



# TERM REPORT

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## Health & Human Services

Office of the Governor  
State of Hawai'i



## Health and Human Services

### Overview

During the eight years of his administration, Governor Ige put the health and wellbeing of Hawaii's residents first and foremost. This was abundantly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, which dominated the final years of his term, and a separate report was prepared to address that event. Both the departments of Health (DOH) and Human Services (DHS) played critical roles in the pandemic response, and a separate report notes those achievements.

In addition, the Ige administration prioritized efforts to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness, and a separate report was prepared on that issue.

This report focuses on the other significant work during the Ige administration undertaken by the two departments to improve access to care, treatment, and affordability for the extended family, 'Ohana Nui, beginning with our children and honoring our elders in all communities across the state.

The 'Ohana Nui approach guided the coordinated efforts of the two departments, along with others, to combine prevention and intervention in addressing a range of issues — from unwanted pregnancies, domestic violence, homelessness, and opioid abuse to basic "survival" needs such as jobs, housing, food, education and health care —with an emphasis on children ages zero to age 5. The new multi-generational approach to delivering services used a comprehensive delivery system to ensure that people got the help they need.

The unprecedented collaboration between the departments and their service providers has had big benefits for community members who most need state services, and in 2022, Hawai'i was determined to be one of the healthiest states in the nation (<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/healthiest-states>).

Despite this, there was a pressing need to build a new forensic mental health facility, and the Ige administration prioritized its construction on the grounds of the State Hospital in Kāne'ohe. With over \$160 million in funding appropriated by the Legislature for the design/build contract, the new hospital, opened in April 2022,

provides better care for hospital patients, a safer work environment for hospital staff, and enhanced community security for Kāneʻohe and surrounding communities.

To ensure continued delivery of quality health care throughout the Maui Region, the Ige administration managed the transition of the Maui hospitals to the Kaiser Permanente affiliate, Maui Health System in July 2017. Maui Memorial Medical Center, Kula Hospital and Lānaʻi Community Hospital continued to operate as community hospitals and clinics, treating patients within and outside Kaiser's health care network. This historic accomplishment ensures the best health care system possible for the people of Maui County.

Statewide, the Department of Health fought a series of vector-borne and food-borne illnesses, such as Hepatitis-A, rat lung worm disease, Dengue fever, Zika virus, West Nile virus, and Chikungunya. The public was at risk of widespread illnesses that may have included serious long-term medical conditions such as birth defects or liver failure, as well as impacts to Hawaiʻi as a tourist destination. The department met the challenge by increasing its public health surge capacity including communications and vector control workers.

The opioid crisis that has swept the nation did not spare Hawaiʻi, although the state has not been as hard hit by as some. The state and its partners convened an Opioid Abuse Prevention Work group which developed a strategic plan to address the issue before it became devastating. The Hawaiʻi Department of Health received an \$8 million federal grant over a two-year period to continue to combat opioid misuse in the state. And in 2022, the state and counties announced that an Advisory Committee, including all four major counties, will determine the recommended uses for \$78 million received from opioid settlement funds.

In a ground-breaking move, Hawaiʻi became the first state in the nation to pay eligible caregivers who work 30 hours or more per week to receive \$70 a day to pay for the care of their elders who are 60 years or older. As part of the 'Ohana Nui approach, the innovative Kupuna Caregivers Program is a big help for family caregivers.

The Department of Human Services delivers services to one in four adults in Hawaiʻi and nearly half of Hawaii's children, services that have long-term, sustainable, positive outcomes. Its programs support self-sufficiency and the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Hawaiʻi.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is one of these programs. During the Ige administration, the program received several performance awards resulting in hundreds of thousands of additional federal dollars coming into Hawai'i to help those experiencing food insecurity.

To improve health outcomes, the Department of Human Services created an integrated managed care program for all enrollees called QUEST Integration (QI), which is a leader in the country for managed long-term care, benefitting approximately Medicaid 330,000 beneficiaries. Also, during this administration, the Office of Youth Services achieved a 20 percent drop in admissions to the Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation made progress in helping people with significant disabilities enter the workforce. A department-wide focus on staffing and professional development, along with improved technology systems, helped provide better services to the people of Hawai'i.

Overall, the 'Ohana Nui approach improved the state's ability to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty by concurrently addressing the highest needs of individuals and families resulting in better outcomes.

## **Governor Ige's Mission**

Create a 21<sup>st</sup> century health system that improves access, treatment, and affordability for all Hawai'i residents, beginning with our children, honoring our elders, and including rural communities on all islands.

## **Commitments**

"Mental health is a serious and growing issue throughout our state which we cannot afford to ignore. I've asked our health department to focus on building these services especially for those with serious illness and our homeless population."

Governor David Ige, 2017

"We need to provide more access to medical services and experts on every island. I've pushed every state director to look at technology and how our state can incorporate the use of technology to benefit every resident by increasing and improving convenience, access, and efficiency."

Governor David Ige, 2017

"Public-private partnerships offer great potential, but only if they are shaped in the right way. But no matter our direction, changing how we operate our hospitals to meet changing needs will be key to any long-term solution."

Governor David Ige, State of the State 2015

"We're investing \$160.5 million in a new forensic mental health facility on the grounds of the State Hospital in Kāne'ohe. And we've budgeted \$4.7 million in FY2017 to cover projected operating deficits at the State Hospital."

Governor David Ige, State of the State 2021

## **Outcomes**

"We recently signed a historic agreement transferring the operation and management of the Maui Region health care facilities from the state to Kaiser Permanente. There is still work ahead but this is a great step forward. Thanks to all of you for working with us to make this happen."

Governor David Ige, State of the State 2016

## Overview of Hawaii's Health\*

Health Indicator	Year	U.S.	Statewide	% change
<a href="#">Life expectancy at birth, years</a>	2018	78.7	81.0	-0.6
<a href="#">Infant mortality, per 1000 live births</a>	2020	5.4	4.9	-21.6%
<a href="#">Cardiovascular disease death rate, per 100,000 ppl</a>	2017-2019	216.3	174.5	-3.9%
<a href="#">Cancer death rate, per 100,000 ppl</a>	2017	152.5	128.6	-6.3%
<a href="#">Obesity, % of adults</a>	2020	31.9%%	24.5%	-43.8%
<a href="#">Smoking, % of adults</a>	2020	15.5%%	11.6%%	-26.6%
<a href="#">Immunization rate, % of children aged 19-35 months</a>	2018	75.4%	77.6%	-17%

\*Data sets from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and America's Health Rankings

## Progress & Milestones

### Department of Health: 2015

Honest, transparent, and responsive government is fundamentally supported by good governance practices and accurate and timely data. DOH has invested time and effort to deploy in 2015 several infrastructure improvements that demonstrate both accountability and responsiveness.

- Implemented a Vital Records Customer Order Tracking System to improve the customer experience relating to request for copies of essential documents like birth, marriage, and death certificates
- Expanded use of Business-All-In-One telecommunications technology for public contact programs resulting in fewer dropped calls/contacts and improved customer satisfaction

Responsive government is also characterized by efficient government. To that end, DOH has implemented several initiatives aimed at reducing waste of public resources.

- Operationalized a Paperless Technology Purchase Management System for computer and telecommunications equipment that reduced processing time from one week to 8 hours
- Implemented a Paperless Worker's Compensation Document Management System to reduce from many days to several hours files needed to process worker claims and reduce payment errors and delays for injured staff
- Deployed an automated electronic Daily Cash Flow Projection Tool for federal grant funds to increase public benefit, minimize fund lapses, improve accuracy, and reduce staff time by 300%
- Implemented a disabled parking permit database connecting state and county issuing sites and law enforcement to improve efficiency and reporting
- Updated and consolidated exemption lists from Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements resulting in increased operational effectiveness

The department regulates many industries and practices that affect the community's health and natural environment. Throughout 2015, DOH improved regulatory effectiveness through better collection and analysis of data and major policy updates.

- Uploaded inspection report results for Developmental Disabilities Adult Foster Homes, while continuing to work on a backlog of other facilities
- Digitized thousands of credentialing files in a database for certified substance abuse counselors to ensure high professional standards
- Successfully transferred the Medical Marijuana Registry Program into the department and upgraded the technology infrastructure to improve timeliness, accuracy, and accessibility for patients, providers, and law enforcement
- Met major milestones in the inspection of food establishments and the public placard program
- Completed major updates and revisions to the State Water Quality Plan and Environmental Justice Plan
- Initiated ongoing and regular meetings among state agencies and the private sector to address the public health impacts of climate change
- Expanded data exchange with the Hawai'i Green Growth coalition regarding State sustainability goals, targets, and metrics for the Aloha+ Challenge, including Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Solid Waste.

Creating a 21st century health system that improves access, treatment, and affordability was advanced by several key research projects, planning initiatives, and prevention activities completed in 2015.

- Completed the first statewide 3rd grade oral health screening survey to assess the oral status of children
- Published the Hawai'i State Hospital Master Plan to provide an effective roadmap to improve community and patient safety, access, and treatment at the state's only psychiatric hospital dedicated to serving court-ordered patients with serious mental illness from all islands.
- Completed negotiations with Kaiser Permanente Hawaii to partner with Maui Memorial Hospital to improve and stabilize services
- Opened the Crisis Line of Hawaii, a "warm line" staffed 24/7 and dedicated to helping individuals who are facing mental health crises and renewing the State's focus to providing crisis support to the community
- Launched the interactive Indicator-Based Information System (IBIS) that provides users better access to Hawai'i public health data for public policy, research, and healthcare
- Initiated data exchange between DOH and the Department of Education (DOE) to enhance school health and school-based behavioral health services
- Expanded the list of conditions eligible for the newborn screening program and secured federal funds to develop community capacity
- Re-established Hansen's Disease clinics and secured ongoing municipal and federal support for Kalaupapa residents and facility
- Implemented the "Choose Healthy Now" program across government agencies, public schools, and the private sector to improve access to healthful foods at stores and vendors
- Increased to age 21 the minimum age to purchase, possess, and consume cigarettes and electronic smoking/vaping devices and banned their use in parks and beaches

## Department of Health: 2016

### **Statewide focus on substance abuse during pregnancy improves access to state care**

A major strategic priority for DOH, the department secured over \$8 million dollars in competitive federal and private grants to assure substance abuse screening, referral, and treatment for high-risk residents, with a particular focus on pregnant women. Data show that approximately 8% of Hawai'i mothers drink alcohol during their last three months of pregnancy, a nearly two-fold increase from an earlier study. Substance use may cause Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, a preventable condition that affects a child's emotional, physical, and intellectual development. The initiative will create and improve access to underserved, rural, and vulnerable patients.

### **Design and build of new Hawai'i State Hospital to provide safer, secure patient facility**

The Legislature appropriated demolition and construction funds totaling over \$160 million that will provide better care for hospital patients, a safer work environment for hospital staff, and enhanced community security for Kāne'ohe and surrounding communities. The novel Design/Build methodology will save several years of project time.

The public, through the Legislature and several lawsuits from staff members, has been critical of inadequate safety measures allegedly due to overcrowding and infrastructure limitations. The department responded with a Special Action Team that spanned all branches of government that recommended legal, clinical, operational, and infrastructure changes that are in various stages of adoption.

### **Death records matching system saves taxpayer dollars**

The department concluded business agreements and protocols to legally share sensitive vital records information, specifically death records, with other state agencies to purge deceased beneficiaries from certain government programs including the Employee Retirement System, county property tax collections, parking placards, and Medicaid.

The public is served by avoiding inappropriate payment or overpayments that may total in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

### **Disease outbreak investigation and prevention fights vector and food-borne illnesses**

A series of vector-borne and food-borne illnesses struck Hawai'i from summer 2015 through autumn 2016 including in rapid succession:

- "Fight the Bite" Campaign – A combination of public health education and mosquito eradication strategies aimed at keeping Hawai'i free of diseases spread by mosquitos such as Dengue fever, Zika virus, West Nile virus, and Chikungunya. Hawai'i successfully secured over \$4 million in federal funds from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Hepatitis-A – Infections of hepatitis A were strongly associated with frozen seafood distributed to a popular restaurant chain, resulting in the restaurant chain's temporary closure. In coordination with the department, the health care sector responded with community-wide vaccination resources to assure Hawai'i residents are protected.

The public was at risk of widespread illnesses that may have included serious long-term medical conditions such as birth defects or liver failure, as well as impacts to Hawai'i as a tourist destination. To meet public demand for information the department continuously updated web sites showing infection progress and increased public health surge capacity including communications and vector control workers.

### **Contract GENie reduces administrative burdens to the state and local businesses**

DOH developed a web-based software application (*Contract GENie*) to generate 103F and 103D contracts. The application creates a standardized, electronic contract document which (1) decreases the time required to draft contracts, (2) eliminates many user errors associated with contract drafting, and (3) decreases the contract review time. This expedited drafting and review process will allow DOH to procure services in a more efficient manner and to roll out services more quickly to the public, specifically our various vulnerable populations.

## **Medical marijuana program improves patient access and satisfaction**

The department implemented a web-based medical marijuana patient registry system that decreased patient wait time from eight weeks to a few days. The Legislature transferred the program to DOH in 2014. Since this change, the department has witnessed a steady increase in registered patients, from approximately 11,400 to over 34,000. Individuals with valid medical marijuana cards will be permitted access to medical marijuana dispensaries, authorized by the Legislature in 2015. Public concerns about wait times for patient registration and other issues were addressed by establishing a dedicated program in DOH and adoption of a web-based registry system.

## **Drinking water revolving fund targets exceeded**

DOH disbursed more than \$30 million dollars in fiscal year 2016 to support county water infrastructure projects, a milestone that helps assure future federal funding. The success was in part due to the timely submittals of payment requests for projects which had loans, as well as implementation of a new financial planning model (FOCUS) to manage the low-interest loan program in fiscal year 2016 for:

- Hawai'i Island – six reservoir, water line, well, and pumping station projects
- O'ahu – a major urban water system improvement
- Maui – five water tank replacement, pumping station, and generator projects
- (Note – no loans were issued for Kaua'i projects in this cycle)

The public is served by having a safe drinking water supply, a core public health resource. Criticism for slow disbursement of federal funds was published by local news outlets. Issues were addressed by department leadership through a combination of a new financial planning model and implementation of the Lean/Kaizen process improvement methodology that eliminated waste and improved efficiency.

## **“Kaeru Program” reduces expensive and restrictive mainland treatment**

DOH received a competitive federal grant for \$8.1 million dollars over four years in September 2016 for returning (*kaeru* is the Japanese word for “return”) youth currently placed out-of-state mental health treatment and preventing youth currently being considered for out-of-state placement with the intent on reducing the overall frequency with which out-of-state placements occur. This is done

through a combination of a wraparound planning process employed by a dedicated team integrated with an evidence-based treatment implementation model.

The public will be served by more youths staying with their home communities and support systems, increased individualized mental health services within the state, and expanded interagency collaboration.

## **Department of Health: 2017**

### **Medical marijuana dispensary/laboratories provide safe access to medical cannabis**

The Department of Health established a new Medical Marijuana Dispensary Licensing program in 2016. The program oversees the regulatory responsibility over the eight (8) medical marijuana licensees across the state. The Department issued notices to proceed for dispensaries and certifications of private laboratories for product testing despite the short ramp for execution. The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs also facilitated a cashless system for dispensaries increasing the safety of operations. Registered patients are afforded reliable and safe access to medical cannabis on the recommendation of their medical provider for conditions ranging from cancer treatment to childhood seizures.

### **Disease outbreak response and prevention team tackles Zika and other diseases**

The DOH, in collaboration with the District Health Offices, mayors, councils, and HIEMA, HDOA, HTA, worked to communicate about Zika and rat lung worm disease, and launched an educational campaign on rat lung worm disease through a \$1 million appropriation from the state legislature. This will help educate Hawai'i residents and visitors about precautions they can take to protect their health. The state has rebuilt its vector control program to address the threat of diseases spread by mosquitoes, rats, and other vectors.

### **'Ohana Nui approach addresses social determinants of health**

An example of Governor David Ige's desire to break down state agency silos to foster more collaboration. Progress in changing the trajectory of the lives of people who are at risk, even before a child is born, as a result of collaboration between Hawai'i State Department of Health and Department of Human Services. Also

highlight DOH's recent \$3.5 million federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to support the state's Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. These programs address social determinants of health and preschool and K-12 education readiness.

### **Mental and behavioral health programs enhanced**

Rebuilding and transformation of mental health / behavioral health program, which provides early intervention and a broader continuum of community-based mental healthcare options. Integration of mental health with primary care visits for early intervention. Addresses health disparities and homelessness. As part of the state's mental health offerings, initial design and plans for replacement of the Goddard Building at Hawai'i State Hospital and underway, with construction expected to begin in 2018. The state has convened an Opioid Abuse Prevention Work group to complete a strategic plan for Hawai'i to address this emerging issue before it becomes devastating.

### **Telehealth pilot project to Improve access to care**

The Hawai'i State Department of Health is addressing the health needs of rural, underserved communities through telehealth. The telehealth law signed by Governor David Ige demonstrates his policy commitment to address the state's physician/specialist shortage on the neighbor islands. The law enables pilot projects, such as the virtual dental home, to become financially self-sustaining through parity reimbursements for office visits and online consultations.

### **New public access for real-time beach advisories**

Through an EPA grant, the Hawai'i State Department of Health's Clean Water Branch launched an upgraded website that gives the public access to real-time information — integrated with aerial photos from Google maps — to check on the status of the water quality of beaches that may experience a surge in bacteria levels or are impacted by sewage spills. The website was developed based on feedback from those within the health department as well as representatives of the Surfrider Foundation, the visitor industry and the City and County of Honolulu's Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services.

## **Kupuna Caregivers Program to compensate family caregivers**

Governor David Ige can take credit for passing the Kupuna Caregiver law, the first state in the nation to have such a law, to help family caregivers. It allows eligible caregivers who work 30 hours or more per week to receive \$70 a day to pay for the care of their elders who are 60 years or older. The Executive Office on Aging, which is administratively attached to the Department of Health, is developing administrative rules for this law. Lobbying efforts were primarily conducted by Caring Across Generations and Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE).

## **LBGT health report will result in tailored health services**

The Hawai'i Department of Health released the first-ever Hawai'i Sexual and Gender Minority Health Report to build competency in serving the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth to address early risk factors that contribute to poorer health outcomes in adulthood. The findings have allowed the Department of Health to better tailor programs to ensure the need and health challenges of all of Hawaii's youth who experience discrimination and stigma, and are often victims of bullying, family rejection, and lack of acceptance.

## **Department of Health: 2018**

### **Breaking ground for start of construction of new Hawai'i State Hospital facility**

In August 2018, construction began on the new four-story, 144-bed, secure forensic psychiatric facility at Hawai'i State Hospital in Kāne'ohe. The new building represents the state's strong commitment to improving mental health care in our community. The facility will include patient care units, a comprehensive rehabilitation mall, outdoor courtyards, admissions and transfer suites, building support functions, and office spaces — all within a secured area. Construction of the facility is a major milestone in resolving the challenges of an ever-increasing patient population and safety concerns raised by the high percentage of high-risk forensic patients at the hospital.

## **Emergency response expands air quality monitoring on Hawai'i Island during Kīlauea Volcano toxic gas emissions**

Keeping the health and safety of first responders and the community a top priority, the Department of Health worked with federal and county officials to expedite the installation of air quality monitoring equipment in more than 30 additional areas on Hawai'i Island during the Kīlauea eruptions in May/June 2018. The equipment provided access to real-time air quality data on safe and dangerous levels of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) and particulates (vog) for responders to make critical decisions each day to support response efforts, and for residents and visitors to make informed decisions for their personal health and safety.

## **Opioid Prevention Action Plan – continued development and implementation**

Preventing opioid misuse, expanding access to treatment for addiction, training first responders, and other community-based programs continued along with the launch in July 2018 of the Hawai'i Medication Drop Box Program. Supported by the Department of the Attorney General, Department of Public Safety, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Hawai'i, Maui, Honolulu, and Kaua'i Police Departments, the program provides a safe way to dispose of unused medications to prevent opioids or other drugs from getting into the hands of children or others. In September 2018, the Hawai'i Department of Health received an \$8 million federal grant over a two-year period to continue to combat opioid misuse in the state. The grant funds will continue to support the collective efforts of the Hawai'i Opioid Initiative, a comprehensive approach to aggressively counteract the misuse of opioids and other prevalent drugs, such as methamphetamines in Hawai'i.

## **Telehealth pilot funded in historic Kau district to increase access to care for those most in need**

The Ka'ū Rural Health Community Association was awarded \$100,000 to provide medical care in resident's homes from physicians based in Hilo and Ocean View (both of which are 60-90 minutes away). Fifty patients, many of whom are elderly, have multiple chronic conditions, or lack reliable transportation, will be followed closely over the pilot. The project will also study how Community Health Workers can be incorporated into care teams, providing economic and professional development opportunities for Ka'ū residents. A second award will be made to Wahiawa Center for Community Health for a similar project for residents of central O'ahu and the North Shore. Funds were appropriated by the Legislature for these

telehealth demonstration projects to encourage greater adoption of telehealth to increase access to rural and underserved areas.

### **DOH continues third year of West Hawai'i Teledentistry Pilot Project and expands to Maui**

The teledentistry program, or virtual dental home, is an innovative system that makes it easy for patients to receive diagnostic and preventive dental services in community settings. With funding from the HDS Foundation, pilot projects have focused on children in West Hawai'i who typically would not receive or have access to dental care until their tooth decay or oral health disease reached an advanced stage, when there is pain and infection, and more costly intervention is required. Expansion of the pilot to Maui will provide needed care to kūpuna as well as keiki.

## **Department of Health: 2019**

### **Executive Office on Aging increases Caregiver Program participation**

Act 102, the Kupuna Caregiver Program (KCGP), was signed into law in July 2017 and amended in 2019 by Act 126. The program provides financial assistance of up to \$210 dollars a week for support services to working family caregivers. The program received an additional \$1,500,000 in funding to continue its implementation.

In SFY 2019, 132 caregivers received services, a 17.8% increase over SFY 2018. An additional 49 caregivers were screened, assessed, and deemed eligible but were waitlisted for services. The program increased provider capacity in Honolulu with 13 new service providers of Adult Day Care.

### **Take Back Boxes Promote Safe Medication Disposal**

Appropriate disposal of prescription medications is essential in preventing diversion of medications and limited the environmental impact of improperly discarded drugs. In collaboration with the Attorney General's Office, Narcotics Enforcement Division and other key partners, DOH/ADAD has provided take back boxes to Police Departments statewide. Listed on [www.hawaiiopioid.org](http://www.hawaiiopioid.org) website with maps and directions, there are now three sites on Kaua'i, six sites on Hawai'i Island, nine sites on Maui and ten sites on O'ahu. In addition, Act 183, which was signed by Governor Ige, allows pharmacies to take back medications. Hawai'i continues to participate in the twice-yearly DEA take back campaigns in addition to

28 sites statewide. Nearly one ton of medications has been collected in the past 12 months.

### **Coordinated Access to Addiction Treatment Increases Access to Care**

The Hawai'i Coordinated Access Resource Entry System (CARES) is the state's multiple entry-point and coordinating center for mental health disorder (MHD) and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services. This initiative has improved coordination among providers and increased access to quality care for people who are in mental health crisis and/or living with MHDs/SUDs. Hawai'i CARES is a collaboration between the Department's Behavioral Health Administration (through its Adult and Child and Adolescent Mental Health as well as Alcohol and Drug Abuse Divisions), and community providers. The project is funded through a combination of state funds and federal funds from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This collaboration includes a call center which screens for MHDs/SUDs and provides service referrals and processes for quality improvement. Hawai'i CARES staff, who are trained crisis counselors and coordinators, facilitate entry into the system of care, transitions in care, and provide information and referrals to other services. CARES serves not only individuals who request services but also stakeholders who advocate on behalf of those in need of MHD/SUD treatment. This includes parents, family members, peer recovery advocates, probation officers, teachers and anyone who wants to learn more about seeking help for someone they know in need of behavioral health services.

### **The Behavioral Health Administration promotes texting to access services**

The CAMHD and AMHD have invested in the expansion of and publicity campaign for the Crisis Text Line. By texting ALOHA to 741741, texters can receive help from a counselor.

### **Healthy by Default Program Encourages Healthy Beverage Choices for Keiki**

Act 138 – Healthy by Default. The Department supported legislation that requires restaurants that serve children's meals to have a healthy beverage (water, unflavored white milk, or 100% juice) as the default option. Having the healthy option as the default makes the healthy choice, the easier choice for families. Act 138 goes into effect January 1, 2020. CDPHPD is working to implement and evaluate this policy.

## **Food Access Coordinators Help Food-Insecure Residents in Three Counties**

The Food Access Capacity Building Project is a component of the Department's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education (SNAP-Ed) Federal Fiscal Year 2018 State Plan. This project seeks to establish county-specific efforts across the state that comply with SNAP-Ed guidance and seek to create policy, systems, and environmental changes that facilitate food access among SNAP-eligible populations.

The goal of the County-level Food Access Capacity Building Project is to identify stakeholders and build a collaborative network dedicated to improving healthy food access, as recommended in a recent report called Hawaii's Food System: Food For All. The intention of the collaboration is to coordinate projects and build capacity within partner organizations and food insecure populations.

There are currently Food Access Coordinators in Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i counties who coordinate community coalitions addressing food access issues, fostering greater collaboration across agencies and understanding of existing food systems roles and gaps. Food Access Coordinators are also developing a strategic food system plan and asset map for the county that increases and sustains access to local food.

## **New Electronic Document Submission System Enables Efficiency and Financial Sustainability**

In early 2019, the Disability and Communication Access Board completed a transition of the document review submission and review process from a manual submission/review to electronic format. This has enabled the architects, engineers, and other design consultants who submit plans and specifications for the construction of state and county buildings, facilities, and sites under Hawai'i Revised Statutes 103-50 to submit and pay electronically. The modernization has also centralized the document reviews to enable all staff in the Facility Access Unit to follow-up with resubmittals and questions. This represented the last phase of the modernization of the process with the creation of a special fund that has enabled the program to be financially self-sufficient.

## **Protecting our environmental resources**

In 2019, Governor Ige's Administration finalized the Water Quality Plan. A vital part of Governor Ige's priorities for Hawai'i includes fostering public environmental

stewardship, protecting, and efficiently using our fresh water supply and providing state lands and waters for the public's use and enjoyment. Through its programs and actions detailed in this Water Quality Plan, the administration makes progress toward attainment to improve and protect Hawaii's water, air and land. The department continues to work with public and private partners in ensuring the health of our state's water quality.

### **Protecting users of Hawaii's Beaches**

The Ige Administration developed a beach water quality advisory system to inform residents and visitors who swim and recreate at Hawaii's beaches. The advisory system may be found at: <https://eha-cloud.doh.hawaii.gov/cwb/#!/landing>. The public may sign up to receive water quality advisory emails on that web page. The state has routinely monitored 280 beaches since 2017. Prior to 2017, 45 sites were routinely monitored.

### **Addressing Climate Change**

The Ige Administration is continuing to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by maintaining GHG emission caps on 19 of Hawaii's largest stationary source emitters.

### **Funding Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure**

The county drinking water and wastewater systems received \$175M and over \$169M, respectively, from the Clean Water State Revolving and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds. These Federal and State funds were used to ensure safe drinking water and clean recreational waters in the State. The first Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan of \$1M in principal forgiveness and zero percent interest to a privately-owned public water system was issued in July 2019. Six Engineering Service Contracts for six small public water systems were awarded in SFY2019 to evaluate the system's assets and identify drinking water infrastructure improvement projects which are eligible for a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan.

## **The Medical Cannabis Registry Program Introduces Nation's First Electronic Registration Card and Opens to Out-of-State Patients**

In 2019, the DOH Medical Cannabis Registry Program became the first in the nation to develop and use an online electronic patient card system. Patients can now download their approved registration cards from a secure online site and store them on smart devices. These electronic cards can be used and verified in the state's licensed medical cannabis dispensaries and for verification of registration with law enforcement. The use of the new e-cards overcome client inconvenience due to delays and expense of printing and mailing out new cards or replacing lost, damaged or expired cards. Most patients already carry smart phones and appreciate the convenience and safety of having electronic cards safely stored. In the same year, the program implemented an online application and registration system for qualifying out-of-state medical cannabis patients who are visiting Hawai'i. Patients can apply in advance and select the start date corresponding to their arrival date. These patients, once registered in Hawai'i, may purchase their medication from Hawaii's licensed dispensaries.

## **First Immunization Hawai'i Administrative Rules Update Since 2001**

The Immunization Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR) provide the details for immunization requirements for the State of Hawai'i. Current national medical standards for immunizations are provided by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and most, if not all, healthcare providers follow the guidelines established by ACIP. The last time the Immunization HAR was updated was in 2001, and many changes occurred since then. Inconsistencies between the administrative rules and the ACIP guidelines (e.g., differences in intervals between doses) were causing issues in implementation.

Healthcare providers following ACIP recommendations found patients were being excluded from school based on outdated Administrative Rules. These discrepancies resulted in additional visits to healthcare providers, loss of work time or wages for parents, and the administration and added expense of unnecessary vaccine doses. This was an additional burden on parents who were trying to ensure their child(ren) complied with requirements.

With the governor's signing of the updated Immunization Administrative Rules in August 2019, Hawaii's immunization requirements now align with ACIP guidelines and current national medical standards. Healthcare providers are now able to

provide care in accordance with standard medical practice and without concern for conflict with the Administrative Rules. With the update, our community is better served and protected against vaccine-preventable diseases—a priority initiative of this administration. Our parents and healthcare providers no longer have to worry about discrepancies between the two policies, since there is the one national medical standard followed by all.

### **Unified Case Management System Helps Hawaii's Vulnerable Consumers**

Two Divisions of the Behavioral Health Administration (Developmental Disabilities and Child and Adolescent Mental Health) jointly released its case management information technology solution, INSPIRE. The solution leveraged federal Medicaid funds to offset its costs. INSPIRE is designed to move work from dependency on a paper-driven business system, to one that is efficient, promotes communication, increases coordination of care and time spent with clients, and allows for data-driven decisions at both the client and system levels. Built on a dynamic Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform, INSPIRE has the flexibility for staff to make changes to the solution as the Divisions' business processes improve over time. INSPIRE is now a Behavioral Health Administration-wide initiative.

### **Department of Health: 2020**

*Please see COVID-19 Term Report.*

### **Department of Health: 2021**

*Please see COVID-19 Term Report.*

### **Department of Human Services (DHS)**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is focused on delivering services with long-term, sustainable, positive outcomes. DHS is committed to supporting self-sufficiency and the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Hawai'i. Well-being encompasses many facets of life, including health, housing, safety, work, environment, education, family, and community.

The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness staff are housed within the Department of Human Services, and a separate term report has been prepared with the results achieved on this priority issue.

## **Department of Human Services: 2015**

### **SNAP Timeliness Rate Among Best in Nation; Program Awarded Additional Federal Funds**

On October 2, 2015, Hawaii's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) received a SNAP State Performance Award in the amount of \$660,422 for placing among the six (6) States with the highest percentage of timely processed SNAP applications (FFY14): As of September 2015, Hawaii's SNAP timeliness rate was at 96.7% for an estimated 183,680 Hawai'i residents receiving SNAP benefits.

### **QUEST Integration program a leader in ensuring healthcare coverage**

Created an integrated managed care program for all enrollees called QUEST Integration (QI), which is a leader in the country for managed long-term care. This creates a continuous system of coverage for Medicaid's approximately 330,000 beneficiaries so that people no longer must change plans if/when they become aged, blind, or disabled. The January 1, 2015, implementation went smoothly, and QI has been successful. The Med-QUEST Division provides health insurance to 50% of all children and one in four people in Hawai'i.

### **Juvenile justice reform results in 20% drop in admissions to the Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility**

Office of Youth Services (OYS) continued to help spearhead the state's effort in juvenile justice reform through Act 201 (2014 Legislature), which aims to reduce secure confinement, strengthen community supervision, and focus resources on practices proven to reduce recidivism. In FY 2015, a 20% drop in admissions to the Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility occurred as a result of the collaborative efforts among stakeholders working to improve the juvenile justice system.

## **Department of Human Services: 2016**

### **Bonus federal funding awarded for improving access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

On September 30, 2016, the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) notified Hawai'i that the state had earned a SNAP Program Access Index (PAI) bonus award of \$716,622 for federal fiscal year 2015, for its effectiveness in making SNAP benefits accessible to low-income families. DHS improved its productivity over the previous year without any increase in the existing eligibility-worker workforce.

### **Investing in women's health**

For the past year, the DHS MedQUEST Division has partnered with the Department of Health on several maternal and child initiatives to address pressing public health issues. The two main issues of focus are Hawaii's unintended pregnancy rate of more than 50 percent, and high substance use among pregnant women in Hawai'i, which leads to health issues in children. DOH and DHS did promotional work on the "One Key Question™" screening protocol, based on this question: "Would you like to become pregnant in the next year?" A "yes" answer triggers assessments for substance abuse. As part of a public/private partnership with DHS and DOH, training for OBGYNs on use of Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) has taken place across the state. A "no" response triggers education on options that include highly effective forms of contraception, such as Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC). LARC is proven to be a highly effective and cost-effective method to reduce unplanned pregnancy and teenage abortion rates. The DHS MedQUEST Division has changed reimbursement policies for SBIRT and contraceptives to align with these initiatives.

### **Summer Youth Employment Program provides summer work for Hawaii's young people with disabilities**

The DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), in partnership with the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Workforce Development Division; the City and County of Honolulu, Department of Community Services/Workforce Development Division; and the County of Kaua'i, Office of Economic Development sponsored DVR's largest effort to date in providing summer employment for Hawaii's young people with disabilities. In the summer of 2016, 231 participants were placed in state, county, and private sector jobs across the state. For many, this was a first venture into the world of work. The program will be held again in the summer of 2017. This program brings together students, families, government agencies, and the private sector, and demonstrates that youth with significant

disabilities have the capacity to enter and sustain integrated, competitive employment.

### **Staffing plan to increase quality protective services to families and children**

Social work is a demanding field, and it is difficult to recruit and retain qualified workers. As part of a comprehensive plan to address staffing shortages, the DHS Child Welfare Services (CWS) Branch partnered with the University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work to re-establish the Hawai'i Child Welfare Education Collaboration. In exchange for tuition assistance, Master of Social Work (MSW) students commit to working in CWS for a minimum of two years after they graduate. In 2016, ten second-year MSW students were recruited for this program. These students will complete their requirements and receive their MSW degrees by May 2017 and will be ready to begin their two-year CSW employment commitment in June 2017.

## **Department of Human Services: 2017**

### **Timeliness, ease of access earn bonus federal funding**

On October 17, 2017, the federal Food and Nutrition Service notified DHS that Hawaii's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will, once again receive a SNAP State High Performance Bonus Award for being among the states with the highest Program Access Index (PAI) for calendar year (CY) 2016. This year's award is \$654,584

### **'Ohana Nui approach transforming delivery of services to break inter-generational cycle of poverty**

The department is operationalizing its 'Ohana Nui multi-generational approach to delivering human services. DHS believes this will improve its ability to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty by concurrently addressing individuals' and families' highest need areas:

- Housing
- Food/nutrition
- Health/wellness
- Economic self-sufficiency/education
- Social capital

The approach addresses the needs of children, parents, and grandparents early and concurrently, resulting in better outcomes for the family. A critical component of this evidence-based approach is prioritizing the needs and development of children ages zero to five and ensuring they are not exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and responding appropriately when ACES are present.

DHS is currently receiving technical assistance from the Urban Institute and the Ascend/The Aspen Institute to assist with developing multi-generational performance measures.

### **Information technology systems improved to provide better services**

DHS is continuing its investment in improving its information technology systems and internal information and data governance structures. In 2014, in compliance with the Affordable Care Act, the DHS Enterprise System was launched with the development of the Med-QUEST Division's KOLEA Medicaid Eligibility on-line application for Medicaid insurance coverage. KOLEA has significantly reduced the time to determine Medicaid eligibility. Currently in procurement, DHS is adding BESSD's programs to the DHS Enterprise System, phase II of the IT investment and will result in the integration of the basic DHS services of medical coverage, financial assistance, SNAP, homeless services, employment service and childcare subsidies. With an improved IT infrastructure, DHS will be able to better analyze data to improve our service delivery, as well as develop innovative services for those families and individuals with complex needs.

## **Federal waiver provides flexibility to ensure safety of children and reduce need for foster care**

In 2013, Hawai'i was one of eight states approved by the federal administration for Children and Families to implement a Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project. This project allows Hawai'i to use federal funds more flexibly to develop and implement new interventions to ensure the safety of children and reduce the number of children and youth entering and staying in foster care. As part of the Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project, four new initiatives began, including: Crisis Response Team, Intensive Home-Based Services, Family Wrap Hawai'i, and Safety, Permanency and Well-Being Meetings. Data indicates that each of the new interventions has yielded positive outcomes. This division will continue to monitor the success of these interventions.

Additionally, as part of the 'Ohana Nui effort, the Social Services Division (SSD) has increased collaboration with the Med-Quest Division (MQD) and the Department of Health to find appropriate placements for foster children who may have mental health needs and/or are medically fragile. Locating appropriate placements for these children proves to be very difficult. With this increased collaboration, the department can leverage its resources to better serve foster youth.

This collaboration has also extended to the department's public and private partnerships, which were established to adequately respond to commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC). Resources are being developed to raise public and community awareness to this growing concern, while also assisting mandated reporters in identifying early warning signs.

## **Department of Human Services: 2018**

### **'Ohana Nui**

DHS is actively working to imbed and operationalize the 'Ohana Nui concept, which employs a multi-generational approach to human services delivery. One such example of 'Ohana Nui implementation is the creation of a navigator program to assist families and individuals with complex needs to access DHS services. This will allow easier access to services, reduce churning (termination and reapplication), and ensure greater success for these families with complex needs.

## **Project SEARCH**

Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific (REHAB) is the first organization in Hawai'i to launch Project SEARCH, a one-year program aimed at helping secure competitive employment for people with disabilities. In partnership with the Hawai'i State Department of Health, Abilities Unlimited, Department of Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Kalani High School, REHAB serves as the host location for six student interns with developmental or intellectual disabilities and provides real-life work experience, training in employability, and independent living skills to help make successful transitions from school to productive adult life. Students participating in the program intern in food services, grounds keeping, outpatient reception, housekeeping, linen/laundry and materials management during the school year.

## **Support for the employment of people with disabilities**

The Departments of Labor and Industrial Relations, Human Services, Education, and Health, along with the University of Hawai'i Center for Disability Studies worked to develop and sustain a coordinated approach to develop and expand business and employer networks. These networks will provide greater job search, job referrals, vocational training, and work-based learning opportunities to individuals with disabilities. "This agreement is among the first of its kind. It brings together various stakeholders in state government to support individuals with disabilities and their opportunities to work in our communities," said Department of Human Services Director Pankaj Bhanot.

The Cooperative Agreement positions the State of Hawai'i to maximize resources and shift policies to serve a more diverse audience and improve workforce outcomes. The agreement also calls on departments to identify and leverage resources to provide training and build capacity of employers. It will simultaneously work to expand work opportunities for people with disabilities by identifying career pathways, coordinating assistive technology programs and services where appropriate, and streamlining services.

## **Social Services Division: Addressing staff shortage and retention**

To address chronic staff shortages, in 2016, the administration advocated for the restoration of the Hawai'i Child Welfare Education Collaboration (HCWEC) with the University of Hawai'i to build a child welfare system of committed and competent social workers.

To fill position vacancies, in 2018, a cross-sector team from DHS-Personnel, DHS-Child Welfare Services, and the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD), redesigned the hiring process of child welfare social workers. The Wiki Wiki Hire team reviewed existing application to hiring processes, reduced the number of steps involved, pre-identified vacant positions and CWS point of contacts, and trained specific CWS staff to conduct hiring interviews. The changes reduced the amount of time from application to hire, from 21 weeks or more. Since rolling out in June 2018 the pilot has already resulted in 20 new hires at CWS; and based upon the pilot's success, other divisions are interested in redesigning their hiring processes.

With continued investment in the HCWEC program and its scholars, the department will grow the capacity of our local students to serve families who need the most assistance.

## **Safe Sleep Campaign**

Staff of the DHS Director's Office and Child Care Program Office teamed up with staff from DOH Maternal & Child Health and Children with Special Health Needs Branch to develop messaging around safe sleep. The team worked to develop materials for both childcare providers and parents and families to help everyone understand how best to put babies under age 1 to sleep.

The 2017 State Legislature charged DHS with creating a public awareness campaign, and DHS partnered with DOH to have maximum impact.

## **Pohulani Processing Center: Using new technology & good customer service to improve access**

In 2017, the Pohulani Processing Center (PPC) began the process to revamp its phone system and customer service to improve telephone access and reduce waiting times and recipient complaints. The office, which provides cash assistance,

SNAP, and child care subsidies for densely populated East Honolulu, processes nearly 500 applications and conducts an average of 800 eligibility reviews each month. Prior to investing in a new telephone system and business process, applicants and recipients routinely complained about long waiting lines, lost documents, and being unable to contact anyone by phone. Staff also suffered with multiple duplicative requests and the high volume of walk-in recipients who could not access information or conduct business by phone.

The technological and business process changes have significantly reduced the number of complaints from PPC recipients, the number of walk-in clients, the length of waiting time, and the number of cases that "churn" – those that close and are reopened.

### **Embracing the insight and lived experience of web designer and former foster youth to improve access to information**

Child Welfare Services has a new look for its Independent Living on-line resources page, [www.ilpconnections.org](http://www.ilpconnections.org). Built by former foster youth and HI HOPES Board member Tuan Giai Giang, the sleek new page is a collaborative effort between DHS CWS branch, the Independent Living Collaborative, and EPIC 'Ohana. The site is a window into a world of information and experiences that captures both the resiliency of foster youth and the bright possibilities for their future. It's also a portal into our community of caring.

Tuan hopes the website will encourage and empower youth to reach out and use the help that's available (and expand their supporters' knowledge and understanding too). He hopes the videos and testimonials of current and former foster youth will give the website users a greater sense of possibility and internal permission to reach out and use resources that are available. More importantly, Tuan hopes the site and its content will inspire youth to believe in themselves and know that they're worthy of support.

### **Foster Grandparent program increases social connections**

The Foster Grandparent program, administered by the Adult Protective and Community Services Branch, recruits volunteers to assist children with special needs in child-care and school settings. Volunteers, who must be at least 55 years old and meet income requirements, serve a minimum of 15 hours a week. The inspiring program works with 110 volunteers across the state – from Kaua'i, O'ahu,

Maui and Hawai'i Island. In fiscal year 2017, program volunteers served nearly 100,000 hours over the year.

### **Iron Chef Kitchen: New Vision Student Group Cooking Competition**

Ho'opono Services for the Blind on Bachelot Street was transformed into the Iron Chef Kitchen. New Visions is a program with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's Ho'opono Services for the Blind Branch, which teaches non-visual blindness skills to build confidence and independence. New Visions students competed in a group cooking competition as part of their blindness training. In the end, the two-person team of Beryl and Jeffrey were the victors, though all the students were successful on that day.

### **New Visions students experience camping & travel**

In May 2017, the New Visions program took a group of eight adult students to YMCA Camp Erdman. During the group's stay, students completed various challenges individually, in partnership and as a group. One day, they tackled the daunting Odyssey Ropes Course which takes participants 30 feet above the ground to walk on telephone wires. On another, they did team development activities that highlighted the need for strong communication in group work. They also traversed the 5.4 mile roundtrip trek to Ka'ena Point.

Then in June, seven Transition students headed to Hawai'i Island. The focus of this trip was for the blind youth to focus on post-secondary education and employment as well as learn about Hawaiian culture. The Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration, which oversees the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, mandates that 15% of the agency's budget be spent on this age group, focusing on pre-employment transition services.

During the week on Hawai'i Island, students were immersed in various employment activities from volunteer work experience to peer mentoring and advocacy. They also were exposed to counseling on career and post-secondary opportunities and independent living skills.

## **Emergency Management: DHS staff embodying community spirit & empathy**

2018 may be a preview of the future with multiple back-to-back natural disasters. During the historic rainfall on Kaua'i in April, Kīlauea eruption on Hawai'i island over the summer, and hurricane threats to the state, DHS staff showed true grit and dedication to our communities and residents. Staff were sent to assist at the state's emergency operating center, staff statewide participated in daily information briefings, coordinating calls between divisions and staff on the ground, and staff engaged in collaborative efforts to respond to the needs of impacted residents. On the ground, DHS staff were members of damage assessment teams lead by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Hawai'i Island. Damage assessments were vital to the state's application for federal assistance.

## **Helping foster youth prepare for a new school year**

West Hawai'i CWS staff teamed up with Mālama I Nā Keiki Hānai, a community partner agency, to help foster youth be "ready to roll" for the new school year. CWS staff, Mālama I Nā Keiki Hānai, and family members came together to raise funds and collect supplies to help prepare foster youth for the upcoming school year. The event took place at the Kailua-Kona Wal-Mart and the backpacks and school supplies were later distributed to resource caregivers at the West Hawai'i CWS office.

## **Department of Human Services: 2019**

### **Staff retention improves family safety and well-being**

To achieve positive outcomes for children and their families, a concerted effort was made to fill vacancies and retain staff. Wiki Wiki Hire, a cross-agency collaboration between the Department of Human Resources Development and the Department of Human Services, developed a streamlined hiring process to certify, interview, and hire applicants. The start of the pilot in June 2018, quickly showed positive results with a point in time comparison for October 2018 with 78 vacant positions in CWSB to 40 vacant positions in 2019.

CWSB developed a pilot project of emergency response workers designed to support sections experiencing gaps in their operations until the sections can sustain services to their community. Positions for this pilot are in recruitment.

### **Fostering cross-sector collaboration**

In April 2018, DHS with the sponsorship of Governor Ige, and in partnership with Departments of Education and Health, and the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL), applied for and received cross-sector technical assistance from the National Governor's Association. The 15-month process examined programs and resources available for children, youth, and families in Hawai'i. The major result of the assistance is the development to a "Cabinet for Children, Youth, and Families" that will develop decision-making and information processes so that child, youth and family serving agencies are able to align outcomes and goals and braid available funding. Foundational documents of the cabinet are in circulation and under review by participating department directors and the Executive Director of EOEL.

Improved information sharing and relationship building among NGA technical assistance participants has already led to new partnership between DHS First To Work Program and the DOH Public Health Nursing to provide home visiting services to pregnant recipients of Temporary Assistance and Needy Family (TANF) benefits. DHS and DOH Public Health Nursing are developing the program. DHS, DOH, and the Executive Office on Early Learning also partnered to submit a proposal for a Preschool Development Grant to develop a strategic plan to strengthen the State's Early Childhood system. The team received a grant award, and lead partner EOEL engaged a facilitator who is conducting the strategic plan process; the final plan is expected to be completed in December.

### **Addressing severe mental illness in Hawai'i**

To address issues raised in Senate Bill 1051 (2019), in partnership with and funded by the Department of Health, DHS engaged the expertise of the National Council for Behavioral Health (NCBH) to conduct an environmental scan, provide training, and technical assistance to improve shelter and other services for homeless individuals with severe mental illness (SMI), some of whom may have a co-occurring substance use disorder. Through this collaboration, NCBH will review existing shelter agencies to examine the impact of an integrated behavioral health shelter program that provides short term, sub-acute care for homeless individuals with SMI. This collaboration will also provide facilitation for a newly established steering

committee, which will be comprised of stakeholders and community service providers who will advise on capacity, resources, and collaboration opportunities to support the pilot shelter program. The environmental scan process began with a kickoff webinar in October and work with NCBH will continue for the next 3 years.

### **Addressing juvenile justice through gender responsive reform**

The Office of Youth Services, Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility received a technical assistance grant from the Vera Institute, aimed at ending the incarceration of girls in the state. Through this two-year collaboration, the Vera Institute has developed various recommendations to ensure gender responsiveness within our criminal justice system, beginning with looking at the connections between early childhood abuse and neglect, foster youth, criminalization, trafficking, and incarceration.

### **Statewide child sex trafficking awareness training**

The Office of Youth Services, in conjunction with CWSB and community stakeholders, conducted a three-day training on identification of trafficking, awareness of trafficking, trauma and its effects on brain development in children, and greater prevention techniques. Legislators, along with social workers, direct service providers, and medical professionals attended the training at the Hawai'i State Capitol auditorium. Through this training, attendees learned about the CWS Mandated Reporter Hotline for suspected sex and labor trafficking. Attendees from neighbor islands could apply for stipends to attend the training on O'ahu.

### **Expanding access to higher education through the HINET program**

As an example of cross-branch collaboration, DHS, the University of Hawai'i (UH), and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means worked together to pass Act 156 (2019) expanding the University of Hawaii's Hawai'i Nutrition Employment and Training (HINET) program. The HINET program provides additional financial and one-to-one support to college students who are recipients or eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Program participants receive assistance with finding childcare, reimbursement for books and supplies, transportation expense, and job matching. The additional funding allows UH to expand the program to all seven-community college campus increasing the number of program participants from 200 to nearly 1,000 statewide.

## **New Health Analytics Office informs decision making**

The Department of Human Services has developed in its Med-QUEST Division the Health Analytics Office (HAO). The establishment of HAO improves the state's ability to make evidence-based decisions that are informed by health-related data and related forecasting. HAO is the State's all-payers medical claims database and was enacted in statute by Act 55 (2018). HAO is another example of cross-sector collaborative effort established through partnership with the Department of Health, University of Hawai'i, Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs, the Hawai'i Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund, and the Office of Enterprise Technology Services, with broad support from health-care industry.

## **Department of Human Services: 2020**

### **Department of Human Services successfully pivots and keeps pace with surge of applications for vital safety net programs**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) continues to take aggressive and proactive actions to protect the health and safety of the individuals and strengthen families by maintaining essential services to help the people of Hawai'i during this COVID-19 crisis. **See COVID-19 term report for details.**

### **Non-COVID vocational rehabilitation programs flourish**

Amid COVID-19, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) sustained essential services and supported 94 participants to obtain employment at an average hourly wage of \$15.28 cents, working an average of 29 hours weekly. These participants generated over \$1.8 million in earnings adding another \$150,000 to the local economy.

## Department of Human Services: 2021

See COVID-19 term report.

### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) supports independence**

DVR continued to provide training and job readiness to support financial independence for more than 3,500 Hawai'i residents annually. Some of the DVR related issues are as follows:

- DVR continues its work to support employment opportunities for this population and has made strides to resolve a waitlist from the Order of Selection implemented in 2017. Over 900 participants have been released off the waitlist since July of 2019, with 512 released since March 2020.
- With staffing vacancies now being filled, DVR anticipates services will support closer to 9% of Hawaii's eligible residents with disabilities seeking to obtain employment and/or advance in Hawaii's workforce.
- Persons receiving DVR services this past year and placed into employment with Hawaii's employers during this pandemic include the following occupations: Stock and Order fillers, General Office and Customer Service Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics, Computer Occupations, and Administrative Service Managers. Average hourly wages over the past year for job placements have ranged between \$12.68 - \$36.60 per hour, with participants working between 10-40 hours per week after exiting services.

### **Social Services Division (SSD) delivered services**

SSD received additional federal funds to provide clients with additional supports and services as residents struggled. Some of the SSD initiatives include:

- The Adult Protective Community Services Branch (APCS) fulfilled its mission to protect the most vulnerable adults in the community from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, while continuing to honor the individual's right to self-determination and to ensure every effort is made to prevent premature institutionalization.
- APCS successfully resettled repatriates, provided case management and nursing services, and kept kūpuna active in its community programs: Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program, and Respite Companion Program.
- Due to COVID-19, APCS enhanced its protocols to ensure staff and client

safety, while they continued to provide essential services on the “front line” to address the needs of vulnerable adults in their homes and communities statewide. APCS conducted face-to-face visits on all emergency cases and provided support to clients in the community when other programs had halted or severely scaled-back their operations.

- In 2021, APCS hosted the State’s first World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event which was attended by many partner agencies across the state including APCS staff, law enforcement, city prosecutors, financial institutions, and other stakeholders in the prevention of elder abuse and fraud.
- In August 2021, CWS received approval by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of Hawaii’s 5-year Family First Hawai’i (FFH) prevention plan, allowing Hawai’i to receive Title IV-E prevention reimbursements for approved evidence-based services and related administration costs. At that time, Hawai’i was one of only 16 States to receive ACF approval as required by the First Family Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) of 2018. FFPSA expanded the investment of Title IV-E funds for prevention services to reduce children entering foster care, by implementing evidence-based services using trauma informed healing approaches to strengthen families and relatives to care for their own children and prevent children's entry into the foster care system. With FFH in place, Hawai’i anticipates seeing a decrease in number of children entering foster care, as well as a decrease in costs associated with foster care services.
- In September 2021, CWS in collaboration with DHS office of information technology, launched the initial phase of an automated licensing solution to allow resource caregivers to submit online application to become a resource family (foster family) for children in foster care.
- On October 1, 2021, CWS launched its first FFH prevention services with a phased-in approach with intensive home-based services using the Homebuilders model. Plans include in home visiting services using Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Healthy Families America (HFA) Models by February 2022. Additional FFH prevention services will be implemented in 2023-2024.
- Started in 2019, CWS continues to work on its Program Improvement Plan through the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) which improves 18 data items related to safety, permanency, and well-being of children. The CFSR process involves the eight CWS statewide sections being reviewed annually via review of a random sampling of cases. CWS has met all but two items and the goal is to meet these items within the next year.
- In response to the passage of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act signed into law on December 2020, CWS collaborated with providers,

community stakeholders and former foster youth to issue payments to youth and young adults in foster care and those who were exiting foster care to support this population.

- CWS collaborated with the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority along with other providers and stakeholders to use available housing vouchers to assist former foster youth with housing resources who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness, and we are working on a process to issue these vouchers to CWS families who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
- CWS and its provider EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing have been working with the Partners in Care, O'ahu's homeless service continuum and have reached out to neighbor island homeless providers to assist CWS families and former foster youth who are experiencing homelessness and at risk of homelessness to access housing resources.

### **Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) provides housing and food services**

HPHA continued to provide stable housing and worked with the federal government, CWS, and local non-profits to provide housing vouchers for foster youth who moved to adulthood. HPHA also worked with Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency and FEMA to deliver meals to kūpuna statewide and worked with health care providers and the Department of Health (DOH) to provide COVID-19 testing and vaccination information and resources.

### **Office of Youth Services (OYS) gets results**

This year, the Kawaiiloa/Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF) was selected by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation as one of ten global finalists for the Racial Equity 2030 Challenge. The "Kawaiiloa: A Transformative Indigenous Model to Replace Youth Incarceration" project supports youth to find their roles as healers and community contributors by replacing youth incarceration with a Native Hawaiian restorative system that empowers communities, trains youth healers, and shifts resources to community-driven and culturally grounded pu'uhonua, sanctuaries of support, for youth.

## **Grants and Technical Assistance Awards Support Department's Work**

Thriving Children, Strong Families: Spearheaded by the Director's office, DHS was selected as one of six cohort states to participate in the No Kid Hungry grant, a national campaign with the organization Share Our Strength and the American Public Human Services Association. Through this grant work, DHS will collaborate with the Hawai'i Department of Health – WIC program (DOH) and the Children's Healthy Living Center of Excellence (CHL Center) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, to build foundational capacity to share and analyze administrative data across the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). This groundwork will enable Hawai'i to increase access to nutrition support programs, in alignment with Hawai'i's 'Ohana Nui framework, which aims to dismantle intergenerational poverty.

Hawai'i was also chosen as one of 14 states to participate in both the first and second National Governor's Association Family Well-Being Cohorts, with the support of the Casey Foundation. Through this work, the Department of Human Services, Department of Education, and the Department of Health will work with the National Governor's Association and the National Family Support Network to strengthen Hawai'i's school- and community-based family resource centers to address the multiple and complex needs of families.

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Longitudinal Data Project Grant: Hawai'i was also chosen to participate in a multi-year longitudinal data project with the U.S.D.A. Food & Nutrition Service and the U.S. Census Bureau to standardize the State's SNAP data. This will ensure that more research can be done across states and similar communities to improve our knowledge of nutritional needs of families, and to create opportunities where Hawai'i's multi-ethnic and multigenerational nutrition needs may be studied. Participation in this grant comes with more than \$2 million in federal funding and aims to lead to improved program outcomes and innovations.

National Governor's Association SNAP Employment & Training Learning Lab: A Hawai'i team of staff from DHS, the University of Hawai'i Community College, and workforce providers participated in a two-day learning lab to explore how Hawai'i's can expand use of the SNAP Employment & Training program. One of the outcomes is to strengthen Hawai'i's HINET program at community colleges and improve program participation rates to assist college students with nutrition benefits, and to

provide supports to eligible community college students, such as transportation and child care, so students can complete their degrees and obtain higher paying jobs.

A team from the Director's Office, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the governor's Office, the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations, the Workforce Development Council, and Enterprise Technology Services, continues to work with the National Governor's Association Work & Innovation Network (WIN) and contracted vendor RIPL to improve the Hawaii's on-line employment portal so residents can obtain employment opportunities, find training resources, as well as easy referrals to other public services.

## **Looking Ahead**

The launch of the 'Ohana Nui approach allowed several departments to partner for better outcomes for the people needing state services. Going forward, we anticipate expanding the programs in place and finding new ways to provide much-needed services more efficiently and effectively.