

# WELCOME GUIDE

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State Council on Mental Health  
July 2025 edition



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Hawaii STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH (SCMH or Council). The Council is a long-standing advisory Council on Hawaii's mental health care system. The Council is an active advocacy group providing a voice for children, youth, adults, and their families on behavioral health issues. It has up to 16 dedicated volunteers representing service recipients, students/youth, family members, providers, and state agency representatives who give their time, energy, expertise, and experience.

This guide provides helpful information for newly appointed council members by outlining our experience, roles, and commitments.

Aloha,  
SCMH Members 2025-2026

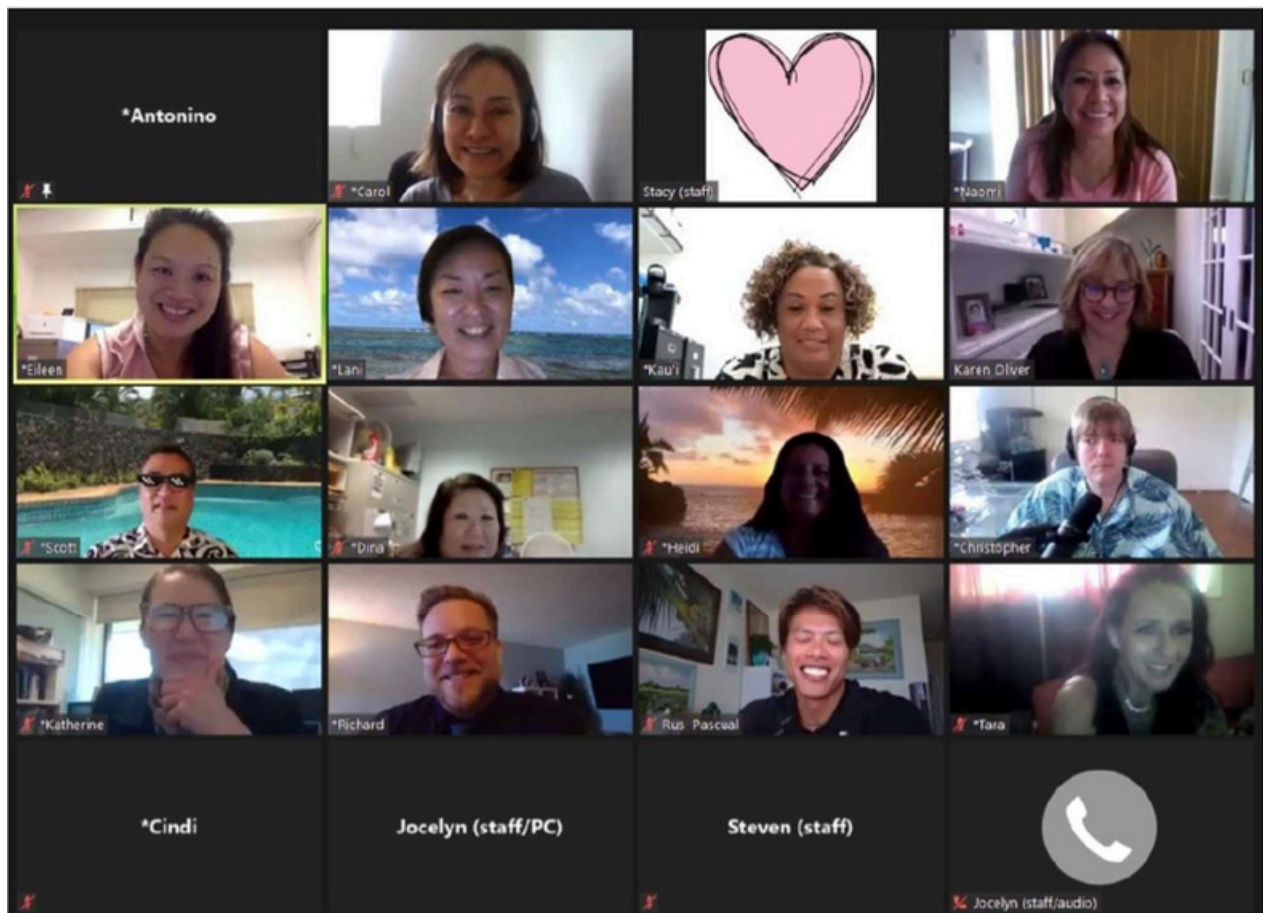


Photo: 2021 Stratetic Planning Retreat

# VISION, MISSION, and MANDATE

## **Vision Statement**

(2021 Strategic Plan)

A Hawaii where people of all ages with mental health challenges can enjoy recovery in the community of their choice.

## **Mission Statement**

(2021 Strategic Plan)

To advocate for a Hawaii where all persons affected by mental illness can access necessary treatment and support to live full lives in the community of their choice.

## **Mandate**

(State Law)

- Shall advise the department of health on allocation of resources, statewide needs, and programs affecting two or more services;
- Shall review and comment on the statewide comprehensive integrated service plan;
- Shall serve as an advocate for adults with serious mental illness, children with serious mental illness, other individuals with mental illnesses or emotional problems, and individuals with combined mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

(Federal law -As the State Planning Council for the Mental Health Block Grant program)

- Review plans provided to the Council by the State and submit to the State any recommendations of the Council for modifications to the plans;
- Serve as advocate for adults with a serious mental illness, children with a severe emotional disturbance, and other individuals with mental illnesses or emotional problems;
- Monitor, review, and evaluate, not less than once a year, the allocation and adequacy of mental health services within the State.

# MEMBERSHIP

Current Council Members have the following lived and professional experience:

INDIVIDUALS IN RECOVERY / SERVICE RECIPIENTS / CONSUMER ADVOCATES

YOUTH ADVOCATES

PARENTS OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MEMBERS

PROVIDER REPRESENTATIVE

## BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

Kauai Service Area Board for Mental Health Substance Abuse

Oahu (Honolulu City & County) Service Area

Maui County

Hawaii County

Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances (HACDACS)

## STATE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration

Department of Human Services

Med-QUEST/Medicaid

Vocational Rehabilitation

Housing

Adult Protective Services

Department of Education Support Services Branch

Judiciary Department -Criminal Justice

## **Mandate**

The SCMH can have up to 21 members. Members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. Federal and state laws ensure that people with lived experience make up the majority of the Council. Based on Federal law at least half of the Council members must be neither providers nor state staff. Based on Hawaii law, the Council must have representatives from principal state agencies representing mental health, education, vocational rehabilitation, criminal justice, housing, Medicaid, and social services. It must have representation from the Service Area Boards (SABs) for mental health and substance abuse covering Oahu, and the counties of Maui, Kauai and Hawaii. One member is ex-officio as the Governor's representative.

## **Terms**

A member's term is up to four years at a time, but the Governor can appoint for less than that. A regular term starts on July 1 and end on June 30. A member can serve up to two consecutive terms and not exceed eight consecutive years.

The Council has one ex-officio member and is co-terminus with a Governor's term.

# WHO'S WHO\*

## Officers

Chairperson: Katherine Aumer

1st Vice Chairperson: Kathleen Merriam

2nd Vice Chairperson: John Betlach

Secretary: Mary Pat Waterhouse

## State Agencies/ Sectors

Department of Health- Kathleen Merriam

Department of Human Services (Medicare/ MedQuest) – Jon Fujii

Department of Education – Christine Montague-Hicks

Department of Human Services – Vocational Rehabilitation – Lea Dias

Department of Human Services – Public Housing – Vacant

Department of Human Services – Social Services – Ray Rice

Department/Criminal Justice Judiciary – Kristin Will

Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances (HACDACS)- Jon Fujii

## Service Area Boards

Oahu County -Jackie Jackson

Hawaii County -John Betlach

## Provider

Forrest Wells

## Youth or Consumer Advocates

Tianna Celis-Webster

Asianna Saragosa - Torres

## Parents and Family Members

Naomi Crozier

Heidi Ilyavi

Katherine Aumer

Mary Pat Waterhouse

Jackie Jackson

## Ex-officio (non-voting)

DOH BHA Deputy Director- Marian Tsuji

## Vacancies (5)

Department of Human Services

Housing representative

Kauai Service Area Board representative

Hawaii Service Area Board representative

\*As of July 2025

# ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Basic expectations include:

- a. Attendance – showing up at meetings to achieve quorum.
- b. Volunteer as a member of a Permitted Interaction Group(s) or PIGs.
- c. Using your personal field of expertise, identify topics within your area(s) of representation that can be addressed as opportunities for positive change.
- d. Meet with stakeholders, especially those you represent as Council members (i.e. within your area(s) of representation) – so that you are knowledgeable and can consider their needs and concerns when you vote.
- e. Understand the purpose of the Council.
- f. Convey the importance of the Council and its value to the community to others.
- g. Understand the limitations of what the Council can achieve.
- h. Recruit new Council members.
- i. Recruit community members to attend council meetings; Encourage the community to actively participate, especially those living on neighboring islands.
- j. To ensure that goals are met in a timely manner, have measurable outcomes with deadlines for your tasks.
- k. SHOW UP, BE PRESENT, AND CONTRIBUTE!

**Remember**, we all need to be present and actively participating in meetings in order for us to become a COUNCIL OF ACTION.

“ As a service recipient, I share my personal experiences to fight/battle stigma (personal choice to do so), and encourage other service recipients to share their experiences (when they are comfortable).”

- C . K n i g h t s b r i d g e -



# MEETINGS

## Entire Council

Regular Council meetings occur on the second Tuesday of every month, from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. These meetings are held via Zoom and in person at DOH Waimano Conference Room at 2201 Waimano Home Road, Pearl City. Hawaii's Sunshine Law governs council meetings and member interactions.

Meetings have set agendas, frequently involving presentations and allowing time for public input. The SCMH staff person helps organize the schedule in consultation with the Chairperson and by considering members' suggestions.

A subset of Council members may also meet as members of a committee or Permitted Interaction Group (PIG).

## Committees

The Council's only standing committee is its Executive Committee. It can create ad hoc committees, such as the Ad Hoc Legislative committee that was created in January 2023.

## Permitted Interaction Groups

Permitted Interactions Groups (PIGs) are created and dissolved by the Council from time to time to investigate specific concerns and recommend action to the Council. In 2021, the Council started several PIGs to address its strategic plan focus areas. All these PIGs have been dissolved because their tasks are done or absorbed in newer PIGs.



"As a Service Area Board representative, representing the County of Kauai, I will focus on service gaps, identify who from my community is involved in mental health and who should be involved/linked with mental health. I will continue to participate in discussions with the Kauai Mental Health Consortium to improve access to mental health services through better coordination between mental health and primary care providers. Personally, I'm willing to learn about roles other Council members have and what resources other Council members share and share examples from my personal experience in my specialized field."

-Lani Nagao, former member-



# TOOLS

## Bylaws

The 2021 Bylaws, amended 2023, is the latest version.

## Strategic Plan

The 2024 Plan is the latest plan.

## Council Website

The Hawaii State Council on Mental Health website is [scmh.hawaii.gov](https://scmh.hawaii.gov). There are updates on meetings, recordings, reports, Bylaws, service area boards, members and many resources.

"As a youth/student representative, I'm willing to go into the educational community and into the schools to ask students about their experiences with mental health and their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. I started asking for feedback and have received some responses about how the pandemic has affected youth/ students and their mental health. I'm willing to share my findings at future Council meetings. Personally, on my own and to gather information informally, I'm willing to create a survey to ask for feedback from students and teachers about their experiences."

-ANTONINO BENINATO, former member-

It has been an honor to serve on the State Council on Mental Health as a representative of the Hawaii Department of Education and as someone whose life and work have been shaped by a deep commitment to mental wellbeing and mental health advocacy. I hope to elevate the mental health needs of our students while ensuring that cross-agency partnerships are responsive, sustainable, and effective. I also welcome the opportunity to learn from fellow Council members and align our efforts to address systemic gaps with compassion and clarity.

-Christine Montague- Hicks, Department of Education-

"As a Service Area Board representative, representing Hawaii County, I will continue to promote awareness about the Council and the Hawaii Service Area Board by attending meetings, introducing myself, and talking about the Council and Board. I will continue to have discussions in the community about mental health related topics; in the past, I have asked providers to give a survey about mental health services to service recipients."

-Carol Matayoshi, former member-





# CALENDAR

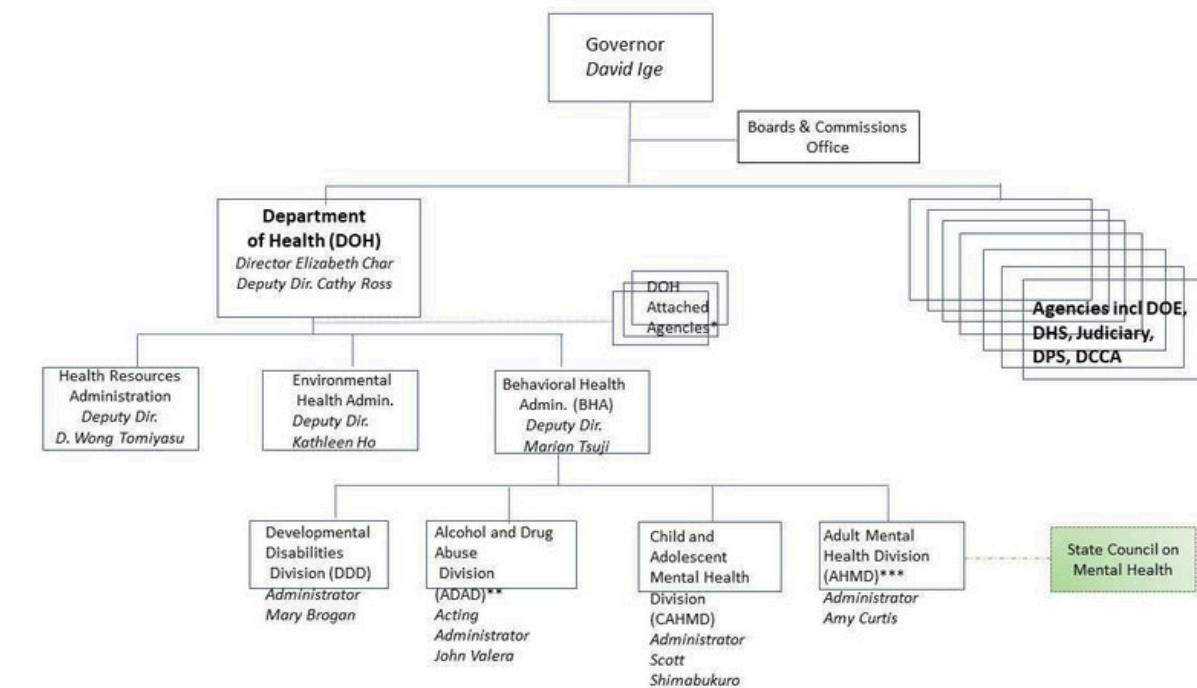
The Council's calendar will change from year to year. The following offers a good idea of what to expect.

State Fiscal Year 2025												
	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026
	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL/ INTERNAL AFFAIRS</b>												
1. Welcome, onboarding and reboarding (orientation)												
2. Strategic planning retreat												
3. Recruitment of new members												
4. Bylaws -Review and amendments												
5. Officers- Annual nomination and election												
6. Training (e.g., Native Hawaiian concepts, culture)												
7. Meetings												
8. Permitted Interaction Groups, AD HOC committees needed												
<b>PLANNING COUNCIL</b>												
1. Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG)/ State Comprehensive Integrated Service Plan (SCCISP)- receive presentation. review and provide feedback												
2. MHBG/SISCP- Formal response to mandates												
3. Other studies- Availability of inpatient psychiatric hospital beds												
<b>ADVOCACY (LEGISLATIVE)</b>												
1. Guidelines and Informational sessions												
2. Legislative tracking												
3. Formal testimonies, including any introduction of bills												
<b>ADVOCACY (NON-LEGISLATIVE), OUTREACH and EDUCATION</b>												
1. Community events (e.g. Mental Health Awareness, suicide prevention)												
2. Letter writing												
3. Website Updates (at least once a month for meeting minutes)												

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

## (ADMINISTRATIVE)

The Council is administratively attached to the DOH, more specifically under the Behavioral Health Administration.



\*DOH has 7 Attached Agencies including State Health Planning and Development Agency; State Planning on Developmental Disabilities  
 \*\*The Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances (HACDACS) is administratively attached to DOH, assigned to ADAD  
 \*\*\*4 Service Area Boards on Substance Abuse and Mental Health are administratively attached to DOH, assigned to AHMD



"As a mental health provider, I will interface with other mental health providers and organizations who provide mental health services and bring this information back to the Council. I will listen to patients and clients as well as community members and share this feedback with the Council as well. I will stay involved and participate with mental health groups to gather information. Personally, I'm willing to share themes I see that are related to mental health; I will continue to chair Council meetings; and I will interface better with leadership, media and press when the Council has consensus and wants to see movement."

-Richard Ries, former member-

# ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The SCMH is supported by the DOH through its Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD). The AMHD Planner is designated as lead support staff. The Hele Imua Interns is a liaison and support for legislative matters, website, shared resource for members. The AMHD support staff assists with meeting minutes, logistics, and fiscal matters.

For questions or information, please contact: Carolyn Weygan-Hildebrand

AMHD Planner /SCMH Lead Support Staff [carolyn.veygan-hildebrand@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:carolyn.veygan-hildebrand@doh.hawaii.gov)  
(808) 453-6857

As a state agency representative from the Hawaii State Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division, I will share about Behavioral Health Administration activities with the Council. I will share Child an Adolescent Mental Health Division reports with the Council as well. If the Council has questions for other health department staff such as Adult Mental Health Division, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, and Developmental Disabilities Division, I will assist with getting information back to the Council. I will also report mental health related legislative activities to the Council. Personally, he would like to know what tools are available to the Council to advocate for service utilizers ad what tools the Council is empowered to use. Knowing these things will help me to contribute.



-Scott Shimabukuro, former member

# COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

## Email address

doh.scmhchairperson@doh.hawaii.gov

## Office address

DOH Hale F  
2201 Waimano Home Road  
Pearl City, Hawaii 96782

## Mailing address

Attn: SCMH Waimano  
P.O. Box 3378 Room 256  
Honolulu Hawaii 96802-3378

The AMHD Planner checks emails and correspondences regularly.



"As a family representative, I am committed to promoting access to care that is both effective and sensitive to the needs of our diverse communities. I prioritize data-driven, evidence-based strategies that lead to measurable outcomes and long-term improvements in well-being. On the council, I hope to contribute a grounded perspective informed by real family experiences, while remaining open to learning and aligning efforts with what the evidence shows is most impactful."

-Katherine Aumer, Chairperson of Hawaii State Council on Mental Health -

# CHECKLIST FOR NEW MEMBERS

New members are required and requested to do the following completing some training within ninety (90) days from their first meeting as an official member. For most members, that will be by the Council meeting in October.

Check	Material	Where to Find
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit Boards and Commissions Office website	<a href="https://boards.hawaii.gov">boards.hawaii.gov</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete Ethics for Boards and Commissions Training	<a href="https://ethics.hawaii.gov/training/">https://ethics.hawaii.gov/training/</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete "Open Meeting : Guide for State and County Board" Training	<a href="https://oip.hawaii.gov/training">https://oip.hawaii.gov/training</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review HRS 84-11 (Ethics Code), 84-17 (Financial Disclosure) and 92 (Sunshine Law)	find in <a href="https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrsal/">https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrsal/</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm access to online portal for Council members, scheme through contents esp meeting agenda and minutes	Online portal for members
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm access to website and scheme through pages	<a href="https://scmh.hawaii.gov">scmh.hawaii.gov</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read Vision and Mission Statements, Mandates	This guide
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familiarize -members and their roles	This guide
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familiarize - meeting agenda and minutes	<a href="https://scmh.hawaii.gov">scmh.hawaii.gov</a> or online portal for members
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familiarize -difference between PIGs and committees	<a href="https://oip.hawaii.gov/training">oip.hawaii.gov/training</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read 2021 bylaws with 2023 amendments	Online portal for members
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read Meeting protocol by SCMH 2008	Online portal for members
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read Roberts Rules of Order simplified	Online portal for members
<input type="checkbox"/>	Skim through Strategic Plan (latest 2021)	Online portal for members
<input type="checkbox"/>	Skim through Reports to the Governor and Legislative	On <a href="https://scmh.hawaii.gov">scmh.hawaii.gov</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review Hawaii Revised Statutes(HRS) §334-10 SCMH, 334-11 SABS	<a href="https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol06_Ch0321-0344/HRS0334/HRS_0334-.htm">https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol06_Ch0321-0344/HRS0334/HRS_0334-.htm</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familiarize DOH, BHA, AMHD, CAHMD and ADAD	explore <a href="https://health.hawaii.gov/about/programdirectory/behavioral-health-services-">https://health.hawaii.gov/about/programdirectory/behavioral-health-services-</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have an Overview of the Legislative Process (Hawaii)	<a href="https://lrb.hawaii.gov/par/overview-of-the-legislative-process/">https://lrb.hawaii.gov/par/overview-of-the-legislative-process/</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have an Overview of the Mental Health Block Grant & Council Role	<a href="https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/block-grants/mhbg">https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/block-grants/mhbg</a>

# Service Area Boards

## **Oahu county**

Chairperson: Randy Hack

Members:

Jackie Jackson

Jacquelyn Esser

Christine Park

Shirley Davenport

Sione Naeata

## **Maui County**

Chairperson: Danielle Bergan

Members:

Waianuhea Getgen

Megan Kosaka

David Litman

## **Hawaii County**

Chairperson: John Betlach

Members:

Sarah Blechman

Renee Rivera

Jessica Stevens

## **Kauai County**

none

\*As of July 2025



"As a state agency representative from the Hawaii Public Housing Authority, I will continue to address housing service gaps by supporting opportunities to increase mental health services beyond the Hawaii State Department of Health, Adult Mental Health Division's contracted providers. I will continue to share knowledge about Adult Mental Health Division funded services with housing staff to increase aware of mental health and crisis services available to Hawaii Public Housing Authority residents and families. Personally, I will continue reaching out to mental health providers and Adult Mental Health Division staff to continue arranging mental health trainings for housing staff including case management and crisis support."

- Kau'i Seguancia-

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide had its genesis at the 2021 virtual Strategic Planning Retreat. It is a guide by members and for members. Photos and quotes are from said activity. Other materials were added based on approved recommendations of the Council's 2022 Permitted Interaction Group on Onboarding and Reboarding.

Please send your feedback and suggestions to improve this welcome guide to  
[doh.scmhchairperson@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:doh.scmhchairperson@doh.hawaii.gov)



Mahalo for volunteering to serve!  
Mahalo for your commitment!