



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 2408
RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

Hearing Date and Time: Friday, February 7, 2020 at 8:30 a.m.

Room: 229

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health ("Department") strongly supports this
2 measure and offers comments.

3 **Department Testimony:** The subject matter of this measure intersects with the scope of the
4 Department's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) whose statutory mandate is to assure a
5 comprehensive statewide behavioral health care system by leveraging and coordinating public,
6 private and community resources. Through the BHA, the Department is committed to carrying
7 out this mandate by reducing silos, ensuring behavioral health care is readily accessible, and
8 person-centered. The BHA's Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) provides the following
9 testimony on behalf of the Department.

10 The SCMH was created in 1984 (ACT 218, Hawaii State Legislature). In its advisory
11 capacity, the SCMH advocates for Hawaii adolescents, adults, and their families and provides
12 recommendations to the Department on community issues related to mental health and
13 substance abuse. The SCMH is a federally mandated advisory board.

14 Applicants for SCMH membership are processed through the Hawaii State Boards and
15 Commissions office based on general applicant criteria and specific criteria for the composition
16 of the council as outlined in §334-10, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

1 The Department recognizes that diversity within the SCMH broadens the SCMH
2 membership. We also observe that Native Hawaiians and those of Hawaiian ancestry are
3 disproportionately represented in the Hawaii State Hospital (HSH) and in our continuing
4 support services.

5 Committed advocates with knowledge and understanding can make a big difference. It
6 may be that expanding the SCMH membership to include individuals who possess
7 demonstrated knowledge or work experience involving Native Hawaiian concepts of well-being,
8 culturally grounded mental health methodologies, or traditional healing or health practices
9 promotes recovery and more effective services for our consumers.

10 We look forward to the potential that members of the SCMH, under this measure,
11 would bring to the Department's awareness of mental health needs in our community and how
12 best to respond.

13 **Offered Amendments:** None.

14 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

15 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined.



Hawai'i Psychological Association

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Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2408
Relating to the Composition of the State Council on Mental Health

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Friday February 7, 2020, 8:30AM, Room 229

The Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) is in **support** of SB2408, which will require at least three (3) members of the Hawai'i State Council on Mental Health to "have demonstrated knowledge of or work experience involving native Hawaiian concepts of well-being, culturally grounded mental health methodologies, or traditional healing or health practices." It is important that these council members have understanding about how their decisions affect Native Hawaiian mental health related to high rates of suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, incarceration, child abuse, school adjustment problems, and certain psychological and psychiatric mental illnesses. In Hawai'i, Native Hawaiians experience one of the poorest mental health statuses. There are existing programs in our communities led by experts in Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. They have shown promising results in improving mental health, increasing family and community connectedness, and building resilience. Council members with Native Hawaiian expertise have the ability to identify, develop, or implement programs and services that are culturally appropriate for Native Hawaiians.

This bill takes a positive step forward in reaffirming the state's commitment to Native Hawaiians across the state and will increase the diversity of the council which will ultimately benefit everyone in our communities.

We urge the committee to vote YES on this important bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Takishima-Lacasa, PhD, President
Chair, Legislative Action Committee
Hawai'i Psychological Association