

HSAC

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition

June 28, 2011

SAMHSA Desk Officer
Human Resources and Housing Branch
Office of Management and Budget
New Executive Office Building, Room 10235
Washington, DC 20503

VIA FACSIMILE: 202-395-7285

RE: Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC) Comments on Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grants Revisions

Dear Sir or Madam:

Please continue to fund the block grant to cover treatment gaps as many chronic addicts who seek treatment will not have completed the documentation requirements to be enrolled in Medicaid due to the nature of their illness. When the individuals are ready for treatment, it is a short window of opportunity and many, though eligible, will not have access to Medicaid yet. Once admitted, providers can enroll them into insurance Medicaid plans.

We are pleased that SAMHSA is only requesting and not requiring states to combine mental health and substance abuse grants into one grant effort because we believe that separating the substance abuse bid requests is better for Hawaii, given the different administrative systems.

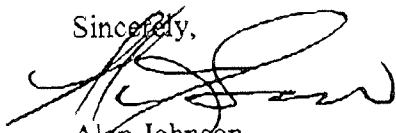
We are pleased that SAMHSA is only requiring that healthcare reform and parity questions are completed and not requiring states to comply with new regulations. We agree that states must move forward but need time to do so.

We believe that 2014 is too soon for states to be in compliance with new requirements, especially about changing the grant requests to fund mostly "recovery support." Many clients will not be on Medicaid yet because local area Medicaid does not have funding mechanisms for substance abuse. Additionally, those clients who have chronic conditions will generally not be able to functionally meet documentation requirements to enroll in Medicaid until after admitting into treatment.

We urge SAMHSA to add Native Hawaiian to any considerations for Native Americans, especially SAMHSA's "describing Tribal consulting services."

Since SAMHSA has offered to give technical support to those states that are having difficulty, we humbly request that Hawaii be considered for additional support. Our single source payor, ADAD, has had recent changes in leadership with both Chiefs (Branch Chief and the Chief of Consultative Services) either being promoted or retiring. During this lengthy transition process to find new leaders, we will need help to keep on track or else we could be left behind the change curve.

Sincerely,



Alan Johnson

Chairperson, Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition