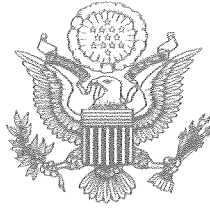


TULSI GABBARD
2ND DISTRICT, HAWAII

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

300 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD, ROOM 5-104
HONOLULU, HI 96850
(808) 541-1986

502 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4906

www.gabbard.house.gov

October 13, 2015

Administrator Fridovich, PhD
State of Hawaii, Department of Health
Adult Mental Health Division
1250 Punchbowl St., Kinau Hale
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Dr. Fridovich:

Please accept this letter in support of Kokua Support Services (KSS). I sincerely believe in their mission to serve the most vulnerable populations in our community so that every person may have the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential and independence.

While homelessness is a crisis that afflicts Hawaii's most impoverished people, many of our homeless also suffer from severe and persistent mental illness. If we are to prevent and end homelessness for these disabled citizens then we must provide them with qualified professional support through recovery oriented systems of care.

While many homeless suffer from mental illness, we also know that a significant portion have co-occurring disorders and suffer from addiction to alcohol and other drugs. This is where I believe the unique qualifications of the KSS team separate them from other representative payee programs. KSS provides "rep payee" services by qualified drug and alcohol counselors who have experience working with vulnerable populations suffering from mental illness. While representative payee services are an administrative provision, it is KSS's ability to provide these services with a professional holistic and all-inclusive approach that inspires me to lend my support.

Executive Director, Tristyn Haxton has earned her MSCP, CSAC, ICADC, CSAPA, VAS, SAP, and BA Psychology, while Operations Director, Chelsea Torres has achieved her MSCP, VAS, BA Psychology, and BA Justice Administration. With these qualifications, they are able to take all areas of concern into consideration when addressing an individual's financial related matters.

The Directors of KSS, Ms. Haxton and Mrs. Torres, have worked under Gateway Educational Services Representative Payee Program as the operations supervisor and quality assurance manager since awarded the AMHD contract in 2013. While providing services under GES, the representative program has grown in number and has efficiency with providing in-depth, client-focused, quality services for those in need of financial management services. Cohesive working relationships with a multitude of community based mental health case management agencies have been established of which are not limited to: North Shore Mental Health, Institute of Human Services, Community Empowerment Resources, and Care Hawaii. The policy and procedures set in place provide an atmosphere of availability, clear communication, financial

education, and flexibility within reason to ensure the client's needs are met. Now able to expand, Ms. Haxton and Mrs. Torres are providing valuable resources to the community through the non-profit community agency, Kokua Support Services.

I believe AMHD and KSS share the same purpose to provide disadvantaged individuals the opportunity to achieve a higher level of independence through addressing their specific needs in a manner that promotes the greatest degree of self-respect and determination.

During the past two years, my office has worked with KSS keeping that same purpose in mind. We have actively collaborated on rendering assistance to several constituents suffering from mental illness, addiction, and medical frailty. KSS has demonstrated their commitment to go the extra mile and more by meeting the client where they are at, both mentally and physically: in crisis and on the streets. As a result of these collaborations my team has developed a confident partnership with Mrs Haxton and Mrs. Torres.

Kokua Support Services has proven their professional ability and commitment to care for the most vulnerable citizens in our community. I fully support their proposal for providing representative payee services to the clients of Adult Mental Health Division.

Thank you for your consideration. If my office may be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact my Senior Field Representative, Mr. Jay King at 808-541-1986.

Mahalo Nui Loa,



Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress (HI-02)