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HAWAII TOPS AMERICA'S HEALTH RANKINGS AS HEALTHIEST STATE IN 2013

HONOLULU – Hawaii is the healthiest state according to the United Health Foundation's *2013 America's Health Rankings®: A Call to Action for Individuals & Their Communities* released today. The rankings provide an analysis of national health on a state-by-state basis by evaluating available data to determine national benchmarks and state rankings.

“Marking steady improvement over that last three years, Hawaii’s number one ranking is encouraging and reminds us how fortunate we are to live in the Aloha State. Today’s honor is reflective of the Abercrombie Administration’s priority focus on health issues,” said Health Director Loretta Fuddy. “Even with our top ranking, there are serious public health challenges ahead of us and we cannot afford to be complacent with the issues of childhood obesity, chronic disease, mental health, and protecting our environment.”

“While Hawaii scored well along most of the report’s measures – particularly for having low rates of uninsured individuals, obesity, smoking, and preventable hospitalizations, as well as high rates of childhood immunizations – some ethnic groups experience significantly worse health than the average. We need to pay attention to the areas and populations that aren’t enjoying good health status.”

Gov. Neil Abercrombie added: “I’m proud that our public health efforts have helped us attain the number one spot. A closely linked initiative, healthcare transformation, focuses on excellence and cost-effectiveness in our health care delivery and payment systems so that Hawaii can enjoy the best health and health care for years to come.”

“United Health Foundation’s annual America’s Health Rankings® provides an invaluable look at the challenges and opportunities facing Hawaii. It gives us a nice picture of the health of our state compared with our region and our nation,” said Ron Fujimoto, D.O., chief medical officer, United Healthcare’s Community Plan for Hawaii. “This report is an important tool for focusing on meaningful programs to address our biggest challenges and to help us measure the progress we’ve made with our efforts to date.”

Highlights of the determinants and outcomes that make up Hawaii’s top ranking are available at www.americashealthrankings.org. The report shows that other areas where Hawaii can improve include higher-than-average rates of binge drinking and occupational fatalities, and lower-than-average rates of high school graduation.

Hawaii’s number one ranking this year is an improvement from ranking second in 2012 and third in 2011. The state ranked fifth in both 2010 and 2009 and has remained among the top five healthiest states in the United Health Foundations report since 2003.

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