



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

LORETTA J. FUDDY, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
Phone: (808) 586-4412
Fax: (808) 586-4444

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**LIVING WELL HAWAII PROJECT PROVIDES INNOVATIVE
HEALTH CARE TO ADULTS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS**

HONOLULU – Gov. Neil Abercrombie together with Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), Hawaii Primary Care Association, and the Kalihi-Palama Health Center today announced the opening of the new *Living Well Hawaii* project. An innovative, first-of-its-kind pilot project, it combines medical care with mental health services under one roof for adults living with serious mental illness and chronic disease. The governor, health officials, consumers, and partners gathered for a ceremonial blessing and tour of the new project, located at the Kalihi-Palama Community Mental Health Center at 1700 Lanakila Ave.

“This collaborative pilot project advances our New Day Plan vision for patient-centered models of health care that eliminate health disparities to improve the health of all Hawaii citizens,” said Gov. Abercrombie. “Providing better access to culturally sensitive, collaborative, and integrated care for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness will mean a better quality of life and improved health for those served.”

The project is the first primary and behavioral health care collaboration in Hawaii that will utilize an Integrated Care Management Team comprised of primary care staff employed by Kalihi-Palama Health Center (a private, non-profit, federally qualified health center) and DOH behavioral health staff to embed primary care services into Kalihi-Palama Community Mental Health Center.

(more)

It is well documented that adults with serious mental illness die an average of 25 years earlier than the general population. More than half of these premature deaths are due to comorbid medical conditions, including obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular and pulmonary disease. The goal of the Living Well Hawaii project is to improve the physical health status of people with mental illness and chronic, comorbid medical conditions by fully integrating physical and mental health services.

Adults with severe mental illness who choose to participate in the Living Well Hawaii project will have access to a comprehensive and culturally informed array of health services delivered in a manner consistent with patient-centered medical home standards and expectations. Based upon past research and evaluation efforts in other states, providing access to culturally and linguistically sensitive, integrated, comprehensive care improves health outcomes.

“This outstanding collaboration between the Department of Health, Primary Care Association, and Kalihi-Palama Health Center will lead the way toward more effective, patient-centered, integrated services that support health equity,” said Health Director Loretta Fuddy. “Mahalo nui loa to the Kalihi-Palama Health Center who fully supported the project by providing expert staffing.”

Services for the Living Well Hawaii project are scheduled to begin in June 2013 with current health center patients included in this first pilot. New participants in the pilot are not being enrolled at this time. Individuals seeking mental health services may contact the state’s Access Line at (808) 832-3100 on Oahu, and neighbor island residents may call (800) 753-6879.

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