DRUGS AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

TO: Senator Josh Green, Chair; Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair; Members of the Senate Committee on Health

FROM: John Casken, RN, MPH, PhD,  
Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene.

Hearing: Wednesday, April 15, 2015 1:15 PM Room 414

Dear Chair Green and members of the committee:

I am writing in support of GM 653, Heather Lusk to be confirmed on the Hawaii Advisory Council on Drugs and Controlled Substances (HACDACs). This will be Heather's second term with HACDACs, where she currently serves as chair. Heather has over twenty years of experience working in this field and is an asset to this commission, and I strongly support her appointment.

Her current work is as the Executive Director of the Community Health Outreach Work (CHOW) Project. The CHOW Project is dedicated to serving individuals, families and communities adversely affected by drug use, especially people who inject drugs, through a participant-centered harm reduction approach. CHOW works to reduce drug-related harms such as but not limited to HIV, hepatitis B/C and overdose. CHOW supports the optimal health and well-being of people affected by drug use throughout the State of Hawaii. CHOW has operated the statewide syringe exchange program for the past twenty years.

I have served on the Board of CHOW for approximately 14 years. For most of that time CHOW served a very limited role in our Community. However when the Board appointed Heather Lusk to the position of CHOW Executive Director approximately three years ago a whole change took over the organization as demonstrated by the number of clients served, grants successfully funded and new initiatives undertaken to improve the lot of CHOW's clients. What is especially notable is that Ms. Lusk worked and continues to work very closely with other community stakeholders to bring about these changes.

I also support the confirmation of Ms. Lusk because of the active role she takes in working with students and interns from Hawaii Pacific University and the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am faculty at UHM and have had incredible support from Ms. Lusk for students that have been placed in CHOW in order to increase their knowledge in the area of drugs and substance abuse. Though she is incredibly busy with the regular operations of CHOW she still makes quality time available to assist the students. The students have been unanimous in their praise of Heather Lusk. They comment on her knowledge in the area of drugs and substance abuse. More

importantly they have noted how she uses this knowledge in order to benefit CHOW's clients and the Hawaii community at large.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

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**GM653**

Submitted on: 4/14/2015

Testimony for HTH on Apr 15, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
David Kopper	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am writing in support of GM 653, Heather Lusk to be confirmed on the Hawaii Advisory Council on Drugs and Controlled Substances (HACDACs). This will be Heather's second term with HACDACs, where she currently serves as chair. Heather has over twenty years of experience working in this field and is an asset to this commission, and I strongly support her appointment.

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