

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1942

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 20 2023

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 514

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2023  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 514, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

G.M. No. 514      KENNETH FINK,  
for a term to expire 12-07-2026,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Dr. Kenneth Fink for service as the Director of Health.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Dr. Kenneth Fink from the Governor; Department of Health; Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; Department of Budget and Finance; Department of Law Enforcement; Department of Agriculture; Department of Education; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Taxation; Department of Human Services; Executive Office on Aging; Disability and Communication Access Board; Office of Enterprise Technology Services; Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Oahu Region; Hawaii Disability Rights Center; City and County of Honolulu Board of Water Supply; 'Ohana Health Plan; Healthcare Association of Hawaii; AlohaCare; Hawai'i Primary Care Association; Hawai'i Medical Service Association; Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i; Hawai'i Pacific Health; Hāna Health; Castle & Cooke Hawai'i; Capitol Consultants of Hawaii; The Queen's Health System; Hawaii Association of Health



Plans; Matson Navigation Company, Inc.; and forty-seven individuals. Your Committee received comments on the nomination for the appointment of Dr. Kenneth Fink from Akamai Cannabis Consulting.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Dr. Fink's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify him for appointment as the Director of Health. Dr. Fink is a seasoned physician-executive with extensive credentials in medicine, military service, public health, public and private sector executive leadership, and public administration. Dr. Fink is board certified in family medicine, and general preventive medicine and public health. He received his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Haverford College and his Doctor of Medicine and Master of Governmental Administration from the University of Pennsylvania. After completing his residency in family medicine at the University of Washington, Dr. Fink attended the University of North Carolina School of Public Health, where he earned his Master of Public Health and completed his preventive medicine residency and health services research fellowship as a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar. Dr. Fink was thereafter selected to be a Kerr White Visiting Scholar and completed a health policy fellowship at the United States Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Furthermore, Dr. Fink was awarded the degree of Fellow by the American Academy of Family Physicians and American College of Preventive Medicine, and trained in the Excellence in Government Fellows Program at the Council for Excellence in Government in Washington D.C.

Dr. Fink has been serving as the Interim Director of Health since January 2023. At the time of his appointment, Dr. Fink was serving as the Vice President for Medicare and Medicaid Programs at the Hawaii Medical Service Association. Before that, Dr. Fink served as the Director of Student Health Services for Kamehameha Schools. Dr. Fink has also served as the Administrator of the Department of Human Services Med-QUEST Division, Chief Medical Officer for Region 10 of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and Director of the United States Preventive Services Task Force Program and Director of Evidence-Based Practice Centers Program at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Dr. Fink's leadership skills are also demonstrated in his military career, during which he received numerous awards and decorations. Following the attack on September 11, 2001, Dr. Fink placed his professional career aside to serve in Operation Enduring Freedom.



Dr. Fink recently retired as a Colonel from the United States Air Force Medical Corps. Dr. Fink also served in the Hawai'i Air National Guard as Commander, Chief of Aerospace Medicine, and Flight Surgeon in the 154th Medical Group.

Dr. Fink has earned the trust and respect of his colleagues with whom he has engaged over many years, as evidenced by the overwhelming testimony in support of his nomination. Testifiers who have worked closely with him during his time as the State Medicaid Director have commended his responsiveness and willingness to work through difficult issues, such as addressing the State's historic staffing crisis in neighbor-island emergency air ambulance services, and his honest and candid efforts in working with health care providers to mitigate the impacts of reduction in Medicaid coverage. Dr. Fink has hit the ground running as Interim Director of Health, demonstrating his ability to comprehend and respond to complex issues of the State's diverse health care system. Dr. Fink has garnered the trust and support of his staff by emphasizing values that focus on integrity, sense of stewardship, scientific fidelity, curiosity, innovation, and communication, and has re-energized the Department. Other state agencies have commended Dr. Fink's open-door approach; transparent and ethical leadership; deep understanding of the State residents' various needs, social determinants of health and well-being, and issues impacting the State's most marginalized communities; and communication skills and leadership style that welcomes collaboration and ideas for improvement.

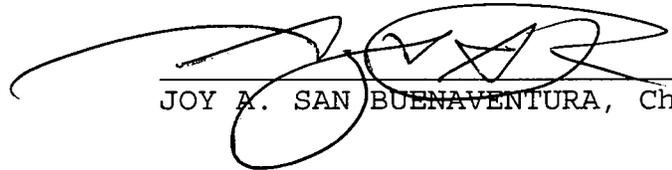
Your Committee notes from Dr. Fink's personal statement that his vision for the Department of Health is to provide all State residents with health equity -- a fair and just opportunity to achieve optimal health and well-being. With over one quarter of the Department's positions being vacant, Dr. Fink has emphasized the necessity to establish a strong foundation to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department. Dr. Fink has also acknowledged the need to expand public health facilities and workforce to address new issues resulting from the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, such as increased mental health needs, and to improve timeliness of vital record certificate issuance. Dr. Fink's goal is for the Department to be a trusted source of information to allow people to make informed health-related decisions during times where a plethora of misinformation and disinformation makes the deciphering of accurate information increasingly difficult. Dr. Fink has also highlighted the urgent need to ensure that the defueling and decommissioning of the Red



Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility are performed as quickly as safely possible and to hold the United States Department of Defense accountable to an acceptable timeline. Your Committee therefore recommends that Dr. Kenneth Fink be appointed as Director of Health based on his qualifications, experience, background, and demonstrated commitment to the health and safety of the people of Hawaii.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, has found the nominee to be qualified for the position to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Health and Human  
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



