February 25, 2019

To: Chair Rosalyn Baker  
Vice Chair Stanley Chang  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

Chair Maile Shimabukuro  
Vice Chair Kaiaki'i Kahele  
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Re: Testimony in Support of SB193

Hrg: February 26, 2019 at 1:30pm, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

The Hawaii Public Health Association is a group of over 600 community members, public health professionals and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. HPHA also serves as a voice for public health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

The Hawai‘i Public Health Association (HPHA) supports SB193, which requires the State Council on Mental Health to include at least 3 members with knowledge of or work experience involving Native Hawaiian concepts of well-being, culturally grounded mental health methodologies, or traditional healing or health practices. Native Hawaiians are disproportionately impacted by mental health concerns and the repercussion of these concerns on families and communities. It is important that State Council members have an understanding about how their decisions affect Native Hawaiian mental health and may attenuate or exacerbate disparities in suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, incarceration, child abuse, school adjustment problems, and certain psychological and psychiatric mental illnesses.

Promoting Native Hawaiian traditional practices, values, and beliefs builds resilience in individuals, families, and communities. This bill takes a positive step forward in reaffirming the state’s commitment to Native Hawaiians across the state and addressing significant mental health and mental health care disparities. We urge the committee to PASS this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on important health issues affecting people in Hawai‘i.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Townsend Ing, DrPH
Legislative Committee Chair