

GM762 Rebecca Sawai:

1.) Why do you wish to be a member of the Hawaii Medical Board?

I have been fortunate to be a practicing physician in the state of Hawaii since 2008 and would welcome the opportunity to give back by serving on the Hawaii Medical Board. The timely evaluation and licensure of medical providers are essential to the functions of our hospitals and clinics, especially in this era of healthcare worker shortages and pandemics, and I would like to help fill this need.

2.) What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the Hawaii Medical Board?

I see the primary mission of a Hawaii Medical Board member as advocating for high quality health care for all residents of the state by: (1) evaluating applications for medical licensure; (2) setting disciplinary actions for practitioners who fall outside the standards of professional conduct; and (3) providing feedback regarding legislation being brought before the State House of Representatives and Senate.

3.) Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Hawaii Medical Board member, 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.

As a general surgeon specializing in colon and rectal surgery, I have honed my abilities to evaluate complex medical situations and guide patients through making difficult decisions about whether to pursue invasive and sometimes life-altering treatments. Similarly, I anticipate that as a Hawaii Medical Board member, I would need to assess quantities of information and make a clear, impartial, and sometimes difficult decision about whether a medical provider is qualified to practice or what disciplinary actions may be warranted in order to protect the health and welfare of Hawaii's people. Finally, I believe my years as a physician have taught me to be sensitive to the needs of the community, as well as the multi-faceted issues facing physicians in these changing times.

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

I hope to become more familiar with physicians, healthcare providers and healthcare systems across Hawaii and how they may be affected by the state government.

5.) Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will benefit the Hawaii Medical Board.

Thoughtful – I take the time to gather important information from all vantage points before taking a course of action, which will lead me to make careful and considered decisions for the Board.

Honest – I aim to be truthful to myself and those around me about my opinions and beliefs. This helps me to maintain a strong moral compass which can further maintain the integrity of the Board.

Hard-working – I am committed to seeing my work through to its conclusion, which will allow me to be a reliable and trustworthy Board member.

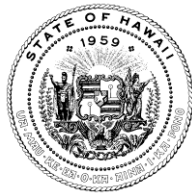
6.) Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a Hawaii Medical Board member.

I have had the opportunity to serve on the credentialing committee at Kaiser Permanente Hawaii, and have become familiar with the general process of evaluating applications to practice and granting

clinical privileges. I believe these actions are akin to some of the primary functions of the Hawaii Medical Board and will allow me to rapidly contribute to the Board's activities.

7.) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Hawaii Medical Board? How would you overcome conflicts of interest?

In this interconnected world, it is almost inevitable that at some point a conflict of interest may arise, such as a friend or close colleague coming before the Board for disciplinary action. I hope to overcome this by being transparent about my possible biases and, if necessary, recusing myself.



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LT. GOVERNOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

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CATHERINE P. AWAKUNI COLÓN
DIRECTOR

JO ANN M. UCHIDA TAKEUCHI
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Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Friday, April 8, 2022
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229 and Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
G.M. 762, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE HAWAII MEDICAL BOARD,
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, REBECCA SAWAI,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2026**

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Catherine Awakuni Colón, and I am the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (Department). The Department supports the appointment of Dr. Rebecca Sawai to the Hawaii Medical Board (Board) as a licensee member.

Dr. Sawai has been a licensed physician in Hawaii for almost 14 years, specializing in surgery, and has earned numerous honors and awards throughout her career. In addition to practicing medicine, Dr. Sawai participates in several committees and professional memberships. Dr. Sawai is currently an attending surgeon in colorectal and general surgery at Kaiser Moanalua Medical Center.

The Department believes that Dr. Sawai's interest in serving on the Board, commitment to actively participate in board meetings, and experience in the profession will make her an invaluable asset to the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

April 4, 2022

Honorable Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Honorable Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 229
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE: GM 762 – For consideration and confirmation to the Hawaii Medical Board,
Gubernatorial Nominee, REBECCA SAWAI, MD, for a term to expire 6-30-2026**

Dear Honorable Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Senate Committee on
Commerce and Consumer Protection:

Please accept this letter in support of Rebecca Sawai, MD – who has been nominated to serve
on the Hawaii Medical Board (expiring 06/30/2026). Dr. Sawai is a general surgeon specializing
in colorectal surgery at Kaiser Permanente Moanalua Medical Center. She is the Medical
Director for Kaiser Permanente Hawaii's Clinical Risk & Quality Assurance Committee and a
member of the Credentialing and Privileging Committee.

Dr. Sawai trained at Oregon Health & Science University Hospital and the prestigious Mayo
Clinic, where she did her fellowship. She is also an instructor at the University of Hawaii, John
A. Burns School of Medicine. Dr. Sawai is certified in general surgery and colon and rectal
surgery by the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Colon and Rectal
Surgery, respectively.

Throughout her time with HPMG over the last 14 years, Dr. Sawai has demonstrated consistent
excellence in her commitment to high-quality patient- and family-centered care and exceptional
service. As such, she was recognized as a Hawaii Healthcare Hero by the Healthcare
Association of Hawaii in 2018. Her philosophy of care emphasizes collaboration,
communication, and evidence-based practices. She's an excellent communicator and
compassionate physician – and she plays a critical role in influencing continuous improvement
initiatives that make us better (and safer) as an organization in caring for our members, patients,
and their families.

Having served as an elected member of the Hawaii Permanente Medical Group Board of Directors, Dr. Sawai is keenly aware of the complexities and challenges of practicing medicine in Hawaii – including the ongoing physician shortage. Further, her commitment to helping others extends beyond the work we do at Kaiser Permanente Hawaii, as an Aloha Medical Mission volunteer.

Committed to compassion, innovation, and excellence, Dr. Sawai is a dedicated physician leader here on Oahu. She's highly regarded by her colleagues, as evidenced by her presence on both peer-nominated "Best Doctors" and "Top Doctors" lists in Hawaii. Her diverse experience and astute exactness make her well-suited to serve on the Hawaii Medical Board.

Sincerely,



John Yang, MD
President & Medical Director
Hawaii Permanente Medical Group



Rebecca Sawai, MD, is the Medical Director for the Clinical Risk & Quality Assurance Committee at Kaiser Permanente Hawaii. She is also a general surgeon specializing in colorectal procedures for Hawaii Permanente Medical Group (HPMG) – the state’s largest multispecialty group practice.

Having joined HPMG in 2008, Dr. Sawai’s professional interests include colorectal cancer, diverticulitis, inflammatory bowel disease, minimally invasive surgery, and quality improvement. She is a member of the American College of Surgeons, the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, the Pacific Coast Surgical Association, and the Northwest Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons. Dr. Sawai serves as an assistant clinical professor at the University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine and was recognized in 2018 as a Hawaii Healthcare Hero by the Healthcare Association of Hawaii. She appears on both the “Best Doctors” and “Top Doctors” peer-nominated lists in Hawaii.

Dr. Sawai earned her medical degree from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry and completed her residency in general surgery at Oregon Health & Science University Hospital. Dr. Sawai also did a fellowship in colon and rectal surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. She is board certified in general surgery and colon and rectal surgery.

Hearing: April 5, 2022, 1:00 p.m., via Videoconference

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96813

Re: In **SUPPORT** of GM 762 – For consideration and confirmation to
the Hawaii Medical Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, REBECCA
SAWAI, MD, FACS for a term to expire 6-30-2026.

Aloha e Senator Baker,

I am writing this letter in heartfelt support of my professional colleague, Dr. Becky Sawai. She is a well-respected, model Hawaii Permanente Medical Group (HPMG) physician and has successfully served in various essential leadership roles in our medical group. She is a highly talented, organized, and articulate leader with a strong moral compass.

As the Director of our Quality Assurance program, she is a thoughtful, detailed and well-spoken facilitator of our bimonthly meetings. In addition to sitting on our HPMG Board of Medical Directors and acting as the General Surgery Site Director and Assistant Clinical Professor for JABSOM for the medical residents, she takes time out of her busy schedule to support her peers in education surrounding “*Communicating Unanticipated Adverse Outcomes*”. She is the current VP for the Hawaii Chapter of the American College of Surgeons. She’s clinically excellent so it’s not surprising that in 2018 she was named the Healthcare Association of Hawaii Healthcare Hero.

As a Colon and Rectal Surgeon, she earned her medical degree in 2001 from the University of Rochester, completed her residency in 2007 at the Oregon Health and Science University and her fellowship in 2008 at the Mayo clinic in Rochester. Prior to her medical training she completed her BA in Chemistry and Music at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. She is an accomplished violinist and performs on occasion for the medical group.

Given her esteemed background, varied leadership experiences and top-notch skills, I feel that Becky is an excellent candidate for the Hawaii Medical Board.

Accordingly, I urge the committee and the Senate to confirm the appointment of Rebecca Sawai for the Hawaii Medical Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynne

Lynne M. Grieco, MD
Assistant Chief of Hospital Medicine
Assistant Chief of Medical Staff
Director of Clinician-Patient Communication
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To Whom It May Concern:

It is a distinct pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Rebecca Sawai, M.D. in strong support of her nomination to the Hawaii Medical Board. I first met Dr. Sawai while recruiting her to join the Hawaii Permanente Medical Group. She was completing a fellowship in Colorectal Surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN when I was strongly advised to contact Dr. Sawai by several Professors of Surgery at Oregon Health Sciences University where we had both received training. Ever since joining the General Surgery Department at Hawaii Kaiser Permanente, Dr. Sawai has proven herself to be the consummate surgical practitioner and educator. Soon after joining us, she became the Director of Surgical Education overseeing surgical residents from Tripler Army Medical Center and the University of Hawaii John A. Burns Medical School as well as medical students from JABSOM. As a tribute to her dedication as an educator, she has been a past recipient of the Surgical Educator of the Year presented by the graduating class of Tripler Chief Surgical Residents.

Dr. Sawai is also highly respected by her medical group peers as demonstrated by the fact that she was elected to the Hawaii Permanente Medical Group Board of Directors where she served 2 consecutive 3-year terms as a board member. Additionally, she is a member of the "Best Doctors in Hawaii," election to which is determined by her peers throughout the state of Hawaii.

Dr. Sawai has served on numerous committees and has held leadership roles in multiple organizations including the American College of Surgeons, Hawaii Chapter, and the Pacific Coast Surgical Association. Within the medical group, Dr. Sawai is the Quality & Peer Review Liason for Surgical Services and has overseen the implementation of Enhanced Surgical Recovery for Colorectal Surgery and now for Emergency Surgery.

Dr. Sawai is beloved by her patients and has been the recipient of several patient nominated accolades including a “Healthcare Hero of Hawaii” award. In addition to all of her awards and accomplishments, Dr. Sawai remains an outstanding partner and highly valued member of the Department of General Surgery within the Hawaii Permanente Medical Group. She is a person of high integrity and holds herself to the highest level of professional standards. I am extremely confident that if selected, Dr. Sawai will be a fair, honest and productive member of the Hawaii Medical Board. On a personal note, if I, or a family member, were to require colorectal surgery, I would not hesitate to request that Dr. Sawai perform the operation. It is without any reservations that I strongly support the nomination of Dr. Rebecca Sawai.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Yamamura, M.D., F.A.C.S
Chief of General and Bariatric Surgery
Hawaii Permanente Medical Group
3288 Moanalua Road
Honolulu, HI 96819

Hearing: Friday, April 8, 2022, 9:30 a.m., Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96813

Re: In **SUPPORT** of GM 762 – For consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Medical Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, REBECCA SAWAI, MD, FACS for a term to expire 6-30-2026.

Aloha e Senator Baker,

It is with pleasure that I recommend Dr. Rebecca Sawai for an appointment to the Hawai'i Medical Board for a term to expire June 30, 2026. Dr. Sawai has been a surgeon with Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group since 2008 and currently serves as an attending surgeon specializing in colon and rectal surgery at Moanalua Medical Center. Furthermore, Dr. Sawai is the Medical Director for Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i's Clinical Risk & Quality Assurance Committee and a member of the Credentialing and Privileging Committee.

Dr. Sawai is a graduate of the Swarthmore College and University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. She completed her residency with Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, Oregon with a fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

Dr. Sawai's experience, especially treating colorectal cancer, a disease for which surgery can make a big difference in patients' lives, as well as her compassion for all her patients will help to inform her decisions and recommendations as a member of the Hawai'i Medical Board. She is incredibly knowledgeable and capable of understanding the larger issues facing the medical practice. Dr. Sawai is a well-liked and trusted colleague who is frequently sought out for her advice – leading her to be recognized as a Hawai'i Healthcare Hero by the Healthcare Association of Hawai'i in 2018. Furthermore, she has consistently been named to "Best Doctors" and "Top Doctors" lists in Hawai'i, both of which are peer nominated honors. Therefore, I believe she will be an asset to the Hawai'i Medical Board.

Accordingly, on behalf of Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i, I urge the committee and the Senate to confirm the appointment of Dr. Rebecca Sawai for the Hawai'i Medical Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director